



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
Civil Grand Jury

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Envisioning the Future of our Jails

We Continue to “Kick The Can”

Summary

Every year, the Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury examines detention facilities within the County, including the Main Jail, the Blaine Street Women’s Jail, the Rountree Men’s Medium Security Facility, and Juvenile Hall. During the tours, which uncovered little information not reported by previous Grand Juries, it learned about the ongoing crisis in Correctional Officer staffing that has caused some detention facilities to be closed. While touring the aging, dismal Main Jail, the Grand Jury also learned about the need for a new jail. This became the subject of our report.

The Grand Jury recommends increasing funding for the Sheriff’s Office to combat the longstanding and serious staffing issue. It recommends increased funding for anti-recidivism programs run by the Public Defender’s Office, Behavioral Health and others to reduce the distressingly high number of inmates who commit further crimes and end up right back in jail. An approximately \$200 million new Main Jail should be considered only after anti recidivism programs have been funded adequately and for a sufficient period to evaluate the needs of a much reduced inmate population.

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Background

Each year in accordance with California Penal Code Section 919(b), the Grand Jury examines the housing and general living conditions of the incarcerated population within our jails. Santa Cruz County has four jails; the maximum security adult Main Jail in Santa Cruz, the adult men’s medium security Rountree jail in Watsonville, the Blaine Street women’s minimum security jail next to the Main Jail, and Juvenile Hall in Felton.

The Main Jail, located at 259 Water Street in Santa Cruz, was constructed in 1981 to house 92 inmates. It was expanded in 1986 and again in 1999, bringing the total capacity to 319 inmates. It currently houses some women because the women’s jail is closed, and the requirement to keep women separated reduces the capacity slightly.

Rountree Detention Facility, located at 90 Rountree Lane, Watsonville, includes two medium security units and the minimum security Rehabilitation and Re-entry Facility. The Rountree medium security units have a capacity of 48 each, totalling 96. One of these units is currently closed due to lack of staffing. The R&R facility has a capacity of 64.

Blaine Street Women’s Facility, located at 141 Blaine Street, Santa Cruz, has a capacity of 32. It is currently closed due to lack of staffing, however, the expected reopening date will be mid May 2023.

Juvenile Hall, located at 2650 Graham Hill Road, Felton, was built in 1968 and can house up to 42 juveniles.

Table 1 shows the average population of each adult facility for the period March 2022 until February 2023.

**Table 1. Santa Cruz County Jails Average Occupancy
March 2022 – February 2023**

Facility	Capacity	Occupancy	Percent Occupied
Main Jail	319	281	88%
Rountree	96	27	28%
Reentry and Rehabilitation	64	47	73%
Blaine Street	32	0	0%

Source: Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office February 2023 Monthly Statistics.^[1]

When the Grand Jury toured Juvenile Hall, the population was 13 boys and one girl, 33 percent of capacity. (There is not an average for the previous year.)

Scope and Methodology

The Grand Jury toured and assessed the Main Jail, Rountree facility, and Juvenile Hall. As described later in this report, the jury’s inspections of the jail facilities did not result in new information beyond that included in the 2015-16 and 2018-19 Grand Jury jail inspections.^{[2] [3]} During the tours, the Jury asked about the chronic and significant

staffing shortage among Correctional Officers, the main subject of this investigation proposal. The Jury was also told about the need for a new jail to replace the aging and obsolete Main Jail.

The Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury interviewed members of the Sheriff's Office, the Public Defender's Office, County Government, the jail's medical contractor, and private citizens having knowledge germane to the investigation. It reviewed numerous law enforcement, criminal justice and mental health websites, published articles on criminal justice and mental health, and local newspaper reports.

The Sheriff's Office was prompt and helpful with the many document and information requests, including but not limited to, county reports, research studies, interviews, annual reports, operations manual & public articles. In addition, the Jury reviewed the several reports of prior grand juries dealing with the jails in Santa Cruz County.

There is some overlap between this investigation and the investigation into Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health. Thus information gathered for this investigation has been shared with the Behavioral Health investigation, and vice versa.



Figure 1. The Main Jail (photo credit East Bay Times)

Investigation

Touring the Jails

The 2022-23 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury toured the Main Jail, the Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility at Rountree and Juvenile Hall in October and November 2022. Staff were helpful and forthcoming at each of the facilities. Some jurors were able to tour the women's facility, which is closed. The Jury found the adult jails to be as described in the 2015-16 and 2018-19 reports, but with a few more years of normal wear and tear.^{[2][4]}

The Jury was impressed with Juvenile Hall. If kids need to be detained, this was a good place for the 13 boys and 1 girl to be. The building is old and in need of upgrade,^[5] but staff have done what they can to make the environment friendly and appealing. The Jury learned about the school that provides high school classes up to graduation. The day some jurors attended, they observed "Unchained", a program that brings dogs in need of training to Juvenile Hall, where students are paired with a dog to promote a positive learning experience while working with their dog on the socialization skills they need before adoption. The Jury found this inspiring and effective for both kids and dogs.

