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BLOG » CANAL ALLIANCE ANNOUNCES THE NEWLY FORMED MARIN CLIMATE JUSTICE COLLABORATIVE

Canal Alliance announces the newly formed Marin Climate Justice Collaborative

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Aerial view of the Canal neighborhood.

Canal Alliance is delighted to announce a newly formed Marin Climate Justice Collaborative (MCJC). As a first-of-its-kind project in Marin, MCJC brings together leaders from two of Marin County's communities at most imminent risk of climate impacts in the Bay Area: unincorporated Marin City and the Canal neighborhood in San Rafael. Launched to lead equitable and community-informed planning of climate resilience projects for these areas, Canal Alliance will serve as the managing stakeholder for the collaborative and will partner with Marin City Climate Resilience & Health Justice as the lead agency in Marin City to facilitate community participation in the development of neighborhood-specific climate resiliency plans.

The Canal neighborhood and unincorporated Marin City—both highly segregated areas with as much as 72% of the population living below the federal poverty line—are subject to numerous environmental health risks, historic underdevelopment and inadequate representation in local

government. Mere feet above sea level, both areas are highly vulnerable to climate change, flooding and ultimately displacement.

The project is currently funded by three key partners. A \$996,000 grant from the Strategic Growth Council facilitated the launch of the collaborative and will support its operations over three years. Two additional two-year grants of \$180,000 from Partners for Places (a joint effort by The Funders Network (TFN) and the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN)) and the San Francisco Foundation (SFF) will allow Canal Alliance to lead community advocacy trainings and compensate frontline community-based partner agencies and community residents for their participation. The funding from TFN and SFF will also allow Canal Alliance to bring on a skilled facilitator to guide the MCJC collaborative through the work ahead.

“I am so proud that Canal Alliance is a founding member of this collaborative,” said Canal Alliance CEO Omar Carrera. “The Canal neighborhood is mere feet above sea level, and those of us that live and work here already see the impacts of sea level rise and increasingly unpredictable storms. The Marin Climate Justice Collaborative will be led by residents and will use their wisdom to identify, create, and prioritize climate resiliency solutions, improving conditions for those that live here. The MCJC will also prepare San Rafael, and Marin County at large, to be eligible for future federal funding as climate-change preparedness planning becomes even more urgent here and across the country.”

Additional and important community partners include: the Multicultural Center of Marin and San Rafael City Schools in the Canal, and Play Marin in Marin City, all of whom specialize in community-based outreach, education, and engagement. Additional countywide partners, including Marin Audubon, Community Action Marin, and Greenbelt Alliance, offer both a breadth and depth of expertise that will also be essential to MCJC’s success, specifically around issues such as wetland restoration, workforce training and regional land use. Finally, the MCJC will work closely with local government partners, including the City of San Rafael, the County of Marin, and the Marin City Community Services District, working to build trust between local government and residents of these two communities.

“It is exciting to see these two Marin County communities leading the way on climate resilience.” says Sarah Jones, Director of Community Development for the County of Marin. “The MCJC work will bring clarity around approaches to climate resilience that will gel with what the Marin City and Canal neighborhoods want and need, resulting in community-generated solutions that support and strengthen these incredibly important places. I am eager for the County to be a great partner and to support actions that emerge from the collaboration.”

“We are really looking forward to continuing the great partnership that has been formed through establishment of the Marin Climate Justice Collaborative,” says Alicia Giudice, Community Development Director for the City of San Rafael. “We are excited to continue working together to develop climate justice initiatives and implement meaningful strategies to support our local community. We believe that together we can create a more equitable and resilient Marin County that upholds and honors the values of economic, social, and environmental justice.”

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