



SANTA CRUZ
COUNTY
GRAND JURY

Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

(2023-1gR) Your Required Response to the Grand Jury Honoring Commitments Report is past due

'Irwin Ortiz' via Santa Cruz Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>
Reply-To: Irwin Ortiz <irwin.ortiz@watsonville.gov>
To: Santa Cruz Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>
Cc: Marisa Fernandez <marisa.fernandez@watsonville.gov>, Rene Mendez <rene.mendez@watsonville.gov>

Wed, Nov 15, 2023 at 3:44 PM

Dear Grand Jury,

The City Council considered and approved the response packet to the *Grand Jury Honoring Commitments to the Public* Report at last night's City Council Meeting. The response packet is attached. Please let me know how else I can assist.



Irwin I. Ortiz
City Clerk, CMC

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**Public Records Requests (PRR) submitted via email, fax, USPS, or dropoff after 5:00 p.m. on a business day, Saturday, Sunday, or holidays, will be processed as received on the next open business day. The 10-day response period begins when the PRR is received.

From: Santa Cruz Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 5:57 PM

To: Santa Cruz Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

Cc: Irwin Ortiz <irwin.ortiz@watsonville.gov>; Marisa Fernandez <marisa.fernandez@watsonville.gov>

Subject: (2023-1gR) Your Required Response to the Grand Jury Honoring Commitments Report is past due

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Watsonville Response to Findings and Recommendations.pdf
250K



The 2022–2023 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury
Requires the

Watsonville City Council

to Respond by September 5, 2023

to the Findings and Recommendations listed below
which were assigned to them in the report titled

Honoring Commitments to the Public County Agency Actions in Response to 2019–2020 Grand Jury Recommendations

Responses are **required** from elected officials, elected agency or department heads, and elected boards, councils, and committees which are investigated by the Grand Jury. You are required to respond and to make your response available to the public by the California Penal Code [\(PC\) §933\(c\)](#).

Your response will be considered **compliant** under [PC §933.05](#) if it contains an appropriate comment on **all** findings and recommendations **which were assigned to you** in this report.

Please follow the instructions below when preparing your response.

Instructions for Respondents

Your assigned [Findings](#) and [Recommendations](#) are listed on the following pages with check boxes and an expandable space for summaries, timeframes, and explanations. Please follow these instructions, which paraphrase [PC §933.05](#):

1. **For the Findings, mark one of the following responses with an “X” and provide the required additional information:**
 - a. **AGREE with the Finding**, or
 - b. **PARTIALLY DISAGREE with the Finding** – specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and include an explanation of the reasons why, or
 - c. **DISAGREE with the Finding** – provide an explanation of the reasons why.
2. **For the Recommendations, mark one of the following actions with an “X” and provide the required additional information:**
 - a. **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – provide a summary of the action taken, or
 - b. **HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – provide a timeframe or expected date for completion, or
 - c. **REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – provide an explanation, scope, and parameters of an analysis to be completed within six months, or
 - d. **WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – provide an explanation of why it is not warranted or not reasonable.
3. **Please confirm the date on which you approved the assigned responses:**

We approved these responses in a regular public meeting as shown in our minutes dated November 14, 2023.

4. **When your responses are complete, please email your completed Response Packet as a PDF file attachment to both**

The Honorable Judge Syda Cogliati Syda.Cogliati@santacruzcourt.org and

The Santa Cruz County Grand Jury grandjury@scgrandjury.org.

If you have questions about this response form, please contact the Grand Jury by calling 831-454-2099 or by sending an email to grandjury@scgrandjury.org.

Findings

F1. The 2022-2023 Grand Jury reviewed responses to five of the 2019-2020 reports and found that, in general, commitments were kept.

- AGREE**
- PARTIALLY DISAGREE**
- DISAGREE**

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

F2. The evident coordination of responses from agencies leaves the public without independent contributions across agencies.

- AGREE**
- PARTIALLY DISAGREE**
- DISAGREE**

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

All responses provided by the City of Watsonville are independent responses and contributions to the findings and recommendations. The finding that agencies may at times coordinate responses is not a negative, but in fact, positive in that the Grand Jury and public should be pleased that agencies are learning from each other and working together on how best to address findings that many times are similar.

