



CITY OF SAUSALITO

July 30, 2024

The Honorable Judge Mark Talamantes
Marin County Superior Court
Post Office Box 4988
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

Rod Kerr, Foreperson
Marin County Civil Grand Jury
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room #275

Dear Honorable Judge Talamantes and Foreperson Kerr,

At its special meeting on July 30, 2024, the City Council of the City of Sausalito reviewed the report "Sea Level Rise: The Water is Upon Us We Cannot Run - We Cannot Hide", dated May 31, 2024. The report requests a response from the City of Sausalito for findings F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, and recommendations R1, R2, R3.

Please see the attached response from the City.

If members of the Grand Jury require any additional information, please contact City Manager Chris Zapata at (415) 289-4100 or czapata@sausalito.gov.

Sincerely,

Ian Patrick Sobieski
[Ian Patrick Sobieski \(Aug 1, 2024 15:48 PDT\)](#)

Ian Patrick Sobieski, Mayor
City of Sausalito

Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations

Report Title: Sea Level Rise: The Water is Upon Us We Cannot Run - We Cannot Hide
Report Date: May 31, 2024
Response By: City of Sausalito

Sea Level Rise Initiatives in Marin’s Bayside Communities

- Further detail on the City of Sausalito’s Shoreline Adaptation Plan and correction of statements made in the Civil Grand Jury Report.

Grand Jury Findings

- We disagree with the Civil Grand Jury findings numbered: F1, F2, F3;
- We partially agree with the fundings numbered: F4, F5, F6.

Grand Jury Recommendations

- Recommendations numbered R1, R2, and R3 suggest action by the Marin County Board of Supervisors and the City of Sausalito has no authority to direct the County Board of Supervisors to take any action.

Date: 08/01/2024

Signed: *Ian Patrick Sobieski*
Ian Patrick Sobieski (Aug 1, 2024 15:48 PDT)

Ian Patrick Sobieski, Mayor
City of Sausalito

Sea Level Rise Initiatives in Marin's Bayside Communities

The City of Sausalito would like to provide further information on our sea level rise adaptation measures to date which were not included in the Civil Grand Jury Report.

As stated in the Marin Civil Grand Jury Report, in 2021 the City of Sausalito established a Sea Level Rise Task Force. To help expedite the City of Sausalito's climate change adaptation goals outlined in our General Plan and Climate Adaptation Plan, in 2022 the City approved the hiring of a Resiliency and Sustainability Manager. In March, 2023 this manager was brought on to City staff. The Resiliency and Sustainability Manager works closely with the Sea Level Rise Task Force and the Sustainability Commission.

The Resiliency and Sustainability Manager is currently leading the City's Shoreline Adaptation planning effort which began in early 2024 and is scheduled to be completed in late 2025. Because the Shoreline Adaptation Plan has not been completed yet, the City has not "adopted" the plan as the Civil Grand Jury Report states.

The Shoreline Adaptation Plan is informed by the County BayWAVE study and will help us create a community-informed prioritization framework and with identified near-term, medium-term and long-term adaptation priorities along the shoreline. Embedded in the planning process and development, is an equitable, community-informed approach. Because sea level rise knows no boundaries, the City approached the County at plan inception about including the neighboring houseboat communities on unincorporated Marin County land in our plan. The County agreed to provide in-kind support services to assist this portion of the plan.

The City anticipates that this plan will meet SB 272 requirements and will be working with the Bay Conservation and Development Commission as they refine Senate Bill requirements. Given the plan is anticipated to be finished by late 2025, the City will fall well within the 2034 plan deadline.

To date, the following activities have occurred related to the Shoreline Adaptation Plan:

- **December 2023** – Council approval of sea level rise adaptation technical and community engagement services.
- **January 2024** – Project kick-off.
- **February – April 2024** – Focus group meetings with selected stakeholder groups.
- **May 2024** – Consultant shoreline walk and information session.
- **Summer 2024** – Public outreach begins.

More information on the Sausalito Shoreline Adaptation Plan, updates, and ways to get involved can be found here: <https://www.sausalito.gov/city-government/hot-topics/sea-level-rise/shoreline-adaptation>.

Response to Grand Jury Findings

F1. A comprehensive countywide agency is necessary to effectively address the impacts of sea level rise in Marin County.

Response: Disagree. The City of Sausalito acknowledges that the County of Marin is currently in the process of completing a *Marin Sea Level Rise Adaptation Organizational Structure and Decision Making Process* to assess the need “for a comprehensive strategy for effective planning and project implementation across disciplines and jurisdictions”¹. The City of Sausalito has participated in initial stakeholder meetings to support this effort and will continue to do so until the effort has been completed. The City of Sausalito recommends awaiting the conclusion and recommendations of the *Marin Sea Level Rise Adaptation Organizational Structure and Decision Making Process* before further recommendations are made.

F2. To be effective, a countywide agency created to address sea level rise in Marin County should include the County of Marin, all cities and towns, and appropriate special districts in Marin County as funding participants.

