Economic Vitality Roadmap

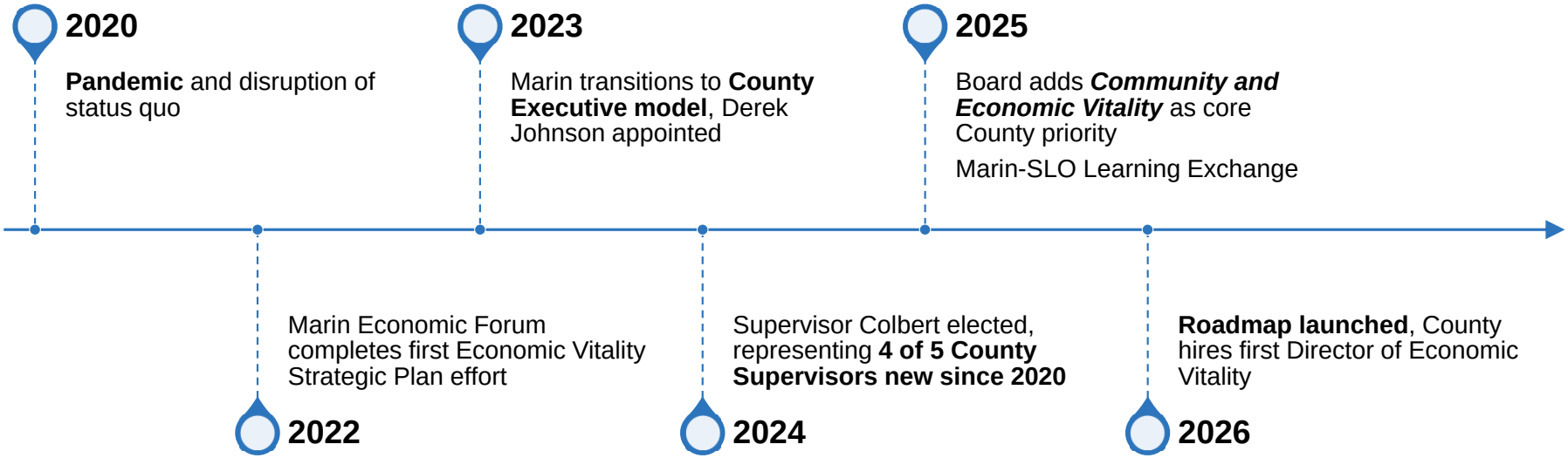
Advisory Committee Meeting #1

November 5, 2026
Marin County Civic Center

WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

Why a Roadmap, and what we are building together

How Economic Vitality became a core County goal



Marin is changing

-5.2%
Population decline the past decade

-5,000
Fewer jobs in Marin today than in January 2020

36.4%
Marin's workforce that also lives in Marin

+160%
Increase in WFH workers in Marin the past decade

- Over the next 20 years, Marin's **overall population** is projected to **decrease by 2%** while **residents 65+** are projected to **increase by 15%**
- Marin has a **highly educated workforce** that tends to **leave Marin for their work**. Workers commuting in are disproportionately low-wage workers
- Marin has the **lowest 10-year housing stock growth** in the Bay Area at **1.8%**

Takeaways from the Marin-SLO Learning Exchange

- Regional **collaboration:** Shared goals and capacity can outperform fragmented local efforts; REACH targets **15,000 jobs across six counties**
- Regional tourism **branding**: "*SLO CAL is the house, each unique community in SLO County is a room"*
- Higher ed as a partner: Cal Poly HotHouse **incubator** downtown supports start-ups. Cuesta worked with Office of Ed to expand teaching credential slots
- Focus on **"patient capital"**: long-term stewardship rather than speculation. Removing barriers to walkable, missing-middle housing
- Arts and culture = engines of **"third spaces"**, build belonging, identity and economic vibrancy. Importance of proximity: "*if it's not within eyesight, people don't see it.*"
- Civic **speaker series** 'Build a Better SLO' was intended to educate residents, business and City leaders around shared growth values



Defining Economic Vitality

Economic development

The traditional toolkit.

- Attracting and retaining businesses, growing jobs, expanding the tax base.
- Measures whether the economy gets bigger.

Economic vitality

The broader aim.

- A diverse, resilient economy that creates quality jobs and shared opportunity.
- Keeps Marin a place where people can live and thrive over the long term.
- Asks who benefits, and for how long.

Strategic plan

A comprehensive document.

- Broad goals and policies, often written to be adopted and then revisited at the next update.

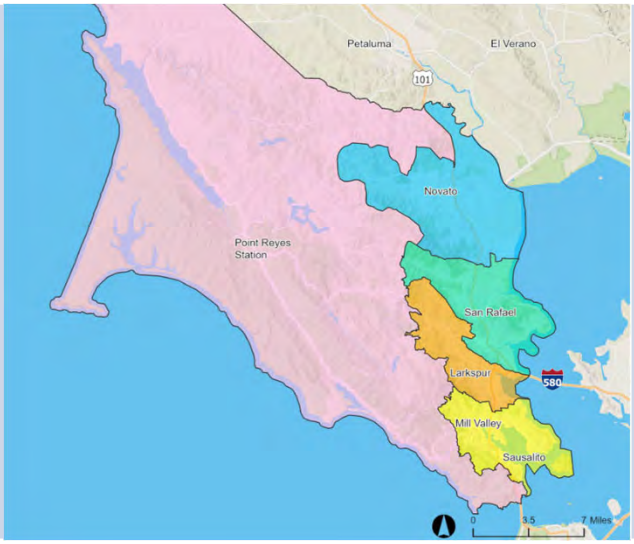
Roadmap

An action-oriented guide.

- Prioritized moves with named owners, timelines, and funding paths.
- Built to start now and adapt as conditions change.

