

Revised

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: Recycling by the Marin County Government: Walking the Talk
Report Date: February 27, 2014
Response by: Marin County Board of Supervisors

FINDINGS

- We agree with the findings numbered: F1, F2, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9, F10, F13, F14, F15.
- We partially disagree with the findings numbered: F3, F11, F12.
- Recommendations numbered **R1, R2, R3, and R4** require further analysis. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of the grand jury report.
- Recommendations numbered **R5 and R7** have been implemented.
- Recommendation numbered **R6** will not be implemented.

Date: 5/13/14 Signed: Kate Sears

Number of pages attached 6

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Marin County Board of Supervisors
Response to Findings and Recommendations from the Grand Jury Report
"Recycling by the Marin County Government: Walking the Talk" –
February 27, 2014

FINDINGS

STATEMENT REGARDING FINDINGS: The County Board of Supervisors, through the Department of Public Works, Marin County Parks, and the Sheriff's Department provided the following response:

- F1. The Marin County Government Board of Supervisors and Administration do not appear to have written plans or policies on recycling, composting and reuse in County owned and occupied facilities. This results in less than optimal behavior and performance with respect to these activities.**

Response: Agree.

- F2. A recycling, composting, and reuse plan with meaningful and measurable goals and the creation and dissemination of internal policies regarding recycling, composting and reuse could improve the County's diversion rate.**

Response: Agree.

- F3. County employees do not perceive clear direction or an imperative from leadership on the importance of recycling, composting, and reuse.**

Response: Partially disagree. While employees could benefit from a refresher on how to reduce waste and increase recycling, the Board of Supervisors Zero Waste Resolution and other policy actions has helped to convey their full support of reducing waste and greater recycling.

- F4. Recycling practices are inconsistent across County departments and facilities.**

Response: Agree.

- F5. Educating employees and visitors on how, why and where to recycle, compost, and reuse, while making it easier for everyone to**

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accomplish these activities, would improve the County government's diversion rate.

Response: Agree.

- F6. The Grand Jury estimates that the actual diversion rate for the Civic Center building in 2012 was approximately 45 percent.**

Response: Agree. We will implement many of the recommendations made by the Grand Jury to increase our rate and will monitor our performance and consider additional investments and changes in practices to increase our overall diversion rate.

- F7. The Marin County government could do a better job recycling the waste generated in the Marin County Civic Center and its immediate grounds.**

Response: Agree.

- F8. The system for recycling paper in the Civic Center and County Jail is well established and, while there is room for improvement, it is a good example of successful recycling implementation.**

Response: Agree.

- F9. The County may have an opportunity to reduce waste by moving to business processes that use no paper or less paper than current processes.**

Response: Agree.

- F10. Prior to this investigation, the County Department of Public Works placed recyclable materials in closed plastic bags into the 25-yard debris box. These bags then went to the landfill and were not recycled. This includes materials placed in cafeteria bins labeled for recyclables. Recyclables were being sent to the landfill due to a misunderstanding of the policies of Marin Sanitary Service. The Department of Public Works made two attempts to remedy this during the Grand Jury's investigation; but due to further misunderstanding, there is still considerable room for improvement.**

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Response: Agree. The County is working with Marin Sanitary Service to develop a consistent method to provide better sorting capability at the resource recovery center.

- F11. It is not easy for employees of the Civic Center to recycle glass, aluminum, and plastic. Offices and department generally do not have receptacles for these recyclables; and if they do, it is an employee-driven initiative and not a service provided by the janitorial staff.**

Response: Partially disagree. Recyclable glass, aluminum and plastic recycling bins are labeled and located in the Civic Center hallways no further from offices than most restrooms. It is relatively easy for employees to recycle these materials.

- F12. It is not easy for visitors to the Civic Center to recycle as available recycling receptacles are sparsely placed, difficult to see from even a short distance, and not labeled clearly and effectively.**

Response: Partially disagree. Recyclable glass, aluminum and plastic recycling bins are labeled and located in the Civic Center hallways generally near public restrooms.

- F13. The Civic Center could reduce food waste going to the landfill by providing pre-consumer food waste to the Marin Sanitary Service Food-to-Energy Program.**

Response: Agree. This is being explored if space, rodent control, and sanitary health issues can be addressed in concert with cooperation from the private operator of the cafeteria.

- F14. Marin County Parks could do a better job ensuring that landscaping waste put in the 18-yard debris box gets composted and not taken to the landfill. They could dump the landscaping waste out of the bags and reuse the bags.**

Response: Agree. However, it is worth noting that any work project involving significant amounts of landscape waste are loaded into County truck and transported directly to the green waste area of the Marin Sanitary facility. The majority of the bags that are placed in the 18 yard

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dumpster located on the campus grounds are collected from the waste receptacles placed throughout the grounds of the Civic Center Campus including the Lagoon Park and the fairgrounds. The bags typically include trash and other non-recyclable materials. Additionally, according to Marin Sanitary staff, all material collected in the County's general 18 yard dumpster was sorted by the Marin Sanitary staff as part of the "disassembly line" at the landfill facility, whether bagged or not. Parks staff has recently requested a green waste dumpster be placed in the same area as the general waste dumpster on the Civic Center grounds. This will allow immediate and direct separation of "landscaping waste" from general refuse collected at the campus.

