

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

REPORT TITLE: Climate Change: How Will Marin Adapt?
REPORT DATE: September 11, 2020
RESPONSE BY: Fairfax Town Council
RESPONSE DATE: December 2, 2020

FINDINGS:

- We agree with the findings numbered: **F1-F5**.
- We disagree wholly or partially with the finding numbered: **F7**.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Recommendations numbered **R1, R4 and R6** have been implemented.

Dated: _____

Signed: _____
Name/Title

Number of pages attached: 3

ATTACHMENT

RESPONSE OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFAX TO GRAND JURY REPORT CLIMATE CHANGE: HOW WILL MARIN ADAPT?

FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

F1. Climate change mitigation efforts by Marin governments have been notably effective in meeting their goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Response: Agree.

The Town has worked with the County of Marin, other cities, towns, and many other partners to develop an integrated approach toward climate change planning, adaptation and mitigation. In Fairfax, we were able to achieve our 2020 greenhouse gas emission goal by the end of 2016. However, we recognize that the vast bulk of this accomplishment came as a result of the State of California Renewable Portfolio Standard on the electricity grid, the introduction of Marin Clean Energy, and particularly its Deep Green offering, coupled with its adoption by such county-wide entities as MMWD.

While our emissions have come down by more than our target goal, we recognize that we must significantly increase our efforts if we hope to achieve even a similar level of achievement in the future. Marin cannot mitigate climate disaster alone, but Marin has and should continue to have a major influence as an example to other communities, which gives us the opportunity and the responsibility to act swiftly and aggressively.

F2. Adaptation planning is essential to protect local public utility and transportation infrastructure as well as private property interests, and to enable Marin's citizens to maintain their current standards of living.

Response: Agree.

We agree that adaptation planning is essential. However, we also believe that mitigation, in the bigger picture, is significantly more important than adaptation. The climate is changing, and, if we do not stop its advance, we will never have the resources to keep up with it in our adaptation efforts. Small prevention is always worth a pound of cure, but prevention must be collective, while adaptation can be more individual. We must be exceedingly careful not to divert resources to adaptation and thereby starve mitigation efforts. The best course will be to focus heavily on responses that can build both adaptation and mitigation.

F3. With the BayWAVE and C-SMART initial vulnerability assessments completed, the county is now well-positioned to focus on adaptation planning and policies related to sea level rise.

Response: Agree.

F4. The existing adaptation efforts across the county pay insufficient attention to the other potential effects of climate change, including impacts on public health, ecosystems, and social equity.

Response: Agree.

While we agree, it should be noted that recent actions have produced significant progress on these concerns. The Grand Jury cites “the working group of Marin’s county and municipal planners that helped develop the countywide, multi-jurisdictional local hazard mitigation plan recently adopted by the county’s board of supervisors and all the cities and towns” (p. 18). This Working Group has been expanded to encompass the mandates of California Government Code Section 65302(g)(4), which now require that cities and counties update their General Plan Safety Elements to address climate adaptation and resiliency strategies across the full breadth of hazard and safety issues, not just sea level rise.

The Working Group has synthesized this General Plan Safety Element work with the substantive hazard adaptation requirements of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) Update, which is required to maintain FEMA funding eligibility. The membership of the working group has been expanded to include the Planning Directors of each jurisdiction to strengthen the integration of adaptation planning with broader community development processes.

In addition, we understand that the County of Marin and other Marin communities responses to the Grand Jury report will describe the countywide and/or local efforts to address the potential effects of climate change, including impacts on public health, ecosystems, and social equity.

F5. There are insufficient staff and financial resources devoted to climate change adaptation efforts across county government as well as in the cities, towns, and other agencies, and many of the existing efforts are highly dependent on grant funding.

Response: Agree.

Please note that we also recommend that mitigation efforts receive the same, if not more, staff and financial resources as adaption activities.

F7. Cross-jurisdictional collaboration and coordination will be required for successful adaptation efforts, but Marin lacks any overarching organizational or governance structure to facilitate this.

Response: Partially disagree.

Although we agree there is no single entity directing the work of these valuable collaborative and interjurisdictional efforts, there are many ongoing efforts that precisely fit this need including, but not limited to, BayWAVE, Drawdown: Marin (currently led by the County with a new County-nonprofit in development), and the Marin Climate & Energy Partnership (MCEP).

Also, as stated above in other responses, the Town believes the efforts should focus on both mitigation and adaptation activities.

However, the Town would participate in and cooperate with any county-wide organization to facilitate cross-jurisdictional collaboration and coordination efforts for both adaptation and mitigation efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES

R1. The board of supervisors, in collaboration with the municipalities and other agencies affected by climate change, should convene a multi-jurisdictional task force (referred to in this report as the Marin Climate Adaptation Task Force) charged with developing a single, comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional adaptation strategy for all of Marin.

Response: The County of Marin reports it has already implemented this recommendation.

Specifically, the County identifies its existing efforts, including BayWAVE; Drawdown: Marin; the General Plan Safety Element in coordination with the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) Update; and the General Plan Environmental Justice Element all point to the collaborative, consistent, coordinated approach to adaptation planning for all of Marin called for in the Grand Jury's report.

The Town will participate in any multi-jurisdictional task force created by the County of Marin to address climate change, beyond what we currently participate in.

R4. Each member of the Marin Climate & Energy Partnership, should declare its support for broadening the partnership's mission and increasing its funding as necessary to enable it to support overall climate change planning efforts, including both mitigation and adaptation in cities, towns, and other member agencies throughout the county.

Response: This recommendation has already been implemented.

The Town participates in MCEP and would be supportive of expanded opportunities for MCEP to make further progress on mitigation as well as adaptation efforts. We would welcome additional or new ongoing funding sources which could support the expanded role and required staff.

R6. Recommendation: Each city and town, if it does not have a full-time sustainability coordinator (or similar position), should appoint a committee or commission charged with monitoring and reporting on its climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Response: This recommendation has already been implemented.

The Town has an active Climate Action Committee (CAC).