Life in Jail for Staff and Inmates

Being in jail is an entirely different experience depending on which jail, and which part of the jail the inmate is in. Some of the Grand Jury toured the Main Jail and the Rehabilitation and Re-entry facility at Rountree on the same day, making the huge contrast between the facilities even more striking. While the Main Jail is crowded, foreboding, and with little to distract the inmates from the boredom of incarceration, the Rehabilitation and Re-entry facility is spacious, light and with much programming which both serves to engage the inmates and to provide necessary skills for life on the outside. During the tours, the Jury was informed that Rountree/R&R provides food service and laundry for the Main Jail. Some staffing for these functions is provided by inmates, allowing them to gain useful work experience, as well as save the jail a little money.

Both jails suffer from a significant staffing shortage, described in the 2018-19 Grand Jury Jail inspection report^[3] and again in the 2020-21 "Justice in the Jail" Investigation.^[6] Both reports describe mandatory overtime, especially for newly-hired Correctional Officers. Mandatory overtime is often coupled with long commutes to where housing prices are slightly less unaffordable than Santa Cruz County. Being a Correctional Officer is stressful; mandatory overtime and a long commute make this much worse. Abuse of sick leave and other negative behavior has been reported, suggesting that there is dissatisfaction among the Correctional Officers. Turnover is high for new COs; some become Deputies, some go to another agency.^[7] The Corrections Policy Manual^[8] describes in detail how COs should treat inmates, and how their safety and welfare should be protected. But expecting an overworked CO to always follow policy is a recipe for failure.^[9] The Sheriff's Office appears to be doing what they can to make the Correctional Officers' work experience more positive; among other improvements, their locker room is being fixed.^[10]

The Main Jail is used to house inmates deemed a high security risk. Most are pretrial, even though they may have been incarcerated at the Main Jail many years.^[11] The Grand Jury is concerned about the civil rights of those detained long-term without being convicted, but that question is beyond the scope of this investigation. However, living in this unending limbo must have a negative effect on the inmates. Those who have never been incarcerated cannot imagine what life is like behind bars, especially the dungeon-like Main Jail. Inmates may be locked in their cells for 23 hours a day and let out for an hour of exercise in a small area open to the sky, but still without a view of any green plant. The exercise hour might be in the middle of the night!^[12] Exorbitant cost of the commissary and phone calls are also a common inmate complaint.^{[13][14]}



Figure 2. Rountree Rehabilitation and Re-entry Facility (photo credit Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Correctional Officer Association)

Rountree is where lower level offenders are housed. Rountree includes two medium security units and the minimum security Rehabilitation and Re-entry facility. Unlike the Main Jail, Rountree is spacious, with outdoor exercise areas including basketball and handball. The Grand Jury watched inmates weeding their home-grown vegetable plots.



Figure 3. “Paths out of Jail” Class at Rehabilitation and Reentry facility (photo credit Santa Cruz Sentinel)

Inmates have access to a large variety of programming including educational, motivational and life skills classes described in the 2019-19 inspection report.^[3] These are both aimed at keeping the inmates occupied and at providing necessary skills for life after incarceration. The Grand Jury understood that not all programming has been resumed post-Covid.^[15] Inmates initially housed at the Main Jail may be transferred to Rountree once they have demonstrated sustained appropriate behavior.^[16]

In recent years, there have been a number of lawsuits against the Main Jail when inmates suffered injuries or worse.^{[17][18]} Some of these lawsuits have resulted in settlements in the millions of dollars, which our County pays. Additionally, there have been sexual assaults, violence, drugs, and serious equipment failures, all described in the 2020-21 investigation.^[19] That report also shows in Appendix B that while Santa Cruz County has the eighth lowest death rate in California, the total number of incidents described in the report suggests that all is not well at the jail.

Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder of Inmates

The Santa Cruz Main Jail has been described as the largest mental health holding facility in the County.^{[20] [21] [22] [23] [24]} Approximately 40 percent of jail inmates have been diagnosed with mental illness.^[25] Sixty-five percent have an active Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and an additional 20 percent were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the crime. Clearly, some inmates have both mental illness and SUD. Treatment for mental illness or SUD for incarcerated people is limited, most inmates do not get the care that is available for insured people on the outside, although treatment in jail may be the first and only treatment they receive. The National Alliance on Mental Illness estimates that between 25-40 percent of all mentally ill Americans will be jailed or incarcerated at some point in their lives. By contrast, about 6.6 percent of the general population will experience this. Rates of recidivism are between 50% and 230% higher for persons with mental health disorders regardless of diagnosis. Prison conditions such as crowded living quarters, lack of privacy, increased risk of victimization, and exposure to punitive segregation are strongly correlated with emerging and worsening psychiatric symptoms.^{[26] [27] [28]}

Treatment for inmates suffering from mental illness or SUD can be effective, but must be followed by significant continuing care after release. Without adequate follow up, a released inmate will find it easier and cheaper to score street drugs rather than follow the laborious process to get medical insurance coverage for methadone, or whatever medication assisted treatment they were on.