Why develop a countywide Economic Vitality Roadmap

Marin has significant assets — but no coordinated regional economic strategy

A changing economy, population	Marin is the 4th smallest county in CA, but has distinct subregional economies	Opportunities that cross boundaries
• Post-pandemic shifts in jobs and work, including WFH • Workforce and demographic changes underway • Housing, affordability pressures • Large employers have left Marin, small businesses dominate the local economy		• Workforce • Housing • Transportation • Business growth • Education • Investment and funding • Development • Arts and culture, Marin's identity

Key questions for this Roadmap

- How can Marin better foster business growth and create more high-wage, career jobs locally that enable workers to live in Marin?
- How can Marin better **connect the talent that already lives here** to entrepreneurship, innovation, employers and economic activity here?
- What support actually matters in an economy dominated by **very small employers**?
- Which **existing industries** should we focus on retaining and growing — and where are **emerging opportunities**?
- What economic assets and opportunities are unique to West Marin, Northern Marin, San Rafael, Central Marin and Southern Marin?
- Where can government, business, education, philanthropy and community organizations **accomplish more together**?
- **What is the County's role?** Lead? Convene? Invest? Remove barriers? Advocate? Or support someone else who is better positioned to lead?

1-year timeline & Advisory Committee meetings

Fall 2026
Economic analysis begins, representative Advisory Committee formed

Nov 5
Advisory Committee launches

Early 2027
Economic Vitality 101 event and a bilingual community survey

Jan 29

Feb 26

Spring
Interim update to the Board of Supervisors.

Review implementation strategies with County staff workgroup

Exploration of 5 pilot projects (per each subregion)

May 21

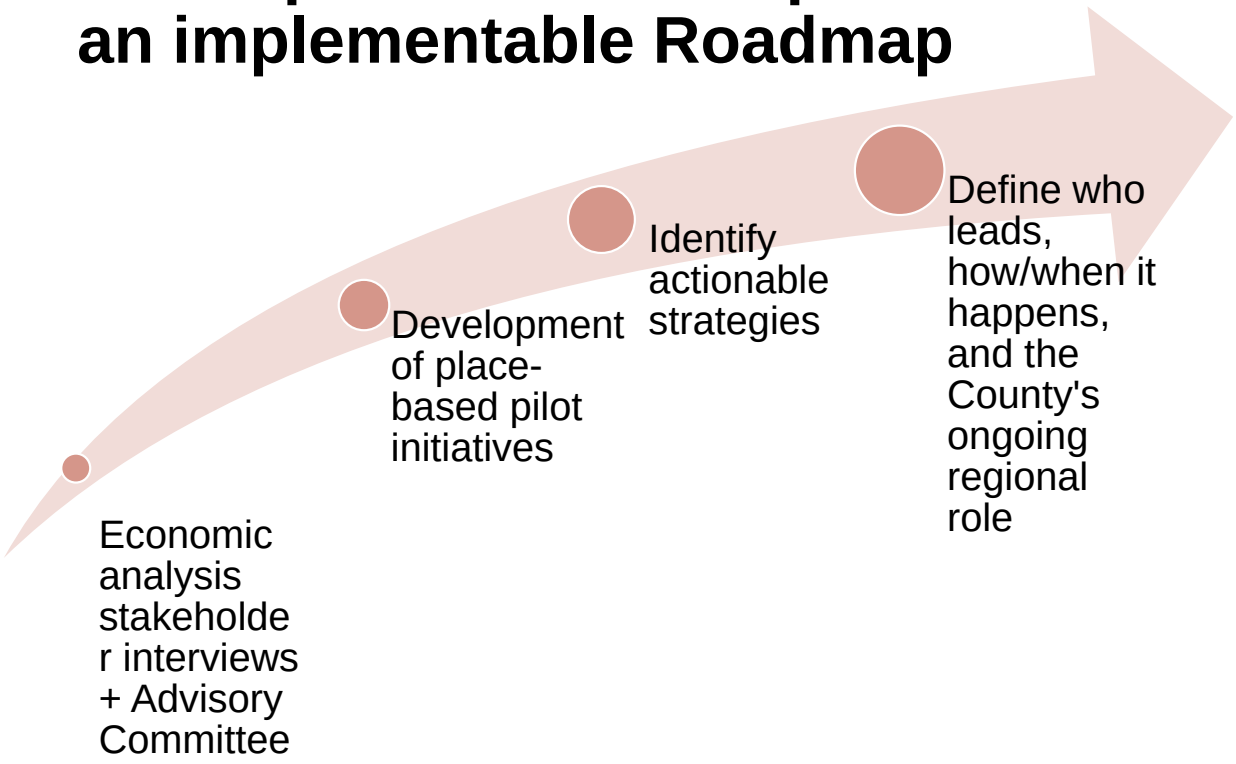
Jun 4

Late Summer 2027
Roadmap delivered to the Board for adoption.

Sep 10

Fall/Winter
stakeholder interviews + targeted outreach

From questions and input to an implementable Roadmap



Possible strategies/pilot-initiatives

- Countywide visitation planning/ strategies (with MCVB)
- New program to expand access to capital for local small businesses
- West Marin agricultural and rural-based opportunities
- Arts and music heritage anchors, including reopened Civic Center VMA and Eames Institute
- Higher education academic partnerships, including launch of incubator
- Data sharing with businesses, agencies, developers

Scope of the Roadmap

What the Roadmap can shape

- Business retention and attraction
- Economic development coordination across unincorporated areas, and Marin's 11 cities and towns
- Workforce, higher education partnerships
- Shared infrastructure and funding pursuits
- Arts and culture, placemaking, Marin identity
- Visitation planning, infrastructure
- County land and facilities
- Permitting and process alignment

What the Roadmap can't shape:

- K-12 education
- Social safety-net programs
- Broader affordability crisis

The test for every idea: can it actually be delivered?

Role of the Advisory Committee: Help Shape the Roadmap

The Advisory Committee brings perspectives from across Marin

- Nominated by Board offices, County leaders
- Members represent business, workforce, education, arts and culture, agriculture, tourism, development, technology, labor, philanthropy and community organizations
- Balanced between **countywide perspectives and subregions**

What we're asking of you...

ADVISE: Help identify the priorities the Roadmap should address and define where the County and other partners can **have the greatest impact**

TEST: Pressure-test proposed strategies and place-based initiatives: Are they needed? Realistic? Who should lead? **What would it take to implement them?**

CONNECT: Bring perspectives from your sector and community — and **connect us to people, partners,** ideas and information we should consider

REVIEW: Help ensure the final Roadmap is **focused, practical and implementable**

5-6 meetings November 2026 – September 2027

The Roadmap is one of several efforts underway. …We will build on, not duplicate them.