Response: Disagree. The City of Sausalito acknowledges that the County of Marin is currently in the process of completing a *Marin Sea Level Rise Adaptation Organizational Structure and Decision Making Process* to assess the need “for a comprehensive strategy for effective planning and project implementation across disciplines and jurisdictions”¹. The City of Sausalito hopes that funding will be addressed through recommendations and conclusions of this study. The City of Sausalito recommends awaiting the conclusion and recommendations of the *Marin Sea Level Rise Adaptation Organizational Structure and Decision Making Process* before further recommendations are made.

F3. The complete failure to create and implement effective countywide sea level rise adaptation projects in Marin County will result in significant damages and losses to commercial and residential properties as well as infrastructure, both public and private.

Response: Disagree. At this point, it is unclear failure to form a countywide agency to implement sea level rise adaptation projects in Marin County would result in significant damages and losses to commercial, residential properties and infrastructure both public and private. However, we know that failure to act at any level will result in an estimated \$230 billion in costs related to damages and losses—more than double, compared to adaptation costs (\$110 billion) according to the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission.

F4. The 2034 deadline imposed by Sections 30985-30985.8 of the California Public Resources Code for each California county to submit its official sea level rise mitigation plan is “too little too late” for Marin county, and delaying action until then will expose coastal and Bay areas to unnecessary flooding risks, financial and other losses.

Response: Partially Agree. The 2017 Bay Waterfront Adaptation and Vulnerability Evaluation (BayWAVE) points out that in just fifteen years sea level rise may threaten and damage shoreline buildings, roads and utility systems, impacting all of Marin. BayWAVE also finds that a one-hundred-year storm, which would rise sea waters as a

result, would render ferry facilities unusable and impede commuters from traveling across the San Francisco Bay. As a result of these findings, in 2022 the City of Sausalito sought out external funding to create a sea level rise/shoreline adaptation plan. The current plan is underway and set to be completed by the end of 2025. The City of Sausalito intends to use this plan to meet SB 272 requirements, meaning we will meet the 2034 deadline imposed by Sections 30985-30985.8 of the California Public Resources Code.

F5. Under-represented populations reside in areas that are severely vulnerable to sea level rise because they are in low-lying ground.

Response: Partially Agree. The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission indicates that low-income, at-risk communities, particularly those in low-lying areas, are exposed to high levels of disruption caused by sea level rise

F6. Sea level rise plans to be developed by a countywide entity should include adaptation strategies that directly apply to under-represented communities in low-lying areas with great exposure to sea level rise, such as the Canal District, areas of Novato, and Marin City, among others.

Response: Partially Agree. According to the California State Adaptation Planning Guide, “equitable climate adaptation planning involves identifying persons who may be most vulnerable to climate change and ensuring that planning processes, distribution of resources, and efforts to address systemic wrongs are all conducted in an equitable manner”². This should be taken into consideration in all climate and sea level rise adaptation plans in the County and jurisdictions.

Response to Grand Jury Recommendations

By March 20, 2025, the following actions should be implemented by:

- R1. The Board of Supervisors, in collaboration with Marin county cities, towns, Bel Marin Keys Community Services District and Marin Water should create a comprehensive countywide agency with authority to plan and implement adaptation efforts addressing the impacts of sea level rise in Marin County.**

Response: The recommendation suggests actions by the Marin County Board of Supervisors and the City of Sausalito has no authority to direct the County Board of Supervisors to take any action. The City of Sausalito acknowledges that the County of Marin is currently in the process of completing a *Marin Sea Level Rise Adaptation Organizational Structure and Decision Making Process* to assess the need “for a comprehensive strategy for effective planning and project implementation across disciplines and jurisdictions”¹. The City of Sausalito has participated in initial stakeholder meetings to support this effort and will continue to do so until the effort has been completed. The City of Sausalito recommends awaiting the conclusion and recommendations of the *Marin Sea Level Rise Adaptation Organizational Structure and Decision Making Process* before further action is taken.

- R2. The Board of Supervisors should actively enlist the participation and support of state and federal legislators toward the creation and funding of this comprehensive countywide agency.**

Response: The recommendation suggests actions by the Marin County Board of Supervisors and the City of Sausalito has no authority to direct the County Board of Supervisors to take any action. If the Board of Supervisors chooses to actively enlist the participation and support of state and federal legislators, the City of Sausalito would like to understand more about potential participation.

- R3. The Board of Supervisors should require the newly created countywide entity to create plans that recognize and address sea level rise exposure and the specific risks to the populations in the Canal District, Marin City, specific areas in Novato, and all low-lying geographic regions where lower income populations reside. The plan should identify and address the risks impacting those populations, which include:**

- (a) risks of becoming stranded due to inaccessible roads;**
- (b) lack of transportation if evacuations are called;**
- (c) mold that may grow inside their homes;**
- (d) exposure to infectious diseases due to contaminated standing water;**
- (e) need to relocate temporarily or permanently as a result of floods; and**
- (f) other community-specific risks identified in regional assessments.**

Response: The recommendation suggests actions by the Marin County Board of Supervisors and the City of Sausalito has no authority to direct the County Board of Supervisors to take any action, however, in general, we support plans and implementation efforts that prioritize equity according to the California Adaptation Planning Guide².

Sources:

1. <https://www.marincounty.gov/departments/executive/marin-sea-level-rise>
2. <https://resilientca.org/apg/>