In addition, all responses to findings are prepared by staff and then forwarded to the City Council for approval via the City Manager's Office.

F6. Although the Cities of Capitola, Scotts Valley, and Watsonville agreed that there appear to be unused or underutilized parcels of land that could possibly be used for homeless services, it is not clear how this could be done.

- AGREE**
- PARTIALLY DISAGREE**
- DISAGREE**

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

As identified in the 2019-2020 Grand Jury Response from the City of Watsonville, the City developed an Emergency Shelter Ordinance in 2018 that provides direction in the development of emergency shelters with supportive services and identified emergency shelters in the N/PF (Institutional/Public Facilities) Zoning district as allowed by-right. These two modifications provide clear directions on how to develop a homeless shelter in the City.

Recommendations

R1. All agencies should provide their own independent responses to findings and recommendations instead of referring to the response of another agency. (F2)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

All responses provided by the City of Watsonville are independent responses to the findings and recommendations. They are prepared by staff and then forwarded to the City Council for approval via the City Manager’s Office.

R2. We continue to recommend that all organizations create and regularly update formal records of the actions they take to address Grand Jury recommendations, and to share those records with the public, in accordance with CA Penal Code Section 933(c). (F1, F2)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The City is in compliance with CA Penal Code Section 933(c). All the City responses to the findings and recommendations are presented to the City Council for adoption at a regularly scheduled meeting and are maintained online and by the City Clerk for the public to access. After Council review and approval, the City will submit its responses as required by and consistent with the timeframes provided in Section 933(c).

R5. As recommended in the 2022 “Homelessness Action Plan,” the Cities of Capitola, Scotts Valley, and Watsonville should collaborate with leaders from the County of Santa Cruz and the City of Santa Cruz to identify 20 new locations for shelters across the county. These cities should report on the status of this recommendation no later than December 31, 2023. (F6)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

In 2018, the City adopted Watsonville Municipal Code Chapter 14-43 (Emergency Shelters) and allowed emergency shelters by-right in the City’s N/PF (Institutional/Public Facilities) Zoning district. The N/PF Zoning district contains approximately 416 separate parcels, most of which are either churches, schools, or government facilities.

As a result of this rezoning, the Counties of Monterey and Santa Cruz are working collaboratively to bring a low-barrier emergency shelter to the Westview Presbyterian Church at 118 First Street in early 2024. This 32-bed facility would consist of tiny home units for each resident, with wrap-around supportive services to work with each resident to overcome their unique challenges and locate stable housing. This project was made possible through an \$8 million grant to the County of Monterey, to provide housing services for the homeless population living on both sides of the Pajaro River for the first two years. After, the low-barrier emergency shelter will expand to provide services to the all the homeless population as capacity allows.

Regarding countywide collaboration, the City now has two seats on the Housing for Health Board, which meets every 2 months. In addition, City staff meets every two weeks with the Director of the Housing for Health Division of the County Human Services Department to coordinate on homeless services. Through this collaboration, the City intends to develop its own Homeless Action Plan over the next 6-9 months, in an effort to address and provide services for our local homeless population. This plan would identify goals and priorities to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness and identify potential funding sources.

R6. The County of Santa Cruz and the four cities should plan to provide services for homeless persons at the sites identified in their plans, including but not limited to supportive housing, case management, and medical services. The County of Santa Cruz and the four cities should report to the Grand Jury on the status of providing homeless services at the sites identified no later than December 31, 2023. (F5, F6)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The County of Santa Cruz developed a 3-year Framework for Housing a Healthy Santa Cruz in 2021 to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness. This Framework called for the establishment of a Housing for Health Division within the Human Services Department to be the collaborative lead for the countywide homeless response. One important pillar of this Framework was to ensure that shelter residents are provided care management, housing navigation, and financial support so that they have a better chance of securing housing while spending less time in a temporary shelter environment. In fact, the County has stopped funding shelters that do not provide these wrap-around services to their clients.

The low barrier homeless shelter proposed to be constructed at the Westview Presbyterian Church within the next 12 months will provide these services to residents, so that they can more quickly get back on their feet and into stable housing