Related Processes

Envision Marin: Countywide Strategic Plan	Jul 2026 to Jul 2027
West Marin Visioning	Early 2027 to early 2029 (tentative)
Tam Junction Placemaking Study	Input in 2026; study spring 2027 to summer 2029
Sir Francis Drake Innovation Corridor	TBD
Climate and resilience planning efforts (El Niño, Sea Level Rise, etc.)	TBD

Sources: County of Marin, Office of the County Executive, planning calendar (Sept 2026, rough estimates); city and partner survey responses (Aug 2026).

City and partner plans/projects

- **San Rafael:** Economic Development Strategic Plan (2023), FY 2025-28 Strategic Plan, Southeast San Rafael and Northgate specific plans
- **Novato:** Economic Development Strategic Plan, just adopted!
- **San Anselmo:** Draft General Plan 2045 with an Economic Vitality Element, last Economic Development Strategic Plan completed 2019
- **Corte Madera:** Economic Development Strategic Plan currently underway
- **Belvedere and Tiburon:** mixed-use rezoning
- **TAM:** Countywide Transportation Plan completed in 2024

Marin County's Economic Identity

The Economic Vitality Roadmap must be data driven (quantitative & qualitative), but also support specific objectives

1. Establish a clear understanding of Marin's economy -- including strengths and challenges -- that residents, businesses, policymakers and other stakeholders can understand and support

2. Inform the implementation framework

3. Create messaging that speaks to investors and implementation partners

Goals for Today's Presentation

1. Set the context
2. Present a preliminary "economic story" defining Marin's economic differentiators based on its assets, not its industries
3. Define some initial economic challenges and tensions the Roadmap must address
4. Illustrate how Marin's EVR could be structured based on our recent experience with Solano County
5. Give Advisory Committee member the opportunity to provide feedback on the economic story, suggest additional data for further analysis, and respond to follow up questions.

Marin County's Economic Vitality Context

There are four places in the Bay Area that people from around the world know:

Silicon Valley





Napa Valley

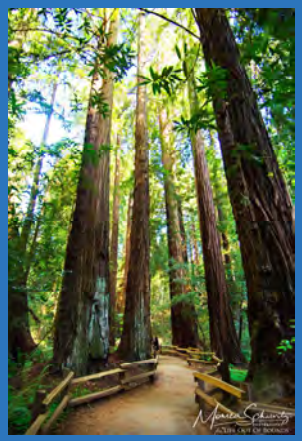
San Francisco





Marin County

But most people think of their individual Marin County destinations, not a part of a larger place with a unique identity











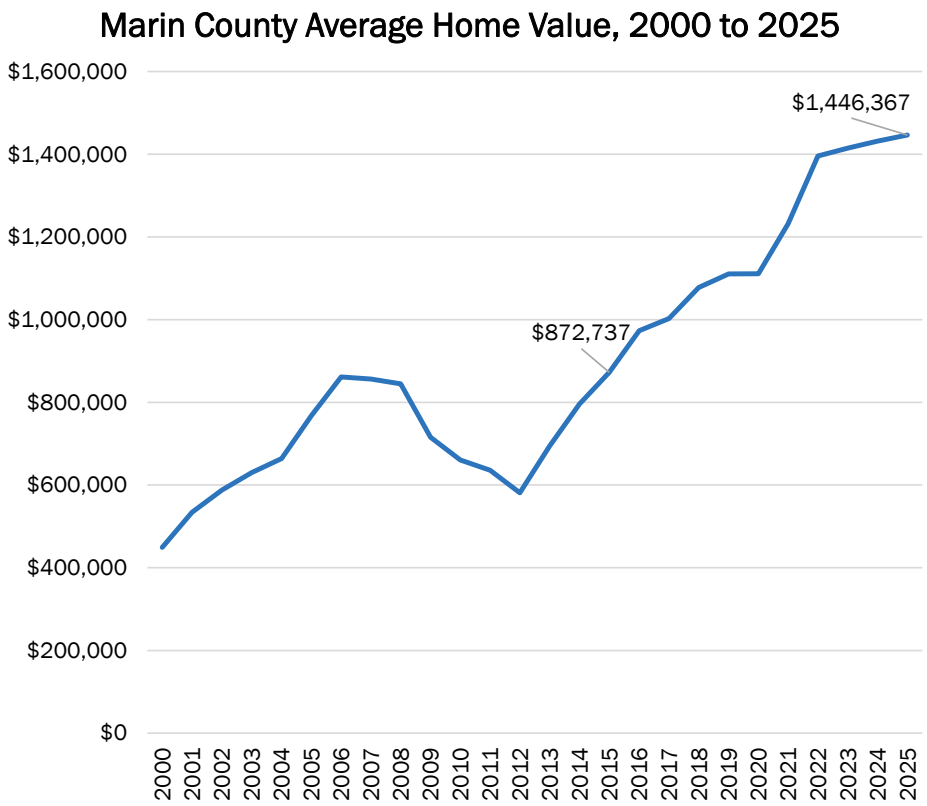
- Marin had $682 million in visitor spending in 2025, up 25% over the past decade
- Yet, Marin captures less visitor spending than comparable regions.
  - Visitor share of taxable sales in Marin is 6%, compared with 16% in SLO, 25% in Napa
- 80% of Marin visitors are day trippers

Or people think of Marin County as a great place to live, they don't even know that the County has an "economy"

Marin County has the third highest home values in the region

Only one-third of Marin County residents work in the County

Source: Zillow, 2026; Strategic Economics, 2026.

