

**Report Title: A Crisis Brewing?
Housing for Public Health and Safety Employees**

Report Date: June 30, 2003

Response by: Robert G. Ritter Title: Director of Police and Fire Services

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: 2 & 4
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: 1 & 3

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation number 1 has been implemented.
- Recommendations number 2 & 3 require further analysis.

Date: 9/10/03 Signed: Robert G Ritter

Number of pages attached 2

Response to Findings:

Finding 1: We disagree with finding 1. Mill Valley has identified public and private persons considered critical to health and safety during a disaster. Employees in Public Safety, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Miscellaneous and Department Heads are identified in the Emergency Plan. Response times are taken in to consideration when making assignments and identifying members of the Emergency Operations Center. In addition, the Emergency

Preparedness Committee, at the direction of the City Council, has worked with Public Safety to identify residents who are medical professionals, individual neighborhood associations, and CERT trained members within the associations. These resources are also used in the event of a disaster/emergency. During last year's winter storms, members of several CERT teams were activated and performed a variety of tasks, which enabled Public Safety to respond to the more serious calls. We have identified other people and services that may be used as first responders, i.e. construction specialists, radio operators, housing, supplies etc.

Finding 3: Partially disagree with finding 3: Mill Valley has been instrumental in developing affordable housing complexes at Pickleweed Park and Alto Station which allows for some housing preferences for public employees. In addition, the City of Mill Valley has acquired town houses near the Public Safety Building, which are available for low to middle income persons. Currently each unit is occupied by a City employee, one of which works for the Mill Valley Police Department. We do, however, feel there is a need for more affordable housing (see recommendations 3).

Response to Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Has been implemented. First responders have been identified and are listed in our Emergency Plan. Mill Valley worked with Marin County Office of Emergency Services to design our current Emergency Plan. Each city in the county has a similar plan which allows us to have an idea of how individual cities will respond to different emergencies. In addition, our Emergency Preparedness Committee continues to work with Public Safety to identify resident medical professionals, neighborhood organizations, and C.E.R.T. trained citizens who are available to respond during an emergency/disaster. When identifying first responders, we do consider their response times based on distance, conditions etc. We have identified other services that may be used as first responders in a disaster, i.e. construction specialists, radio operators, housing, supplies etc.

Recommendation 2: Will be implemented within the next several months. (Also see response to Recommendation 3).

Recommendation 3: Will require further analysis. It is our feeling, based on discussions with City employees, that the lack of affordable housing, in most cases, is not the primary reason for living out of the immediate area. When talking to public safety personnel specifically, police officers and firefighters, the majority would not live in this area even with affordable housing. They prefer to purchase larger homes well below the cost of Marin real estate, even if these are in other (more distant) counties. Some first responders in other fields, i.e. Public Works, etc., would be more likely to take advantage of affordable housing because they receive a much lower income than public safety personnel. Even then, a significantly high number of the members of these departments feel the same as public safety personnel in regards to more-for-less residences in other counties. We will continue to analyze this issue and work with other cities and public and private organizations to see if there is a way to attract first responders back to the county. (This response is applicable Finding 3 and Recommendation 2).