

Responses to Findings and Recommendations
Marin County Civil Grand Jury
"Climate Change: How Will Marin Adapt?"

RESPONSES TO GRAND JURY REPORT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

REPORT TITLE: "Climate Change: How Will Marin Adapt?"
REPORT DATE: September 11, 2020
RESPONSE BY: City of Belvedere

GRAND JURY FINDINGS

We agree with the findings numbered: F1, F2, F3, and F5
We partially disagree with the findings numbered: F4 and F7

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

Support implementation of recommendations R1 and R4
Will partially implement recommendation R6

Date: 11-23-20

Signed: Nancy Kemnitzer
Nancy Kemnitzer, Mayor

FINDINGS

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

RESPONSE: Agree. Marin's jurisdictions have worked together to address the unique challenges here of adapting to climate change impacts, as well as to encourage mitigation, such as reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Belvedere is pleased to have exceeded its reduction targets and will continue mitigation efforts. The City government is encouraging the use of electric vehicles by installing charging stations at City Hall and the City's Corporation Yard (20/21 Capital Budget). As an island community with limited ingress and egress, Belvedere is particularly susceptible to climate change impacts on sea levels and storm intensity. We will continue to work across jurisdictions to intensify mitigation efforts.

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 are particularly attuned to this issue in Belvedere, where both key access roads to and from large sections of the city are situated atop levees. These levees are susceptible to a number of threats, including seismic impacts and sea level rise. Utility systems are embedded into these levees as well. The City has, for the past several years, been developing an adaptation plan for improving the resiliency of these key infrastructural components, which would also enhance protections for private property.

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. The vulnerability assessments are an essential tool in determining what is most vulnerable to sea level rise, and in informing adaptation planning.

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. Partially disagree. Climate change impacts virtually everything. It would be nearly impossible for adaptation efforts in Marin County to address all of the issues impacted by a warming planet. That said, the Grand Jury makes a valuable contribution in pointing out linkages between climate change and social equity and public and environmental health impacts. These linkages manifest in Marin and are not unknown or underappreciated by planners and others working on mitigation and adaptation strategies. Each of these areas of impact have been discussed at considerable length by BayWAVE and other collaboratives that

are working on Marin climate-related issues. There is no question that much more needs to be done (see response to F5).

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. Adaptation is very expensive and, without largescale state and federal funding to supplement local efforts, smaller jurisdictions may simply not be in a position to design and implement adaptation projects/programs in the timeframe necessary for addressing the imposing climate challenge. An undertaking of the scale that will be necessary to create resiliency in Marin County and its jurisdictions is simply not feasible if funded primarily through grants. The City appreciates the Grand Jury's emphasis on multi-jurisdictional approaches to funding.

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

RESPONSE. Partially disagree. It is clear that climate change is a challenge that knows no boundaries; it is equally clear that jurisdictions must work together to develop mitigation and adaptation strategies. As mentioned in the response to Finding 5, a multi-jurisdictional approach to funding will be needed in order to accomplish the significant level of change that is required to address this challenge. Belvedere has participated in several countywide efforts that focus on various aspects of meeting this multi-faceted climate challenge. BayWAVE, the Marin Climate & Energy Partnership, Drawdown Marin, and other countywide efforts are valuable in part because they have demonstrated the effectiveness of working together. More needs to be done in this regard, and Belvedere supports efforts to augment multi-jurisdictional collaboration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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. Support Implementation. This recommendation is most directly addressed to the Board of Supervisors as it recommends action on the part of the County. Belvedere is involved in BayWAVE, the Marin Climate & Energy Partnership and Drawdown Marin. The City also works with its most immediate neighbor, Tiburon, on the issue of how effectively to adapt to the sea level rise challenge. In our view, the most pressing immediate need is for funding to

implement adaptation projects. This need would best be addressed through a multi-jurisdiction approach that involves other entities within Marin County as well as the State and Federal governments.

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 across the county.

RESPONSE. Support Implementation. The Marin Climate & Energy Partnership (MCEP) is a valuable partner in addressing issues related to climate change. To the extent feasible in these challenging budgetary times, it would be useful to broaden the mission and level of activity for organizations that can make an appreciable difference in helping cities, towns and the county in our efforts to address challenges related to climate change. To reiterate, attention needs to be given to funding strategies and sources, as nearly all adaptation measures are expensive to implement. Given the urgency and magnitude of the challenge presented by climate change, planning must be developed alongside of the financial strategies that will be needed to implement plans.

R6. 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. Implement Partially. Belvedere has a very small staff team; the City therefore does not have a full-time sustainability coordinator. Sustainability efforts are managed by the Director of Planning and Building as well as the Director of Public Works and coordinated through the City's executive management team. The City Manager is very involved in the Seawall adaptation project. A Committee has been formed by the City Council to advise on our most pressing adaptation program, which includes seawall/levee enhancement, utility resiliency and the continued assurance of adequate ingress/egress especially for emergency responders. It may be most effective to continue this approach; however, the City will consider whether to augment volunteer involvement through a broadening of the scope of the current committee or by forming a new committee.