



MARIN COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

BRIAN C. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR

June 15, 2010

Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

SUBJECT: Status report on the establishment of the Marin Economic Forum (MEF).

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION: Accept status report.

SUMMARY: On May 19, 2009, your Board authorized the Community Development Agency to retain Robert Eyler, Ph.D., to assist with start-up efforts to establish the Marin Economic Forum based on findings from the 2008 Marin County Economic Sustainability Report. The MEF is a public-private partnership aimed at enabling Marin's economic stakeholders to collaborate on improving the county's economic vitality, focusing on Marin's targeted industries, while enhancing social equity and protecting the environment.

The work program to establish the MEF has been separated into two major phases. The focus of phase one was on developing the governance foundation of the MEF, drawing from the results of studies and recommendations developed by the Marin Economic Commission over the past ten years. Guidance was provided by a Steering Committee made up of volunteers from the business, non-profit, education, and local government sectors. Major outcomes included an initial draft of the mission statement, bylaws, work plan and budget through Fiscal Year 2011. The Steering Committee provided additional input into the nomination and selection of potential candidates for the Board of Directors, as well as a draft job description for the Executive Director.

The focus of phase two has been on launching the MEF's initial operations, in addition to providing specific support functions for businesses. A significant accomplishment has been the initiation of the Board of Directors, which officially convened in January 2010 with Harry Thomas of Hennessy Funds as the new Board President, who is also acting on a volunteer basis as interim CEO. The Board is currently in the process of refining the mission and goals conceived by the steering committee, and has established a working group to fill the position of CEO by the fall of 2010. With the Board in place, Executive, Nominating, and Finance Committees have also been established. A primary task of the Executive Committee has been to oversee MEF operations, including the development of a work program for the next two years. The Committees are also open to participation by non-voting Associate Board members, which is intended enhance community input and volunteerism, recruit potential future Board members, and leverage a broader range of talent. Other main elements of phase two focus on data analysis and business assistance, the development of a one-stop shop website, continued fund development, and public education and outreach.

In addition to the above-referenced standing committees, the Board has formed several ad hoc Working Groups: Fund Development, Targeted Industries, Work Product, and PR & Outreach. The Targeted Industries (TI) working group has already begun work to recruit and retain businesses identified as Targeted Industries for Marin by meeting with TI businesses considering options to expand or relocate outside the county, and with potential TI start-ups interested in locating in Marin.

Data Analysis and Business Assistance

MEF staff has begun the first steps of conducting data analysis and providing pro-active assistance to businesses and cities. The TI Working Group is developing a program to provide resources to businesses as they navigate various local government and special district approval processes. The City of Sausalito and the Sausalito Chamber of Commerce are also partnering to contract with the MEF to analyze potential expansion constraints and opportunities for the downtown business area. A parallel project involves the development of a database of select economic, social, and environmental information for Marin, as well as economic forecasts and indicators for benchmarking and measuring progress, which will be accessible via the MEF website. Portions of the information will be publicly available, while subscribers and sponsors will enjoy unlimited access. Progress of this project is ongoing and its completion hinges on the Employment Development Department disaggregating Marin County's data from the much larger San Francisco Metropolitan Statistical Area data set, which is not expected to occur until winter 2010 or later. Other projects include an assessment of the green building certification process for potential streamlining opportunities, and the development of an emergency planning conference tentatively slated for October 2010. The conference will provide an opportunity for companies to share their corporate disaster relief and continuity plans with other firms, where the MEF would potentially assist in developing a template product for smaller businesses.

One-Stop Shop Website

The MEF website, <http://www.MarinEconomicForum.org>, is evolving and is now under the final stages of construction to provide a one-stop shop for economic data. A new logo has been developed, and the site includes pages devoted to business networking, direct links to sponsors, information on donations, and links to the two Targeted Industries Studies. It will feature links to a blog and Facebook page, as well as provide a portal to the database and upcoming economic bulletin and targeted industry report to be issued later this summer.

Funding

The MEF has partnered with the Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership as a Fiscal Sponsor, which allows the MEF to receive charitable contributions. A number of prominent businesses have provided both financial and in-kind donations that have contributed towards MEF's ongoing support. In addition, the Fund Development working group is concentrating on ongoing fundraising efforts to secure a minimum goal of \$150,000 in sponsorship support from the business community. To date over \$125,000 in cash donations and pledges has been raised, in addition to in-kind donations of services valued at more than \$10,000. Efforts continue to obtain the remaining amount by the end of June 2010.

Public Education and Outreach

Public education and outreach have been a key component of promoting the MEF in support of Marin's economic vitality throughout this entire process. Numerous one-on-one meetings with local business leaders, CEO's, regional managers and entrepreneurs have occurred, along with public appearances at local economic summits and other events. This work will continue in order

to obtain a constant reading on how the MEF can better serve the county now and in the future as the organization evolves.

FISCAL/STAFFING IMPACT: No fiscal impact since funds for this professional services agreement have been approved by your Board as part of the FY 08-09 Budget.

REVIEWED BY:	<input type="checkbox"/> Auditor-Controller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
	<input type="checkbox"/> County Counsel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

Respectfully submitted,



Kristin Drumm
Senior Planner



Brian C. Crawford
Director