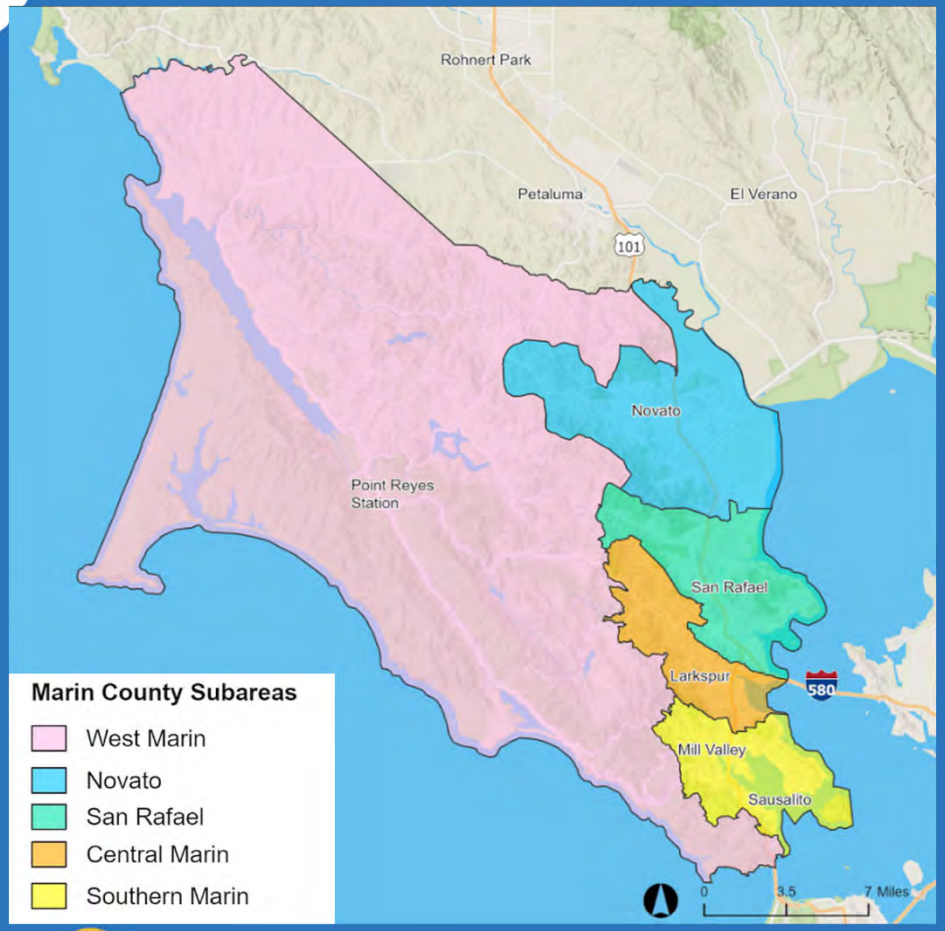


Given these ambiguous ideas of Marin County, how will people know that they can also invest in Marin County to support its businesses, its workforce, and its other assets?



(A Preliminary) "Marin County Economic Story" that the Economic Vitality Roadmap Can Build on

MARIN COUNTY'S ECONOMIC IDENTITY



Marin's economy has been shaped by its diverse topography, its natural resources, and its connectivity via water, bridges and highways



