



900 Fifth Avenue
Suite 100
San Rafael
California 94901

Phone: 415/226-0815
Fax: 415/226-0816

www.tam.ca.gov

Belvedere
James Campbell

Corte Madera
David Kunhardt

Fairfax
John Reed

Larkspur
Dan Hillmer

Mill Valley
Stephanie Moulton-Peters

Novato
Eric Lucan

Ross
P. Beach Kuhl

San Anselmo
Brian Colbert

San Rafael
Gary Phillips

Sausalito
Susan Cleveland-Knowles

Tiburon
Alice Fredericks

County of Marin
Damon Connolly
Katie Rice
Kathrin Sears
Dennis Rodoni
Judy Arnold

June 27, 2019

Pat Randolph, Foreperson
Marin County Grand Jury
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 275
San Rafael, CA 94903

Subject: Response to Grand Jury Report "Wildfire Preparedness- A New Approach"

Dear Ms. Randolph:

The Transportation Authority of Marin Board of Commissioners considered the report issued by the Civil Grand Jury entitled "Wildfire Preparedness- A New Approach" at its regularly scheduled meeting of June 27, 2019. The Board appreciated the efforts of the Grand Jury and the opportunity to respond to their recommendations. Attached please find the Board's response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D. Steinhauser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'D' being particularly large and stylized.

Dianne Steinhauser
Executive Director
Transportation Authority of Marin

Attachment: Response to Grand Jury Report

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: Wildfire Preparedness – A New Approach

Report Date: April 18, 2019

Agenda Date: June 27, 2019

Response by: Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM)

RECOMMENDATIONS

R9. Evacuations – Research, develop, and publish plans for the mass movement of populations along designated evacuation routes.

Response: R9. The devastating wildfires of the past few years have been a wakeup call that disaster preparedness is a topic that must be addressed. The April 18 Grand Jury Report estimates where deficiencies exist and the desired outcome for the residents and visitors in Marin County. The report also points out difficulties associated with the large number of public agencies involved.

The Marin County Office of Emergency Services is responsible for countywide emergency planning. The Marin County Office of Emergency Services (OES) provides the backbone operations and planning for the Marin Emergency Operations Center, EOC, before, during, and after an emergency. The mission of the OES is to lead efforts to prepare for, mitigate, respond to, and recover from disasters. The EOC consists of the staffing deemed necessary to fully respond to a declared emergency.

When fully activated, the Marin County EOC consists of designated personnel skilled in emergency management, public safety, fire, public works, transportation, and human services, at a minimum. The Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) was formed under PUC Code Division 19, Section 18000 et seq. and evacuation planning is not part of TAM's statutory roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, neither TAM's 2010 voter-approved \$10 vehicle registration fee program or the recent November 2018 voter approved ½ cent transportation sales tax plan includes emergency evacuation planning as a mission of TAM.

R10. Evacuations – Give the highest priority to mitigating known choke points and to maximizing the capacity of existing evacuation routes.

Response: R10. The geography of Marin makes it difficult to move large numbers of vehicles at the same time. Some residences are built in valleys and on hillsides with narrow roads and limited access points. Everyday traffic around schools is a perfect example of the restricted capacity of local roadways; with even limited traffic increases associated with school drop-off the roads became almost gridlocked.

The responsibility for local roads lies with the local cities/towns and the county. TAM works closely with all public work agencies throughout the County and helps in funding capital improvement projects. Major points of congestion are constantly being improved through these capital improvement projects. Vehicle capacity is one of many elements that are involved in capital improvements. Multi-modal access and safety are also important elements of capital projects and can create improved capacity for non-vehicular travel.

R11. Evacuations – Incorporate and prioritize plans for mass evacuations in all pending and future traffic/road projects along major escape routes.

Response: R11. TAM has worked closely with local agencies to help implement various programs such as complete streets and improved disability access. Jurisdictions receiving funding from TAM for local and major road improvements are required to consider safety and access improvements for all users of the roadway, and requirements for evacuation access could also be considered by the facility owners.

Local Streets and Road funding flowing through the State of California is sent directly to the jurisdictions and requirements associated with those funds are initiated by the State of California.

TAM is a funding agency and does not set local policy. The local jurisdiction is responsible for determining the scope, cost and schedule of a project and determining the overall budget. Many projects do not have the space, public support or budget to add large capacity increasing features to local roadways.

R14. Evacuations – The Transportation Authority of Marin must convene all stakeholders no later than December 31, 2019, to address congestion on escape routes in an evacuation.

Response: R14. As was pointed out in the April 18 report, various jurisdictions have adopted a range of policies and ordinances to deal with wildfire preparedness. The Marin County Office of Emergency Services is leading efforts on coordination. TAM does not own any road assets or facilities and does not have policing authority in the case of an emergency. Our role is limited to securing and distributing funds to the local agencies that do own the facilities and are knowledgeable as to the best course of action for roadway improvements.

The transportation sales tax expenditure plan, recently approved by the voters in November of 2018, very clearly defined the role of TAM and how the residents of Marin felt their tax monies should be spent. Although very important to the county as a whole, wildfire prevention and evacuation preparedness are not defined elements of the expenditure plan. Therefore, planning for this stakeholder meeting (if held) should not be initiated by TAM.