Keeping People out of Jail

Santa Cruz law enforcement has made several very successful efforts to keep low level offenders out of jail. The Pretrial Division of the Probation Office uses evidence-based tools to determine which defendants are at low risk of failing to appear for court dates, or committing another crime, and who may be released until trial. Moderate risk individuals may be allowed more supervised release. Higher risk individuals may be fitted with electronic monitoring and/or be subject to home detention. Only those for whom a significant public safety concern exists are detained. Since 2015, the population of pretrial released individuals has increased from 38 to 249 in 2022.^[29] The Pretrial Division estimates that keeping offenders out of jail saved more than 91,000 jail bed days in 2022 resulting in a cost saving of over \$26M.^[30] The District Attorney's Office administers several diversion programs allowing a person charged with a crime to avoid a conviction by engaging in treatment designed to tackle the root cause of their involvement in the criminal justice system.^[31] The Sheriff's Custody Alternatives Program allows qualified, sentenced, low level offenders to serve their sentence while working, or performing supervised community service, with electronic monitoring and restricted movement.^[32]

In 2019, the County received a \$6 million grant that was used to start the Neighborhood Courts, a successful diversion program designed to keep low level misdemeanor offenders from entering the criminal justice system.^[33] In August 2022, the County received another \$6 million grant that will continue the Neighborhood Courts program,

and allow the County to expand its Coordinated Access for Empowering Success (CAFES) program, a collaboration of the Santa Cruz County Probation Department, the Public Defender’s Office, the District Attorney’s Office, Santa Cruz County Superior Court and County Behavioral Health. It aims to prevent unnecessary engagement in the justice system, and reduce recidivism for those already involved, while improving the health and well-being of adults who have committed low level crimes so they are less likely to reoffend.^{[34] [35] [36]} The chart in Figure 4 below shows how CAFES works.