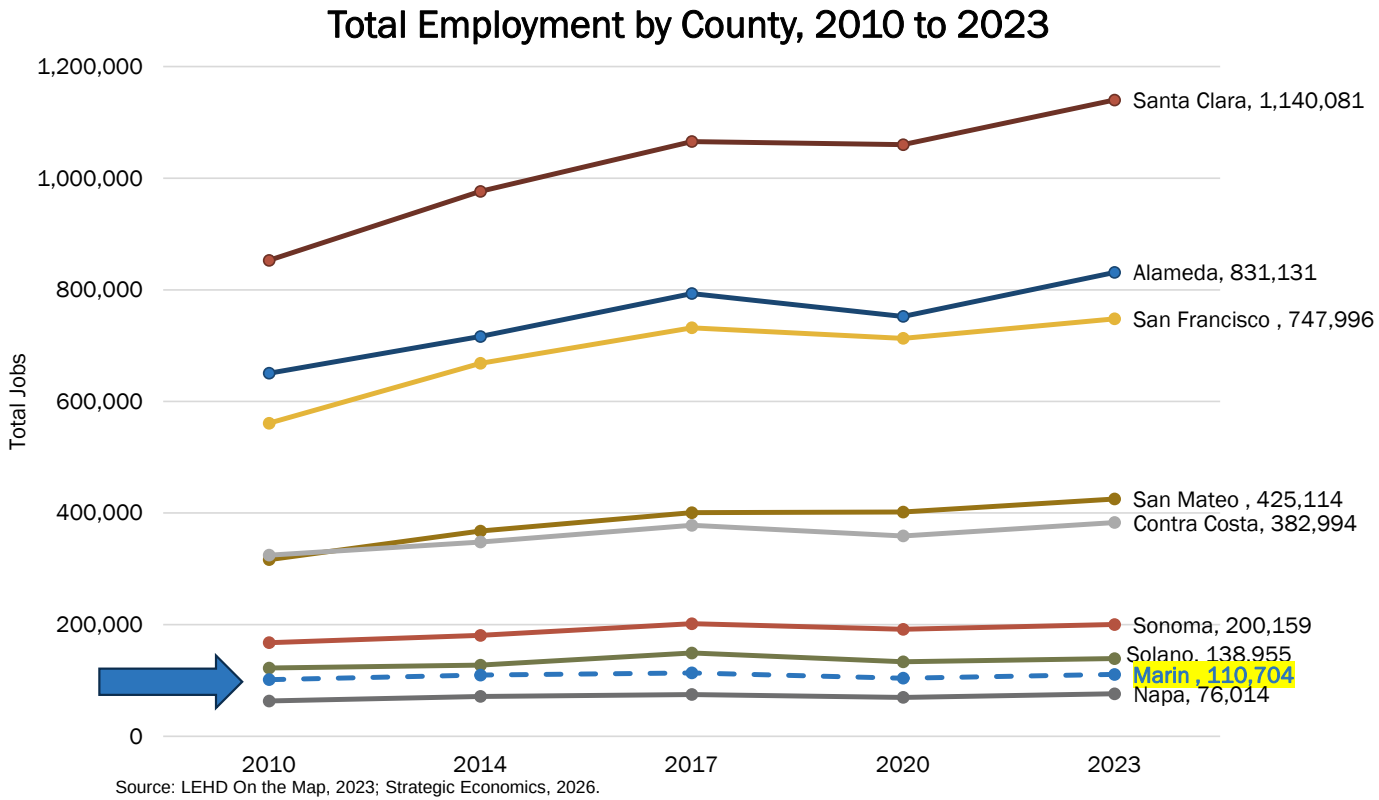






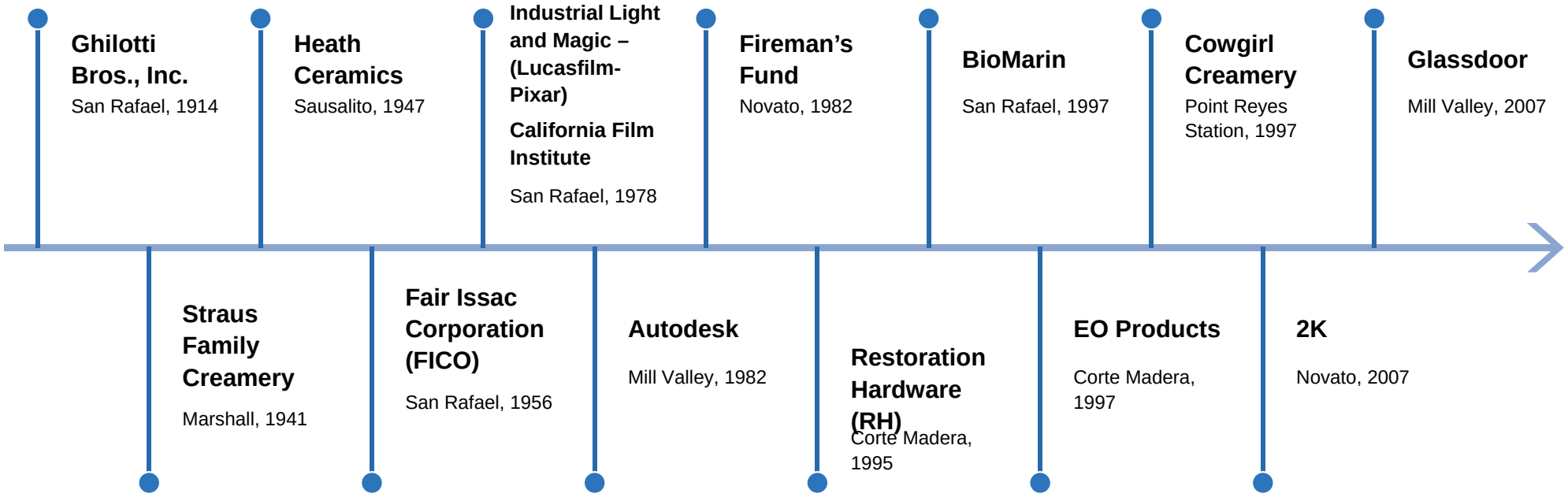
Measured by jobs, Marin County has the 2nd smallest economy in the nine-county Bay Area

But size isn't everything



Source: LEHD On the Map, 2023; Strategic Economics, 2026.

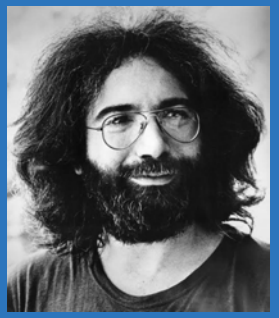
The numbers don't tell the whole story: Marin is a powerful business incubator & attractor



The County has also been a hotbed of artistic creativity



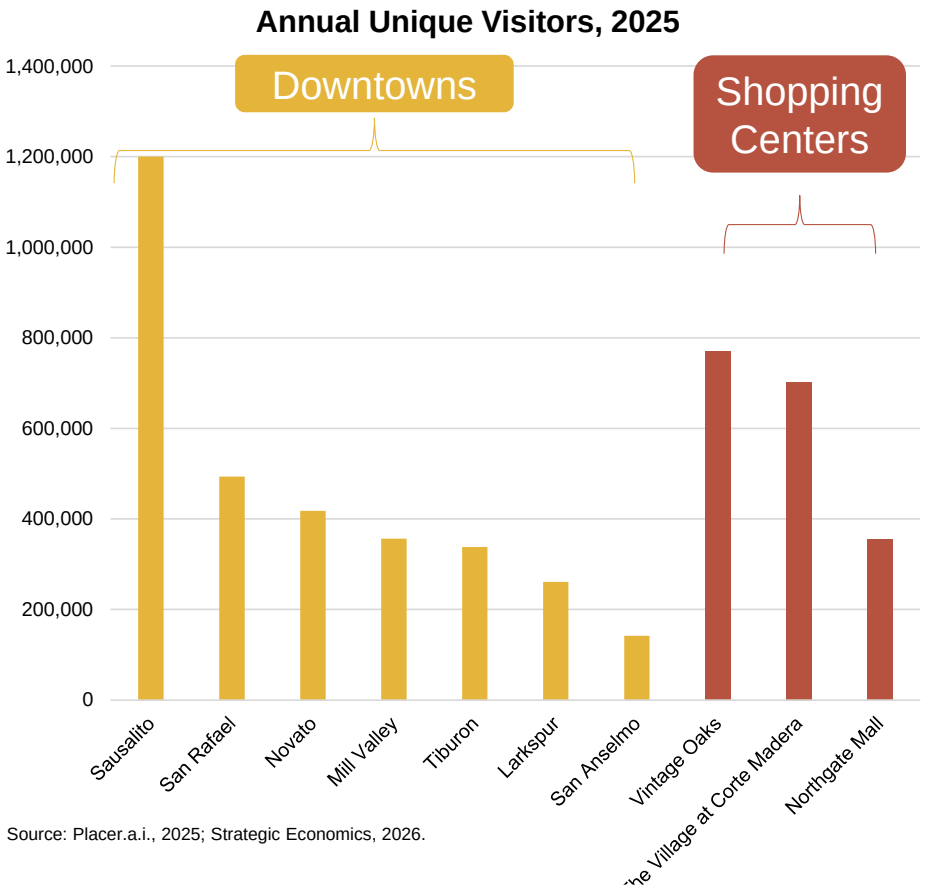






Marin County captures retail demand with its mix of historic downtowns and newer shopping centers

In 2025, major retail destinations across the county had over **five million** unique visitors

