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DATE 9/21/2021 BY [Signature]

Broadband Access  
Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Broadband Access in Sonoma County

Report Date: September 14, 2021

Response by: Lynda Hopkins Title: Chairperson

Agency/Department Name: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

**FINDINGS: F1, F6, F7, F8, F9, F10, F11, F12, F13, F14, F15**

I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F8, F9, F12, F13, F14, F15

I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: F1, F6, F7, F10, F11

(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed with an explanation of the reasons.)

**RECOMMENDATIONS: R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R8, R9, R10**

Recommendations numbered: R1, R2, R6 have been implemented.

(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)

Recommendations numbered: R4, R5 have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)

Recommendations numbered: R1, R3, R8, R9 R10 require further analysis.

(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.)

Recommendation numbered: \_\_\_\_\_ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.

(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 9/14/21 Signed: Lynda Hopkins

Number of pages attached: 4

(See attached Civil Grand Jury Response Requirements)

### **Required Response to Recommendations**

**R1. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors consider recognizing and designating broadband as a “Utility” that needs prioritization by October 31, 2021.**

This is a two part recommendation:

1) The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors consider recognizing and designating broadband as a “Utility”

2) Broadband [is] a “Utility” that needs prioritization

Part one of this recommendation requires further analysis. The Economic Development Board is currently in the Request for Proposals process for a contractor to perform an assessment of a governance structure that would best support broadband infrastructure development and maintenance. This assessment will also include an analysis of options to consider regarding the County’s role in implementing SB 156 in coordination with the State and other regional partners. SB 156 created a new State agency, the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy. This new State agency will oversee the acquisition and management of a statewide open-access middle mile broadband network. SB 156 also requires the Public Utilities Commission to identify and prioritize statewide open-access middle mile locations in coordination with the State’s new Office of Broadband.

Part two of this recommendation has been implemented. On March 2, 2021, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approved a Five-Year Strategic Plan that identifies priorities for the next five years. The Strategic Plan includes specific objectives related to broadband deployment and access.

**R2. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors adopt and support a plan to address a lack of broadband access in the County by November 30, 2021.**

This recommendation has been implemented. On June 8, 2021, the Board of Supervisors approved the Broadband Action Plan and allocated \$315,000 to fund the initial phase of the Action Plan.

**R3. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors provide staff and funding to allow the Economic Development Board and Access Sonoma Broadband to develop accurate data on broadband service for the County by December 31, 2021.**

This recommendation requires further analysis. The Economic Development Board recently announced the Access Sonoma Broadband Speed Test Initiative, which allows community members to test their current home internet speeds to provide granular data that will help determine the quality of access countywide, particularly in areas where services are lacking or non-existent. Once the speed test is complete the Economic Development Board will analyze the data to ensure it’s sufficient, and may request funding from the Board if additional study is needed.

**R4. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and Economic Development Board assemble an interdepartmental group to coordinate and oversee efforts in Broadband expansion by November 30, 2021.**

This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Access Sonoma Broadband, as an informal advisory body to the Director of the Economic Development Board, recently completed a Broadband Action Plan, which was subsequently presented to the Board of Supervisors on June 8, 2021. The plan calls for the creation of a governing structure yet to be determined, though inclusive of County/City departments and other regional stakeholders, to facilitate

**R10. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors assure that any plan for broadband expansion should utilize fiber optic cable transmission or its equivalent whenever it is possible by November 30, 2021.**

This recommendation requires further analysis. Though fiber optic cable or its equivalent is a widely used benchmark, it is unlikely that the County will adopt formal transmission standards before a governing structure and business plan are identified and created.

**F10. Discharge planners could play an indispensable role in preventing the spread of COVID-19 between the jail and the community.**

The Board of Supervisors partially disagree with this finding.

While discharge planners play a very important role in connecting inmates with the community and resources, it is inconclusive on how crucial their role would be in preventing the spread of COVID-19 between the jail and the community and we are unaware of data supporting a direct link between the two.

**F11. Adding at least four new discharge planners at the Main Adult Detention Facility would contribute to lowering the recidivism rate and therefore play a key role in maintaining a lower incarcerated population**

The Board of Supervisors partially disagree with this finding.

While discharge planners play an important role in contributing to the successful transition of inmates into the community, additional data and information is necessary to determine whether discharge planners would be directly associated with a lower inmate population.

**Required Response to Recommendations**

**R4. The Sheriff's Office and the Board of Supervisors work together to develop a plan by December 31, 2021 to increase the contracted Wellpath resources to fund four additional Wellpath discharge planners for mental health and medical assignment to the Main Adult Detention Facility. (F10, F11).**

This recommendation requires further analysis.

The Board of Supervisors recognize the substantial role discharge planners play for our inmates with on-going mental health and medical needs. The FY 21-22 Adopted Budget does not include available resources to cover any additional medical or mental health staff. The Board of Supervisors, County Administrator will work with the Sheriff's Office to monitor the case load of the existing discharge planners, and continue to evaluate the need for additional discharge planners. If warranted, requests for additional discharge planners will be made through the existing budget process.

