



City of Larkspur

400 Magnolia Avenue, Larkspur, California 94939

Telephone: (415) 927-5110 Fax: (415) 927-5022

Website: www.cityoflarkspur.org

September 7, 2022

Pat Shepherd, Foreperson
Marin County Civil Grand Jury
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 275
San Rafael, CA 94903

Foreperson Shepherd:

At its regular meeting on September 7, 2022, the City Council reviewed the report "Affordable Housing: Time for Collaboration in Marin", dated June 24, 2022. The report calls for a response from the City of Larkspur to findings 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9, F10) and recommendation 1 (R1).

Please see the attached for the response from the City.

Should the members of the Grand Jury require any additional information, please contact City Manager Dan Schwarz at 415-927-5110 or dschwarz@cityoflarkspur.org.

Dan Hillmer
Mayor, City of Larkspur

DocuSigned by:

C3020396B5F7450...

Signature

09/07/2022

Date

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FORM

Report Title: "AFFORDABLE HOUSING: TIME FOR COLLABORATION IN MARIN"

Report Date: June 24, 2022

Agenda Date: September 7, 2022

Response by: Dan Hillmer

Title: Mayor, City of Larkspur

FINDINGS:

- We agree with the findings numbered F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F9, F10
- We disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered F8

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Recommendation numbered R1 will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

F1. Marin County lacks sufficient affordable and workforce housing.

Response: Agree

F2. Increasingly, individuals who work in Marin County cannot afford to live in the county, many of whom must commute from outside the county.

Response: Agree

F3. Recent California laws provide new incentives for local governments to collaborate in developing affordable housing.

Response: Agree

F4. The Regional Housing Needs Allocation allotments are widely viewed as unachievable for the county and many Marin municipalities.

Response: Agree

The City supports using the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) as a means of identifying sites for housing, but the current and upcoming allocation greatly increases the amount of housing required for jurisdictions across the County to meet (Larkspur is required to plan for an additional 979 units in next Housing Element Update). Whether this amount of housing can be built within the timeframe required will depend on many factors that are outside of City control.

F5. Failure to achieve Regional Housing Needs Allocation allotments will trigger loss of local control over housing development.

Response: Agree

F6. There is new and increasing support and willingness to cooperate among elected officials for building affordable housing in Marin.

Response: Agree

F7. A countywide approach to housing development would enhance Marin's ability to meet affordable and workforce housing needs.

Response: Agree

Marin County and its municipalities collaborates and coordinates housing programs with the towns and cities in a number of areas, as discussed further in the response to Recommendation R1 below.

F8. Large affordable housing developments in Marin require subsidies to be financially feasible.

Response: Partially Disagree

Regardless of size, all affordable housing developments generally require subsidies of some kind.

F9. Organizations with expertise and access to subsidies and other funding sources are successfully building new affordable and workforce housing developments in Marin.

Response: Agree

F10. A countywide approach to housing development would enhance Marin's ability to secure funding for affordable and workforce housing.

Response: Agree

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES

R1. No later than December 31, 2022, the Marin County Board of Supervisors and Marin's city and town councils should jointly create a regional authority, or empower an existing authority such as the Transportation Authority of Marin, to coordinate affordable and workforce housing policy on a countywide basis.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable. The City agrees that more collaboration on housing policy and funding would be beneficial and will likely result in more affordable housing in our communities. In fact, much work has been done to date, as described below, and additional opportunities are being developed. The City remains open to additional collaboration and/or more formal arrangements in the future as appropriate.

However, forming a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with 12 jurisdictions would take a significant investment of time, funding and energy that would likely impair current housing efforts and requires willing partners. Doing so by December 31, 2022 is not a realistic timeline, particularly given that each Marin jurisdiction is currently striving to meet statutory deadlines to submit their housing element by January 31, 2023.

Below is a brief summary of existing collaboration for strengthening interjurisdictional coordination and planning around affordable and workforce housing:

Existing Collaboration

Cities and towns have long collaborated with each other and the County on housing matters, beginning in 2008 with the development of the countywide Housing Element Workbook, which provided a shared template, background information and model programs and policies for development of the 2009 Housing Element. This effort resulted in all Marin municipalities receiving certified housing elements, which in turn made more housing funds available.

In 2019, County staff reconvened a countywide working group of Planning Directors and planning staff to encourage interjurisdictional collaboration on housing issues and solutions, with a specific focus on responding to new state legislation to streamline housing developments. The working group established common goals and coordinated on housing legislation, planning, production, and preservation of existing affordability. The working group meets once monthly and has evolved from briefings and discussions regarding state housing legislation into collaboration on projects to facilitate the development of more housing in Marin County. The working group applied jointly for SB2 planning grants in the summer and fall of 2019 and has started to collaborate on these grant projects, including Objective Design and Development Standards, an ADU Workbook and Website, and inclusionary housing program updates. The group received funds from ABAG to work collaboratively on shared Housing Element deliverables including translation dollars, Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing products, visualizations, and a countywide website.

Collaboration Identified in Larkspur Housing Element

Additionally, a number of collaborative goals are outlined in the City of Larkspur's Housing Element. Major programs listed in the Housing Element Policies and Implementation Program enumerated below.

H1.4 Inter-Jurisdictional Strategic Action Plan for Housing. The City will coordinate housing strategies with other jurisdictions in Marin County as appropriate to meeting the City's housing needs.

H1.B Collaborate in an Inter-Jurisdictional Strategic Action Plan for Housing.

Work toward implementing, whenever possible, agreed-upon best practices, shared responsibilities and common regulations to efficiently and effectively respond to housing needs (including affordable housing, and transitional and supportive housing) within a countywide framework.

H9.4 Housing for the Homeless.

Recognizing the lack of resources to set up completely separate systems of care for different groups of people, including homeless-specific services for the homeless or people "at risk" of becoming homeless, the City will work with other jurisdictions, as appropriate, to develop a fully integrated approach for the broader low-income population.

Implementing Programs

H9.F Support Countywide Programs.

The City will support countywide programs that provide for a continuum of care for the homeless including emergency shelter, transitional housing, supportive housing and permanent housing.

H10.B Engage in Countywide Efforts to Address Homeless Needs.

Actively engage with other jurisdictions in Marin to provide additional housing and other options for the homeless, supporting and implementing Continuum of Care actions in response to the needs of homeless families and individuals. Participate and allocate funds, as appropriate, for County and non-profit programs providing emergency shelter and related counseling services.