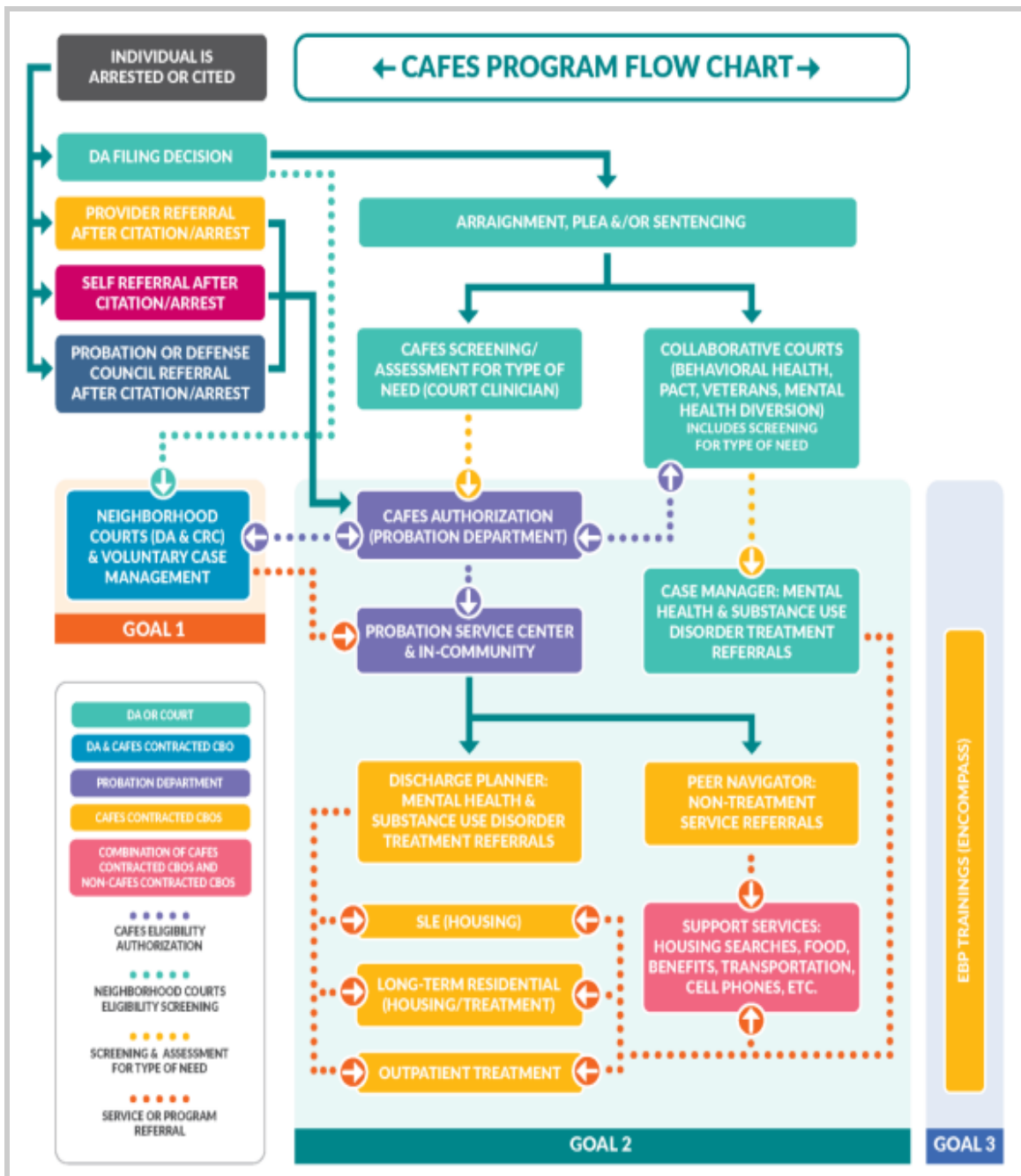


Figure 4. The Coordinated Access for Empowering Success (CAFES) program.^[37]

CAFES focuses on first-time offenders who do not qualify for other programs. Its main goals are to Increase diversion opportunities (Goal 1), reduce recidivism (Goal 2), and improve existing support for those already incarcerated (Goal 3). The chart in Figure 4 shows the major steps in achieving each goal. CAFES is sufficiently new that little data on its effects are available, especially including the impact of Covid. However, the report notes that of 197 people authorized to CAFES, just 8, or 4 percent have recidivated.^[38]

The Focused Intervention Team (FIT) is a collaboration between the Sheriff's Office and Santa Cruz Behavioral Health aimed at reducing recidivism among qualified, but more serious, repeat offenders who have demonstrated aggressive, threatening or assaultive behavior, and who are resistant to being helped. These offenders, mostly homeless people with substance use disorder, get intensive police supervision and support services. Offenders, both in jail and after release, get positive incentives, including employment training, housing assistance, and behavioral health treatment.^{[21] [39] [40] [41]}

Combating Recidivism

The programs noted above are not an exhaustive list of all law enforcement is doing to keep people out of the criminal justice system; however it is clear that local law enforcement is putting significant effort and resources into reducing the number of offenders going into detention, and reducing the number who commit further crimes after being released. In spite of these laudable efforts, recidivism is still around 60 percent within 10 years^{[42] [43] [44]}, and the Main Jail is sometimes overcrowded.^[45] During Covid, the jail population was reduced by about a third to reduce spread of the disease. This made the jail more manageable with the staffing level at the time.^[46] About 15 percent of those released were soon rearrested, but most apparently stayed out of trouble.^[47] This suggests there is yet more that could be done to keep people out of jail.

In spite of all the efforts listed above to prevent recidivism, the lack of sufficient step-down programs, also described as continuing care for released inmates, was noted during several of our interviews.^{[48] [49] [50] [51]} Many released former inmates are either unhoused or have insecure housing.^{[52] [53]} Being homeless is a full time job; just getting food, shelter, bathroom access, medical and dental care, and access to whatever limited services local government or non-profit organizations provide is all consuming.^{[54] [55]} More than 40 percent of released inmates have additionally been diagnosed with mental illness,^{[42] [56]} making reestablishing life on the outside even more difficult for the unhoused. A person needs secure housing before they can be expected to take an active role in dealing with their mental health, or complying with probation or other restrictions imposed for their release from custody.^[57]

This does not mean that the step-down programs that do exist are not working, but that they are inadequate. Santa Cruz County Probation enrolled 464 low-level, unduplicated participants in an anti-recidivism program. For those that completed the program, recidivism was calculated at nearly 12 percent, while those who had left early were calculated as repeat offenders more than 18 percent of the time. Program participants who received only one-time services had recorded recidivism rates of nearly 24 percent, twice that of those who completed the program.^{[34] [58]}

The jail's healthcare contractor, Wellpath, does provide some assistance for inmates being released, including a "discharge planner", similar to a case manager, who helps the inmate get medical insurance restarted and other necessities of life on the outside.^{[59] [60] [61] [62]} There is a 6-7 month wait for getting a bed at a state mental hospital, which is no help for an inmate needing inpatient care.^[63] The Public Defender's Office also tries to help inmates being released by having a social worker do reentry planning.^[64]

The Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Department provides mental health care for those without private insurance and is often the only source of mental health care for released inmates. Behavioral Health is also part of the CAFES program described above. Behavioral Health states that 43 percent of their client population has some involvement with the criminal justice system, mostly post-release supervision.^[65] They further state that there is a lack of coordination with other county systems, such as law enforcement or the jail, and a lack of warm handoff to outpatient providers and ensuring a sufficient amount of medication until a pharmacy is open.^[66] (A warm handoff means that jail staff actually introduces the inmate to the outpatient provider rather than just providing a referral.)

This year's Grand Jury is also investigating Behavioral Health, which we found to be overworked, understaffed and under-funded.^{[67] [68]} Expecting Behavioral Health to improve step-down programs without a significant improvement in staffing and funding is unreasonable.

The Case for a New Jail

Local law enforcement really wants a new jail! After touring the grim, gloomy, cramped Main Jail, which lacks natural light or even a view of the trees around the building, the Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury was inclined to agree. The jail was intended for inmates being held for less than a year, but many have been held pretrial for several years.^{[69] [70]} The current jail does not meet the needs of inmates or modern requirements for incarceration.^[71] The Sheriff's Office has also suggested that a new jail is needed because the current jail is near the end of its useful life.^[72] A new jail would be expected to cost around \$200 million for a 500 bed facility, and it would take 5-8 years to build.^{[73] [74]} Put another way, a new jail would cost \$400,000 per inmate bed. The Santa Cruz Sentinel published an editorial in 2021 entitled "Santa Cruz County must start planning for a new jail."^[75]

Crime Rates in Santa Cruz County

The table in Figure 5 below from Open Justice shows the trend in the number of arrests over the period 2012-2021. Although the numbers for the last three years may have been affected by Covid, the overall decline in arrests for felonies and drug offenses is clear. The decline in drug arrests is likely due at least in part to changing criteria for making an arrest, plus successful efforts to divert low level drug offenders away from the criminal justice system. The decline in arrests for property crimes is likely due to the same causes. The increase in arrests for violent offenses is small compared to the decline in arrests for felonies.

The chart in Figure 5 is for arrests, not those who are actually booked into jail, but arrests for felonies are those most likely to require incarceration in a maximum security jail. However, the number has declined by a third over ten years, and likely explains why the jail is not as overcrowded now as it was a few years ago. It would be wonderful if this trend continues, but there is no guarantee of this. The declining number of felony arrests suggests a declining need for a new jail.

ARRESTS										
Counties: Santa Cruz County.										
Years: 2012 - 2021.										
Offenses: Felony. Ages: Adults. Gender: All. Ethnicities: All.										
SV PDF										
Search within results:										
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
FELONY	2,812	2,814	2,753	2,133	2,086	2,179	2,162	2,039	1,782	1,924
Violent Offenses	548	610	653	739	619	702	724	719	630	682
Property Offenses	598	570	497	402	490	497	517	427	372	359
Drug Offenses	1,110	965	940	378	260	244	169	172	155	179
Sex Offenses	44	56	48	39	38	36	34	34	27	33
Other Offenses	512	613	615	575	679	700	718	687	598	671

Figure 5. Record of arrests in Santa Cruz County for the ten years 2012 - 2021.^[76]

Alternatives to a New Jail

Building a new jail will not solve the chronic Correctional Officer staffing problem, although a more pleasant working environment might help with CO retention. The Blaine Street women’s jail and one unit of Rountree are currently closed for lack of staffing. During the tours, the Grand Jury was told that reopening Blaine Street was a priority, and with sufficient staffing, will happen mid May 2023. Over the last few years, turning Blaine Street into a men’s facility, using part of Rountree for women and expanding Rountree have all been suggested to maximize the utility of our local jail system.^{[77] [78] [79]}

The primary mission of our criminal justice system is public safety. Could more inmates be moved from the Main Jail to Rountree while meeting that mission? The Grand Jury is not equipped to answer this question. Over the last year, the occupancy rates stated in the Background section of this report indicate Rountree is only about 23 percent full; Re-entry and Rehabilitation is more fully utilized at 78 percent. There is room for about

60 more inmates at Rountree if both units were open. If these people could be moved from the Main Jail, that would relieve pressure on the at-capacity facility. Re-opening Blaine Street would also make more room in the Main Jail. Rountree might also be expanded at far less cost than the expected \$200 Million for a new jail. Given the security needs of the inmate population, what is the optimum use for the Main Jail, Rountree/R&R and Blaine Street? Could moderate expansion of Rountree plus some renovation of the Main Jail suffice to keep us all safe? The Grand Jury believes there is good reason to study this before a complete new Main Jail is proposed.

