

**Report Title: A Crisis Brewing
Housing for Public Health and Safety Employees**

Report Date: June 30, 2003

Response by: Lorraine Weiss Title: Director of Environmental Services

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: 2, 3, 4
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: 1

(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefor.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered _____ have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered 1, 2, 3 require further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 9/9/03 Signed: _____

Number of pages attached 3

Response to Findings:

- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: 1

The Town of Corte Madera partially disagrees with finding #1. The Town of Corte Madera does have a method in responding to emergencies, though it is not based on a priority ranking system. Both fire and police personnel respond to emergency events. The Town of Corte Madera has 18 sworn firefighters and 19 volunteer firefighters. The Emergency Services Department (Fire and Paramedics), works on a shift basis. That is, at any given time, there are, at minimum, five sworn firefighters on duty on a daily basis. There are three separate shifts. In addition, during the week, Monday through Friday, the Fire Chief and Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal are on duty. On the weekends, either the Fire Chief, Deputy Chief or Fire Marshal are on duty. When there is an emergency disaster, the Town of Corte Madera responds in the following manner: During an emergency a page goes out to all emergency services personnel and

volunteers. Those who can respond to the page and show up at the location of the emergency in a timely manner are asked to respond. Thus, responding to a disaster is not done on a priority ranking for "close-by housing".

Of the 18 sworn firefighters and two management personnel, only two (10%) live in Marin County. The remainder of the employees live in outlying counties such as Sonoma, Alameda, Sacramento, and Lassen counties. All the volunteer firefighters live in Marin County; however, their availability to serve as a volunteer is when they are not working their permanent jobs or other responsibilities.

Twin Cities Police serves both the Town of Corte Madera and the City of Larkspur and works on a two shift basis. There are 34 sworn officers and 11 non-sworn officers (including community service officers, dispatch, the Police Chief's secretary, and a clerical employee). At any given time, there are, at minimum, three sworn officers, one supervisor and one dispatcher. In addition, during the week, Monday through Friday, there is always either the Police Chief or Captain on duty. When there is an emergency disaster, a notification system pages every sworn officer to respond as available to the station. The Twin Cities Police relies heavily on the County Sheriff and other law enforcement agencies in the County for mutual aid during a major incident. Thus, responding to a disaster in the Town of Corte Madera is not done on a priority ranking for "close-by housing".

Of the 34 sworn officers, one lives in the Town of Corte Madera and 11 reside in Marin County. Only two non-sworn employees live in the Town of Corte Madera. All other personnel live in outlying areas including Sonoma and Solano counties.

The Town of Corte Madera's adopted Housing Element includes policies and programs to identify and establish housing needs for affordable housing, though does not specify public health and safety employees. Policy and programs in the Housing Element address workforce housing. These programs encourage working with local school districts, public agencies, and existing businesses to seek opportunities for helping their employees find needed housing, such as purchasing or leasing larger facilities to provide local housing opportunities, mortgage buy-downs or subsidies, and rent subsidies. Also, that the Town will initiate discussions among motel and hotel owners in Corte Madera, the schools and non-profit housing sponsors for the acquisition, conversion, and/or lease of units for use as long-term, affordable teacher housing. To increase workforce affordable housing construction, the Town requires residential developments to provide a percentage of units or an in-lieu fee for very low, low and moderate income housing. The Town continues to work with the Marin Housing Authority for management of the affordable housing stock in order to ensure permanent affordability, and implement resale and rental regulations for low and moderate income units and assure that these units remain at an affordable price level.

In regards to Finding #3, the Town Council exercises its legislative authority to develop policies to make affordable housing available to first time responders, the Town Council has included such policies in its newly adopted Housing Element. The issue of whether the Town Council may establish a priority for first responders for the affordable housing constructed in the Town, presents a series of legal issues which must be carefully studied and analyzed.

Response to Recommendations:

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- Recommended numbered none have been implemented.

The Town of Corte Madera believes that none of the recommendations listed in this Grand Jury Report have been implemented.

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- Recommendations numbered 1, 2, 3 require further analysis.

The Town of Corte Madera agrees with most of the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury, though, believes that further information and analysis is required for recommendations numbered 1, 2, and

3. The Town does agree that the County should be the lead agency on this project and can expect us to participate in the process. The Town does not have sufficient information to determine the need for public health and safety personnel to have priority affordable housing within the County over other personnel. First, the County should work as a whole to determine if there is a need for public health and safety personnel to have priority affordable housing be made within the County over other personnel for all jurisdictions. Second, should it be determined that the need has overriding importance than defining the positions and rankings for first responders in the event of disaster needs to occur. There are many factors that determine whether an employee chooses to live within the County or not. The cost of housing is one factor. Others may include a desire to live near family, extended family, and friends. A survey, perhaps should be done to clearly define what the factors are in determining location of residence. Additional data collection and analysis should be done before a solution can be implemented. After data collection and analysis are completed, than the data will show the relative number of employees who may be willing and are financially able to reside within the County, and other information pertinent to determining the needs of employees.

Due to limited staffing resources and budgets, contract help should be considered in determining who should be responsible for collecting and analyzing the information. Local jurisdictions will be fiscally impacted by such a project and funding for this project must be considered.

The performance of this work requires the coordination of the County and all of the local jurisdictions within the County. It will also involve substantial resources in terms of data gathering and analysis. It is difficult to determine whether this analysis can be completed within the requisite six months time period. Nevertheless, the Town of Corte Madera remains committed to working the County and other local jurisdictions to complete this analysis in an expeditious manner.