## **Board of Supervisors' Response to Emergency Alerts and Communication**

### **Required Response to Findings**

**F8. Due to the topography within Sonoma County, the re-institution of audible alarms such as air-raid sirens could dependably reach residents in remote areas and work as a reliable tried-and-true alarm system.**

The Board of Supervisors partially disagree partially with this finding.

In 2018 the Board of Supervisors directed the Department of Emergency Management to explore the potential for development of a network of outdoor audible warning sirens. The Department assessed best practices, siren technologies, systems limitations, vendor products, deployment strategies, initial/ongoing program costs as well as participating in field tests in Sonoma County.

The Department of Emergency Management determined that the effectiveness of outdoor sirens may be compromised by terrain, vegetation, urban development, and ability to be heard inside buildings.<sup>1</sup> Additionally modern building construction – including dual and triple-paned windows makes hearing this sirens very difficult – this has been seen in recent community evacuation drills in which vehicle-mounted Hi-Lo sirens were used. Staff will continue to assess the long-term potential for use of outdoor sirens in very specific hazard areas (ex. tsunami inundation zones).

**F12. The County communication network is at risk of communication tower/repeater equipment loss through delayed maintenance and failure to update obsolescent equipment, or disaster loss affecting the Sheriff's Department, city, police, fire agencies, and Redwood Empire Dispatch Communications.**

The Board of Supervisors disagree partially with this finding

Sonoma County's Telecommunications radio-communications system is maintained by the Sheriff's Office Telecommunications Bureau (T-Comm). We understand that T-Comm has not delayed maintenance and therefore do not agree that the system is at risk due to aged equipment.

**F13. There is no backup system for the County communication towers/repeaters or for commercial cellular towers should they fail to function.**

The Board of Supervisors disagree partially with this finding.

The County communications towers are maintained by Sheriff's Office and include a robust series of backups in the event of primary power loss. All county communications towers maintained by the Sheriff's office have backup generators with enough fuel to provide power to the tower for at least 10 days in addition to battery backup systems.

In regard to commercial cellular towers, the County, through a joint effort with other local governments, was successful in 2020 in petitioning the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to require that telecommunications providers provide state and local emergency responders with information directly about the areas that have lost, or may lose, service due to the impacted infrastructure and requiring that outage maps be posted on public-facing websites. CPUC Decision 21-02-029<sup>2</sup> requires 72-hours backup power for wireless providers in Tier 2 and Tier 3 High Fire Threat Districts – except for those

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.midstatecomm.com/PDF/FEMA\\_guide.pdf](https://www.midstatecomm.com/PDF/FEMA_guide.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M366/K625/366625041.PDF>

**F20. Recommendations documented in After Action Reports following a disaster have not been incorporated into the current Emergency Operations Plans for Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management, the Sheriff's Office, Cities, and fire agencies.**

The Board of Supervisors disagree with this finding.

Since 2017, the County has developed several after action reports for wildfire, flood and power shut off incidents. Recommendations and actions from these AARs are a key element of ongoing improvements and program development. The AAR addressing the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in the 2017 Fires has directly led to changes in organization and procedure. A key recommendation was to develop a new EOC facility which has now been incorporated into the County's Strategic Plan and Capital Improvement Plan.

Of course, not all the improvements can be immediately implemented – especially as the historic number and scope of recent incidents has necessarily prioritized response efforts over preparedness. That said, significant progress in implementing many AAR recommendations has been made in the last three years. AARs provide critical input as new plans are developed, new training offered, and new equipment purchased.

By way of example, recommendations made in the Alert & Warning AARs developed following the 2018 and 2019 warning exercises, the 2019 Kincade Fire and PSPS events, and the 2020 LNU and Glass Wildfires have been incorporated into the new Alert & Warning Annex and the larger warning program.

The County's new Emergency Operations Plan which is expected to be approved by the Board of Supervisors by the end of 2021 will further incorporate many other recommendations made in AARs as do the Annexes for Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) and Evacuation which have already been approved by the Board of Supervisors.

#### **Required Response to Recommendations**

**R18. By December 31, 2021, the Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution that all major County disaster plans having to do with Emergencies and Emergency Preparedness be considered "Living Documents" to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. (F18, F19, F20)**

Recommendation R18 has not been implemented and may not be implemented.

It is impractical to update all emergency plans on an annual basis. The County currently maintains the Emergency Operations Plan and five current hazard- or function-specific annexes to the EOP. An additional five annexes are under development/consideration. The County also maintains a comprehensive Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) with 51 annexes for County departments and facilities. It is the intent of the Department of Emergency Management - in coordination with the Sonoma County Disaster Council - to review emergency plans every three years or as warranted.

This recommendation addresses County disaster plans. It is important to note that cities comprise 2/3 of the County's population and each city maintains its own set of emergency operations plans and procedures.

**R20. By December 31, 2021, the Board of Supervisors increase the capacity of the Department of Emergency Management's Community Preparedness function in order to effectively engage the**



County Jail Inmate Telephone and Commissary  
Response to Grand Jury Report Form

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**FINDINGS: F1, F3, F5, F7**

I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F5

I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: F1, F3, F7

(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed with an explanation of the reasons.)

**RECOMMENDATIONS: R1, R3**

Recommendations numbered: R3 have been implemented.  
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)

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but will be implemented in the future.  
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Recommendations numbered: R1 require(s) further analysis.  
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