Reducing recidivism is the main alternative to building a whole new 500 bed jail.^{[80] [81] [82]} As noted previously in this report, recidivism remains stubbornly high at around 60 percent. Once a person goes to jail, there is a 60 percent chance they will go back to jail some time in the future, hugely contributing to the need for a new jail. Step-down or continuing care for released inmates is inadequate, contributing to recidivism. Better funding for step-down programs, such as those described above and run by the Public Defender's Office and Behavioral Health is desperately needed. This could produce positive results much quicker, and at far less cost, than the estimated 5-8 years to build a new jail.

Conclusion

In a perfect world, the Sheriff's Office would have sufficient funding to raise Correctional Officers' pay sufficient to hire all the officers they need, and build the new jail they want. But in that perfect world, there would also be sufficient resources to give all inmates the mental health care they need and to provide adequate continuing care after they are released, including supportive housing as appropriate. This report asks the question "In the real world, with the funding constraints in this County, what is the best solution to both the aging Main Jail and to the distressingly high recidivism rate?"

The Santa Cruz County Grand Jury believes that funding for the Sheriff's Office to hire and retain more Correctional Officers should be increased. Funding for the Public Defender's Office and County Behavioral Health should also be increased so their anti recidivism efforts can reduce the current horrifying 60 percent recidivism rate.

Findings

- F1.** Permanent mandatory overtime for Corrections Officers has a negative effect on them that leads to high turnover, and the need to hire more COs and train them, which is inefficient and demoralizing for the Sheriff's Office.
- F2.** Overcrowding at the Main Jail would be alleviated if the Blaine Street Women's Jail and the second unit at Rountree could be reopened.
- F3.** Keeping women who do not need to be in a high security facility in the Main Jail is clearly detrimental to their mental health, and to their chances of staying out of jail once released.

- F4.** Reopening Blaine Street and the second unit at Rountree would give the Sheriff's Office much more scope to balance the jail population between the three facilities, and would allow some inmates from the Main Jail to move to Rountree and take advantage of the programming available there.
- F5.** Lack of programming at the Main Jail is bad for inmate welfare, both their mental health while on the inside, and their ability to stay out of the criminal justice system once released.
- F6.** Programs such as those run by the Public Defender's Office and CAFES that reduce recidivism are effective because they give former inmates the mental health and/or substance abuse treatments they need, as well as case management and supportive housing.
- F7.** Lack of continuing care for released inmates, most especially those with mental illness, SUD and/or who will be homeless after release, significantly contributes to recidivism, which then contributes to the need for a new jail.
- F8.** Some continuing care does exist, but is massively underfunded, especially for former inmates who need supportive housing.
- F9.** The Main Jail is old, has been overcrowded, and does not meet current requirements for incarceration.
- F10.** The Main Jail might be adequate for incarcerating inmates who need to be in a high security facility, providing it can be renovated to meet current incarceration requirements for a much reduced population.

Recommendations

- R1.** In the next budget cycle the Board of Supervisors should allocate more funding to the Sheriff's Office to be used to increase Correctional Officer pay, and/or give out increased hiring or retention bonuses as the Sheriff's Office determines. (F1)
- R2.** The Blaine Street Women's Jail should be reopened as soon as practical, but definitely before the end of 2023. (The reopening is imminent and will occur mid May 2023) (F2 – F4)
- R3.** After Blaine Street, the second unit at Rountree should be reopened as soon as sufficient staffing is available, and preferably by the end of 2023. (F2, F4, F5)
- R4.** Programming at the Main Jail, both that intended to stimulate and entertain inmates, and that intended to provide them with skills for life on the outside, should be restarted as soon as practical and as Covid restrictions allow. (F6)
- R5.** The Public Defender's Office should receive funding in the next budget cycle to provide adequate anti recidivism programs. (F7 – F9)
- R6.** In the next budget cycle, County Behavioral Health should be funded to adequately treat released inmates with mental illness, including supportive housing where necessary. (F6 – F9)

R7. The Sheriff’s Office should commission a study to determine the most effective use of the three jails and any modifications to existing facilities needed to house the expected jail population into the future. This study should be completed by the end of 2024. (F4, F9, F10)

Commendations

- C1.** The Probation Office and the Public Defender’s Office are doing an excellent job of diverting low level offenders away from the criminal justice system.
- C2.** The Probation Office is providing their Juvenile Hall youngsters a more physically and emotionally healthy environment that most of them ever had at home.