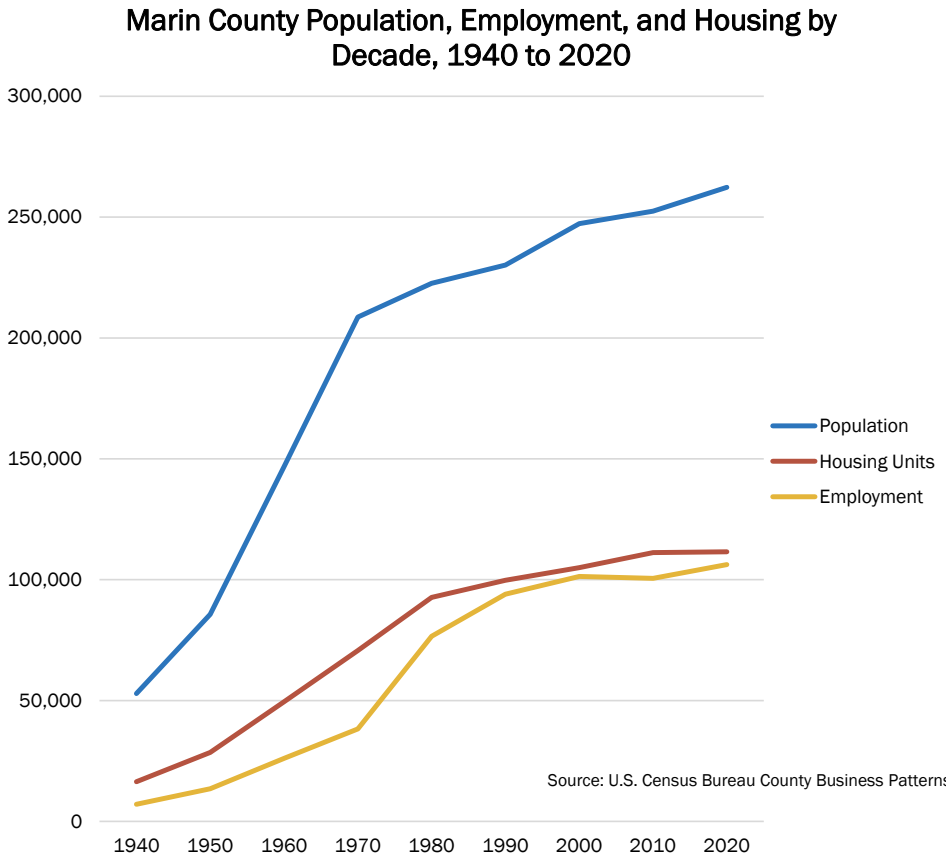


Source: Placer.a.i., 2025; Strategic Economics, 2026.

What sets Marin's economic opportunity apart is its unique blend of wonderful places that also attract innovative creative people

1. **People start or move businesses to Marin because they want this unique blend of assets and opportunities**
2. **These business leaders represent a much more diverse industry mix and therefore economic future, than San Francisco, Silicon Valley, or Napa County because they are drawn to the synergistic characteristics of Marin County, not just the opportunity to be part of an industry cluster**
3. **The synergy that makes Marin County distinct includes many different variables:**
   - Flexible and cost competitive commercial buildings
   - Arts and culture
   - Historic downtowns and newer shopping centers
   - West Marin's agricultural industry
   - Outdoor open space and recreation areas, most of which are already in public ownership

Challenges and Tensions that the Economic Vitality Roadmap Must Address

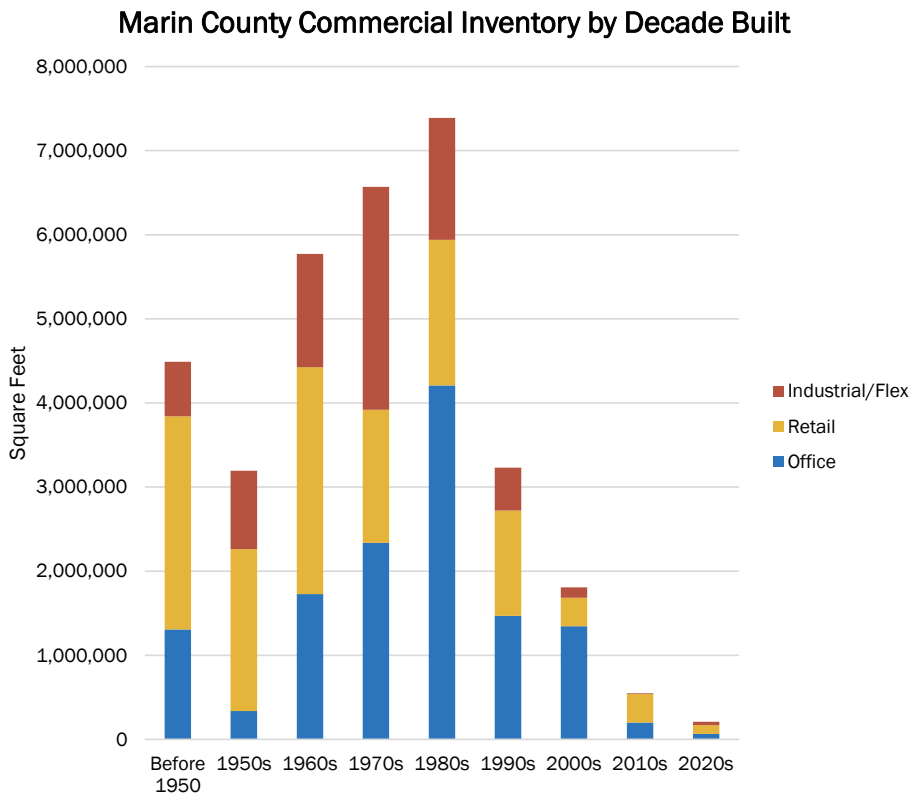


Marin County's growth trends reflect what can be reduced to a simple narrative about the County and its economy:

Many residents think these growth trends define Marin County's primary character:

a series of residential communities surrounded by a beautiful natural environment that would be harmed by future economic growth

Source: U.S. Census Bureau County Business Patterns, 1940 to 2020; U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census, 1940 to 2020; Strategic Economics, 2026.



