

Alexis Fineman  
Mayor

Steve Burdo  
Vice Mayor

Brian Colbert  
Council Member

Ford Greene  
Council Member

Eileen Burke  
Council Member



September 20, 2022

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

Dear Foreperson Shepherd:

At its regular meeting on September 13, 2022, the San Anselmo Town Council reviewed the report "Affordable Housing: Time for Collaboration in Marin", dated June 24, 2022. Please see the enclosed response from the Town.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 415-285-4636 or by email at [hscoble@townofsananselmo.org](mailto:hscoble@townofsananselmo.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Heidi Scoble", is written over a horizontal line.

Heidi Scoble, AICP  
Planning Director

Enclosure



## RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**REPORT TITLE:** Affordable Housing: Time for a Collaborative Approach

**REPORT DATE:** June 24, 2022

**RESPONSE BY:** Town of San Anselmo Town Council

### FINDINGS:

- We agree with the findings numbered: F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, FG, F7, F9, and F10
- We disagree *partially* with the findings numbered: F8

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation **R1** will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable. (Please see attached explanation.)

Date: 9/14/2022

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

DocuSigned by:  
  
485A319D18F7471

Alexis Fineman, Mayor  
Town of San Anselmo

**TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT**  
**AFFORDABLE HOUSING: TIME FOR COLLABORATION IN MARIN**

**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<sup>1</sup> 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 Town of San Anselmo supports the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) as a means of identifying sites for housing, but the most current allocation of 833 units for the 2023-2031 planning period represents an increase in almost 785% above the 106 units that were allocated for the most recent planning period (2015-2023). Whether this amount of housing can be built within the eight-year timeframe will depend on many factors that are outside the Town's control, such as owner interest, availability of land and capacity, financing, and other market forces.

***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.

The Town of San Anselmo collaborates and coordinates housing programs with the County and other Marin municipalities and agencies in several 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.

All affordable housing developments require subsidies regardless of size. In fact, smaller developments are more expensive, more difficult to fund, and cost more per unit than larger developments.

***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.

The Town of San Anselmo collaborates and coordinates housing programs with the County and other Marin municipalities and agencies in several areas as discussed further in the response to Recommendation R1 below.

**RECOMMENDATION AND RESPONSE**

***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.***

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

The Town of San Anselmo 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 Town of San Anselmo remains open to additional collaboration and/or more formal arrangements in the future. 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 updated Housing Elements by January 31, 2023.

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

#### Existing collaboration

The Town of San Anselmo participated in the Countywide housing collaboration, beginning in 2008 with the County's 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, the Town of San Anselmo began participation in 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 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.

#### Future collaboration

- 1. *Commit to collaboration:*** The County of Marin has taken on a leadership role, as evidenced in the County's draft 2023-2031 Housing Element which includes a proposed new program that would *"Collaborate with Marin County, cities and towns to address regional planning and housing issues"*. The Town of San Anselmo is looking forward to continuing to participate in this regional collaboration led by the County of Marin.
- 2. *Implementation of Housing Element programs:*** During implementation of the 2023-2031 Housing Element, the County, cities and towns will collaborate on program implementation, especially those related to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing and tenant protections. This collaboration has already begun and will include:
  - *Model ordinances:* developing model ordinances to be considered by the Board of Supervisors and City/Town Councils.
  - *Outreach and community engagement:* Conducting shared outreach and community engagement.

- 3. *Housing Element Collaboration:*** The County is planning to develop a deeper and more formalized collaboration with cities and towns on the Housing Element in the future. The Town of San Anselmo is looking forward to the County's leadership on this valuable endeavor.
- 4. *Funding collaboration:*** explore ways to more effectively collaborate on shared funding for affordable housing. This could include:
  - *Inclusionary policies:* Developing more consistent policies to encourage and facilitate more affordable housing as part of new market rate developments and increase funding for affordable housing.
  - *Regional housing trust fund:* Consider the establishment of a regional housing trust fund which would make state applications more competitive and lower the administrative burden for cities and towns.
  - *The Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA):* Actively participate and support the efforts of BAHFA to raise funds to help address affordable housing and housing stability.
- 5. *Shared Staffing:*** With the exceptions noted above, the County and Marin municipalities address most housing issues individually, and often with limited staff and financial resources. Programs and policies in the Housing Element require concrete goals and deliverables which will be difficult for smaller jurisdictions to achieve with all of the other obligations associated with the daily services provided and the enforcement of the respective land use regulations. Shared staffing initiatives would encourage coordination and working together to tackle the housing crisis on a larger scale through shared housing staff to provide expertise and local knowledge to support affordable housing developers. This would also result in consistency throughout the county and adoption of best practices.