Required Responses

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>Respond Within/ Respond By</i>
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors	F1 – F10	R1, R5 – R7	90 Days August 23, 2023
Santa Cruz County Sheriff	F1 – F10	R1 – R4, R7	60 Days July 24, 2023

Invited Responses

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>Respond Within/ Respond By</i>
Santa Cruz County Public Defender	F6 – F8	R5	90 Days August 23, 2023
Santa Cruz County Administrative Officer	F1 – F10	R1, R5 – R7	90 Days August 23, 2023

Definitions

Adult: Any person 18 years of age or older.

CAFES: Coordinated Access for Empowering Success (Prop 47)

Correctional Officer: All persons, regardless of rank, who are employees and who are selected and trained in accordance with state law as a corrections officer of the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office.

FIT: Focused Intervention Team, a collaboration between the Sheriff’s Office and Santa Cruz Behavioral Health aimed at reducing recidivism among qualified, but more serious, repeat offenders who have demonstrated aggressive, threatening or assaultive behavior, and who are resistant to being helped.

Juvenile: Any person under the age of 18.

Pretrial: Is a hearing prior to trial, in which all parties involved in the trial attempt to determine the issues, laws, or facts matter, before the court trial.

R&R: Rehabilitation and Re-entry

SUD: Substance use disorder.

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Site Visits

Main Jail, County of Santa Cruz

Rountree Medium Facility, County of Santa Cruz

Juvenile Hall, County of Santa Cruz

Sheriff's Office, County of Santa Cruz



SANTA CRUZ
COUNTY
GRAND JURY

Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

Responses to the findings and recommendations in the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report, “Envisioning the Future of our Jails.....”

Caitlin Smith <Caitlin.Smith@santacruzcounty.us>

Tue, Aug 8, 2023 at 4:35 PM

Good Afternoon,

Please see attached for the Board of Supervisors, the Public Defender, and Sheriff's responses to the findings and recommendations in the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report, “Envisioning the Future of our Jails – We Continue to ‘Kick The Can’.”

Best,

Caitlin C. Smith

County Supervisors' Analyst

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

[701 Ocean Street, Room 500](#)

[Santa Cruz, CA 95060](#)

831-454-2200 main

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caitlin.smith@santacruzcounty.us

To email all five members of the Board of Supervisors at once,

please use: BoardOfSupervisors@santacruzcounty.us

4 attachments



Future of our Jails response Cover letter.pdf
37K



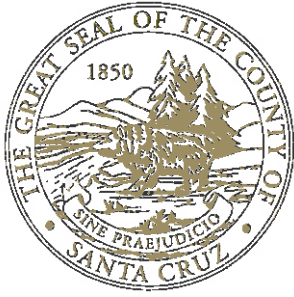
Future of our Jails Report-Board of Supervisors response.pdf
321K



Future of our Jails Report-Sheriff's response.pdf
256K



Future of our Jails Report-Public Defender Response.pdf
212K



County of Santa Cruz

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

701 OCEAN STREET, SUITE 500, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4069
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SECOND DISTRICT

JUSTIN CUMMINGS
THIRD DISTRICT

FELIPE HERNANDEZ
FOURTH DISTRICT

BRUCE MCPHERSON
FIFTH DISTRICT

August 8, 2023

The Honorable Syda Cogliati
Santa Cruz Courthouse
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Response to the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report titled "Envisioning the Future of our Jails – We Continue to 'Kick The Can'"

Dear Judge Cogliati:

The purpose of this letter is to formally transmit the responses of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, the Santa Cruz County Public Defender, and the Santa Cruz County Sheriff to the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report titled "Envisioning the Future of our Jails – We Continue to 'Kick The Can'."

Sincerely,

ZACH FRIEND, Chair
Board of Supervisors

ZF: cs
Attachment

CC: Clerk of the Board
Santa Cruz County Grand Jury



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

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

to Respond by August 23, 2023

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

Envisioning the Future of our Jails

We Continue to “Kick The Can”

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 August 8, 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. Permanent mandatory overtime for Corrections Officers has a negative effect on them that leads to high turnover, and the need to hire more COs and train them, which is inefficient and demoralizing for the Sheriff's Office.

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

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

F2. Overcrowding at the Main Jail would be alleviated if the Blaine Street Women's Jail and the second unit at Rountree could be reopened.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

The Blaine Street Women's Jail was reopened on May 19, 2023. Opening the second unit at Rountree would help ease overcrowding but would not solve it entirely. Overcrowding is a result of many different factors including but not limited to our administratively separated population, different classifications of incarcerated persons, and factors such as mental illness and substance abuse.

F3. Keeping women who do not need to be in a high security facility in the Main Jail is clearly detrimental to their mental health, and to their chances of staying out of jail once released.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Sheriff's assessment. The Blaine Street Women's Jail is more conducive to programming and a better overall environment. However, mental health and recidivism are more complex issues and cannot be reduced to merely the environment in which one is housed while in custody; nor is the security level of a custodial facility determinative to its effectiveness of future recidivism rates.