Marin County has an aging commercial building stock

- Vacancy rates are increasing, especially for office space (office space has had vacancy rates >30% since 2016)
- Vacant office space is expensive to retrofit and/or in locations subject to sea level rise or other climate risk
- But economic growth requires commercial buildings of all kinds
- Aging buildings contribute to declining property values also impact the County's tax base

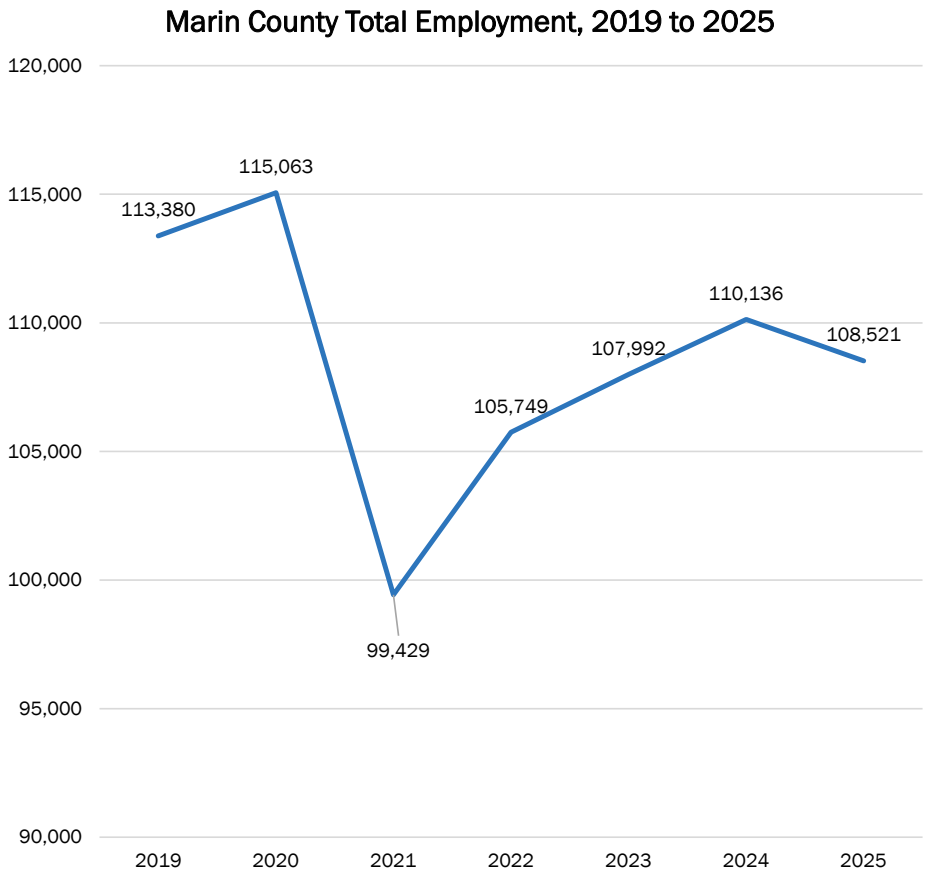
Source: CoStar, 2026; Strategic Economics, 2026.

Many of the places that support existing and future economic activity are threatened by significant resiliency challenges

Until now, there has been no connection drawn between the need for resiliency investments and the County's economic future, or the County's fiscal health

Marin County Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Focus Areas





External forces are impacting the County's economy that the County can't control, but needs to be prepared to address

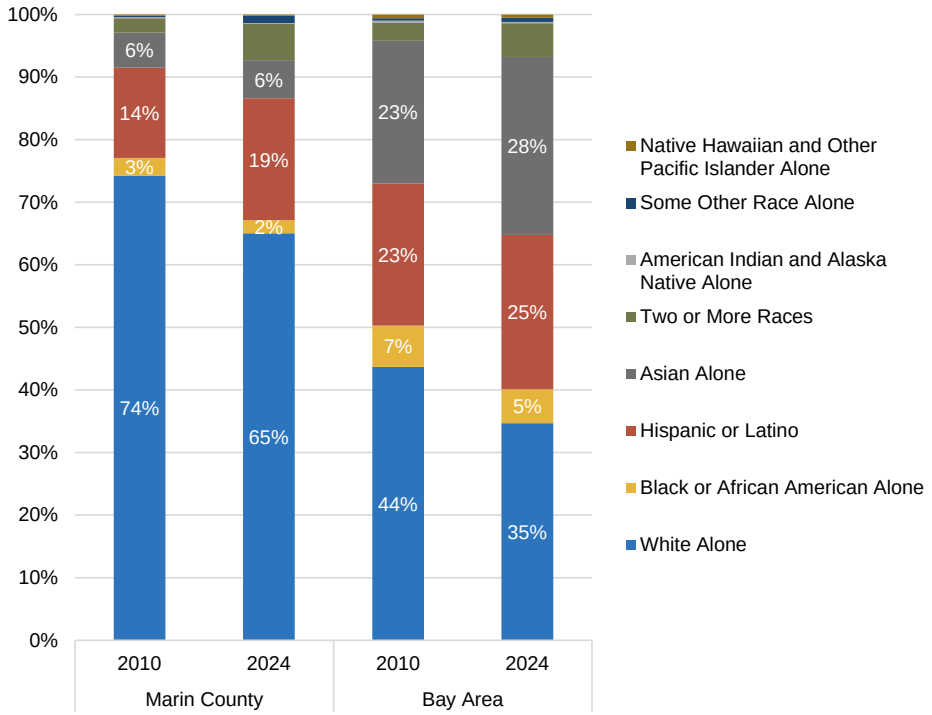
- Since the pandemic, Marin has lost 6,000 jobs that may not be coming back soon
- Many technology driven industries are shrinking their workforces globally, including in Marin
- Historically, as Marin businesses have grown, they relocate outside the County
- Inflation and tariffs have dramatically affected new and planned construction

Source: EDD, 2026; Strategic Economics, 2026.