- F15. The Civic Center cafeteria would be more effective in promoting reuse if they advertised in the cafeteria and elsewhere that there is a deep discount on coffee and tea with a reusable cup.**

Response: Agree.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2012-2013 Marin County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

- R1. The Marin County Board of Supervisors develop, adopt, and publish a written plan for recycling, composting, and reuse in all County government offices and facilities, include the Marin County Jail, and on County property. The plan should include measurable performance metrics and goals for these metrics and be updated every two years.**

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis, but DPW staff is already working on a plan for the Civic Center facility to implement and explore a number of recommendations in the Grand Jury Report, including investigating a safe method to leave bagged material open in the dumpster for easier recycling, adding cafeteria food scraps to the Foodwaste-to-Energy Program, adding Civic Center hallway access to paper recycling, and developing performance metrics for the Civic Center facility.

- R2. The Board of Supervisors create and publish an annual assessment of performance against goal as identified in R1 (above) to compare actual recycling, composting, and reuse performance with goal performance for each performance metric.**

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Response: This recommendation requires further analysis. Staff will develop performance metrics for the Civic Center that reflect current practices and compare them to actual outcomes once we have implemented some of the recommendations of this report.

- R3. The Board of Supervisors request an annual waste characterization study and annual diversion rate statistics based on the current waste characterization study for each facility owned or occupied by the County Government with over 50 employees on the site.**

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis. Given that Civic Center represents by far the biggest impact of County operations, we are proposing to start with a study of the Civic Center.

- R4. The Marin County Government increase recycling and reuse at the Civic Center by adopting the following:**

- a. **Install glass/plastic/aluminum recycling bins in offices to be emptied by the janitorial staff into Marin Sanitary Service recycling carts.**
- b. **Dispose of cafeteria recyclables in the Marin Sanitary Service recycling carts at the custodial loading dock; do not put them in bags in the 25-yard debris box.**
- c. **Add recycling carts at custodial loading dock or have them picked up more often as need to handle additional volume.**
- d. **Work with the Frank Lloyd Wright Civic Center Conservancy to install additional recycling bins and improved signage in public areas. Discontinue separation of glass, plastic, and aluminum, and provide paper recycling in the hallways for visitors.**
- e. **Better educate employees and visitors as to how, what, and where to recycle.**
- f. **Encourage county employees to recycle more effectively through improved communication.**
- g. **Encourage county employees to use reusable coffee and tea cups, advertise discount offered by the cafeteria.**
- h. **Participate in Marin Sanitary Service's Food-to-Energy program.**
- i. **Ensure that all cardboard and paper is recycled.**
- j. **Dump landscape waste out of the plastic bags when it is put in to the 18-yard debris box. Reuse plastic bags.**

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis. The Grand Jury report has helped identify the need to improve recycling at the Civic Center and Jail. Staff will develop a plan to implement improvements at

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Civic Center and report back to the Board of Supervisors concerning the impact of these expanded efforts. Zero waste grants are available for one-time investments, but ongoing funding may be needed to substantially improve our performance metrics.

R5. The Main County Jail continue to recycle steel cans and improve paper cardboard recycling.

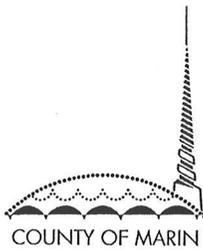
Response: This recommendation has been implemented. Maintenance staff in the Marin County Jail Facility has been trained and are currently removing all paper recyclables from previously sealed large plastic bags.

R6. The Marin County Jail work to implement a milk dispensing system to reduce or eliminate the use of single serving milk cartons.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented. The Marin County Sheriff Dietitian and Jail Kitchen Manager stated that no other county jail in the State of California serves milk in bulk quantities. The hazards of doing so involve the sanitary and chilling challenges of the serving dispensers, who and how to dispense the milk, and the increase risk of contraband transportation in the serving dispensers.

R7. The Marin County Jail work with Marin Sanitary to develop a system to compose post-consumer food waste from the jail.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. Administrative staff at the Marin County Jail has met with staff from the Marin Sanitary Service on three separate occasions and have implemented a trial project to recycle food waste in one of the pods. Initially, the challenges and concerns centered on the logistics of collecting and sorting the waste. Plans are to secure more receptacles to implement this throughout the jail by July 1, 2014.



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May 13, 2014

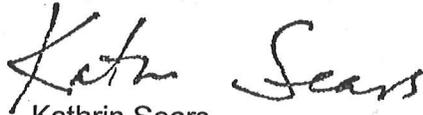
Honorable Faye D'Opal
Presiding Judge
Marin County Superior Court
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Judge D'Opal:

The Marin County Board of Supervisors' response to the 2013-2014 Civil Grand Jury Report "Recycling by the Marin County Government: Walking the Talk" (February 27, 2014) is attached. The attached document responds to all the requests for responses from the Board of Supervisors.

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Respectfully submitted,


Kathrin Sears
President, Board of Supervisors

C: Marin County Civil Grand Jury ✓