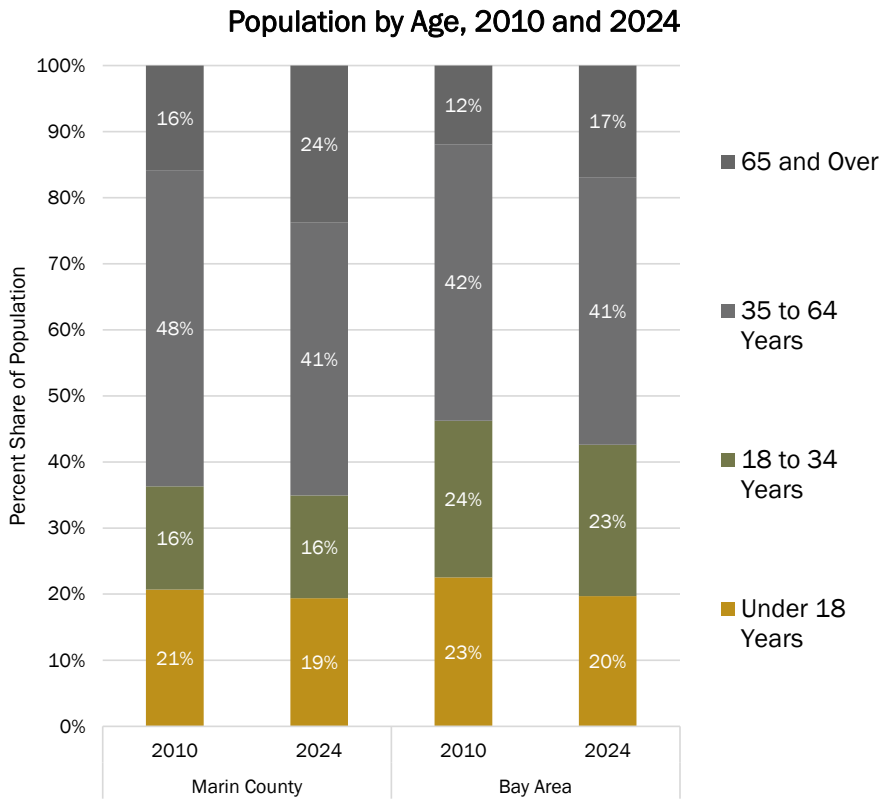
Despite its history of innovation, Marin County's population has had limited racial and ethnic diversity



Share of Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2010 and 2024



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS, 2010 and 2024; Strategic Economics, 2026.



Marin County's population is aging

- As this aging population remains in their single-family homes, this contributes to the County's challenge to attract a new, younger workforce, including future innovators, middle class families, and essential worker households
- This challenge is playing out differently in different parts of the County
- This could be an opportunity, but the solutions are complex, not simple

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS, 2010 and 2024; Strategic Economics, 2026.

RELATED PROCESSES AND STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

What we have already heard

What Marin voters told us in a 2025 countywide survey

77%

say the cost of housing is an extremely or very serious problem

55%

are dissatisfied with the County's work attracting and retaining businesses and jobs (26% satisfied)

41%

say lack of access to affordable childcare is a serious problem

A parallel survey targeting Canal, Marin City, West Marin, and Novato residents

87%

say the cost of housing is an extremely or very serious problem

40%

Say lack of local job opportunities is a serious problem

42%

say lack of access to affordable childcare is a serious problem

Other recent public engagement inputs point the same way:
Southern Marin Hub focus groups (2026): economic mobility, job training, and career pathways were top priorities
Community Health Assessment (2025): essential workers are moving out, local employers struggle to hire/retain staff

Sources: FM3, 2025 Marin County Strategic Planning Voter Survey (Nov 2025, n=851); Marin HHS; Healthy Marin Partnership; Community Action Marin; County of Marin.

What the public told us from the Envision Marin survey

Love

PROTECT AND BUILD ON

- Nature and open space
- Family-owned local businesses
- Restaurants and small-town favorites

"I love seeing longevity in some of our small town favorites but also that growth and change..."

Engage Marin participant, Mill Valley

Big, Bold Vision

BUILD TOWARD

- Vibrant towns and active downtowns
- Homes for younger residents and workers
- Less traffic and stronger connections

"Vibrant towns with bustling downtowns, and service workers who can walk or bike to work..."

Engage Marin participant, Ross

Ideas

TEST AND CONNECT

- Arts, local food and outdoor recreation
- Better transit, childcare and access
- Fewer barriers around housing and permitting

"The arts bring money into Marin."

Engage Marin participant, San Rafael

What cities, towns, and agency partners told us

- **Housing limits the workforce:** businesses, schools, and health care struggle to recruit and keep staff
- **Aging commercial space:** upgrades are costly and vacancies persist, even in strong downtowns
- **Small jurisdictions lack capacity:** interest in shared grant writing, data, business retention, and a business navigator
- **Permitting spans too many agencies:** city, County Environmental Health, fire districts, utilities *(not unique to Marin)*
- **Local identity is the asset:** downtowns, arts, tourism, and agriculture, with place-based implementation
- **Climate and infrastructure risk:** sea level rise, flooding, wildfire, insurance, and financing tools like EIFDs
- **Shared data:** countywide access to Placer.ai, vacancy, and business opening and closing data

Their questions for the County

- What role will the County play in implementation and ongoing funding?
- How will the Roadmap align with city plans rather than duplicate them?
- Will the County offer shared services?
- How will success be measured?

Source: responses to five questions from 15 respondents (7 cities and towns, 4 County departments, 4 regional and institutional partners), Aug 2026. Mill Valley, Sausalito, Fairfax, and Ross did not respond.

In their words

“Many local businesses have difficulty recruiting and retaining skilled workers because of the limited availability and high cost of local housing.”

Town of Corte Madera

“We are seeing a slow but steady rise in vacancies in our office buildings… The result is a drop in B2B sales tax…”

City of Larkspur

“Clinical placements, not classroom capacity or lack of candidates, are the primary barrier to expanding the workforce…”

College of Marin

“What would be most helpful is assistance in understanding what models are out there that would be appropriate for a Town the size of Tiburon.”

Town of Tiburon

“County support should supplement, not replace, local relationships and knowledge.”

Town of San Anselmo

“Agritourism is happening and could likely happen in a much more exciting and robust economic way.”

County Agricultural Commissioner

Source: verbatim from city and partner survey responses, Aug 2026.

Philanthropic funders have recently shared:

- **Coordinated Investment:** Agree on a small set of shared priorities, identify gaps, and align county, private, and philanthropic resources around shared goals for more meaningful impact.
- **Pilot, learn, then scale:** Consider nimble partners who can move quickly to test new approaches and fill early gaps. Then look to government to scale what works.
- **Measure equity outcomes:** Make reducing disparities a measure of success. Track who benefits by place and population, not countywide averages that mask disparities.
- **Climate resilience:** Treat climate resilience as economic infrastructure. Connect housing, flooding, water and infrastructure decisions.
- **Strengthen the rural lens:** Integrate rural West Marin into planning efforts.

Punchline for Economic Vitality:

- Focus public, nonprofit and philanthropic resources on a few shared priorities so partners amplify one another instead of spreading effort too thin.

Source: Linn Walsh, County of Marin, Stakeholder meeting for Envision Marin with Philanthropic funding partners, Fall, 2026.