F4. Reopening Blaine Street and the second unit at Rountree would give the Sheriff's Office much more scope to balance the jail population between the three facilities and would allow some inmates from the Main Jail to move to Rountree and take advantage of the programming available there.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

F5. Lack of programming at the Main Jail is bad for inmate welfare, both their mental health while on the inside, and their ability to stay out of the criminal justice system once released.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Sheriff's assessment. There is value in programming for incarcerated persons, and it can have a positive effect on their well-being, should they choose to participate. However, mental health and recidivism are much more complex than issues such as environment and access to programming.

F6. Programs such as those run by the Public Defender’s Office and CAFES that reduce recidivism are effective because they give former inmates the mental health and/or substance abuse treatments they need, as well as case management and supportive housing.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

F7. Lack of continuing care for released inmates, most especially those with mental illness, SUD and/or who will be homeless after release, significantly contributes to recidivism, which then contributes to the need for a new jail.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

F8. Some continuing care does exist, but is massively underfunded, especially for former inmates who need supportive housing.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

There is a need for additional continuing care in the community, particularly for those suffering from mental illness or substance use disorders. Supportive housing is especially critical for former inmates who are unhoused and struggling with these challenges. There is also a need to make continuing care that does exist less diffuse and difficult to access.

F9. The Main Jail is old, has been overcrowded, and does not meet current requirements for incarceration.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

The Main Jail is old, overcrowded and in need of replacement. The Main Jail is not conducive to modern Corrections practices and would not be built the same way under current practices, policies, and community expectations. However, the Main Jail has passed all Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) Inspections and does meet current requirements for use as a corrections facility.

F10. The Main Jail might be adequate for incarcerating inmates who need to be in a high security facility, providing it can be renovated to meet current incarceration requirements for a much reduced population.

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

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

The current Main Jail needs to be fully replaced. The building is old, resulting in continual and costly maintenance, and lacks the modern design and infrastructure needed to ensure efficient and secure operations.

A new jail facility can address these shortcomings by incorporating state-of-the-art systems, improved inmate management techniques, and enhanced facilities for staff and inmates alike, while prioritizing the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders through better programming spaces, educational resources, and medical and mental health services. Additionally, a new facility can be designed with sustainability in mind, promoting energy efficiency while creating a safer and more effective environment for both staff and inmates that meets modern correctional standards.

Furthermore, continued operation of multiple facilities in different parts of the County is costly and not an efficient use of limited staffing resources. Consolidating facilities to a smaller geographic area would allow more efficient utilization of staffing.

Recommendations

R1. In the next budget cycle the Board of Supervisors should allocate more funding to the Sheriff's Office to be used to increase Correctional Officer pay, and/or give out increased hiring or retention bonuses as the Sheriff's Office determines. (F1)

- 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:

On September 13, 2022, the Board of Supervisors approved a three-year agreement with the Santa Cruz Correctional Officers Association, resulting in an approximate 11% increase with additional incentives for Supervising Correctional Officers (4%) and a Longevity/Retention Bonus for all Correctional Officers with over eight years of service (3%). Contract provisions intentionally focused on recruitment and retention to address the historical difficulty in filling vacancies for Corrections Officer positions. The challenges faced by Santa Cruz County are not unique and are compounded by the need for extensive backgrounds, 24/7 operations, and the nature of the job.

In addition, the Board approved a recruiting and hiring incentive program in October 2021 that pays \$10,000 (subject to legally required taxes) to a new hire in the classification of Corrections Officer and/or lateral transfer upon completion of the new hire probationary period, which is one year or 2080 County service hours. These efforts have yielded 34 new hires since October 2021. County staff will continue working collaboratively on strategies to stabilize the Corrections workforce, which is critical to sustaining stable and experienced personnel in performing their essential work to ensure the safety and care of all individuals incarcerated.

R5. The Public Defender’s Office should receive funding in the next budget cycle to provide adequate anti recidivism programs. (F7 – F9)

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 FY 2023-24 budget provides the Public Defender’s Office with funding to provide holistic representation to the people they represent. This holistic model of representation supports countywide efforts to reduce recidivism and connect people to meaningful, stabilizing services and support in the community. Funding allocations are determined annually as part of the budget cycle. The FY 2024-25 budget will be developed beginning in fall 2023 and ending in spring 2024 during which time staff will determine how much additional funding is available to support these programs.

R6. In the next budget cycle, County Behavioral Health should be funded to adequately treat released inmates with mental illness, including supportive housing where necessary. (F6 – F9)

—

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

-x-

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 FY 2023-24 budget provides County Behavioral Health with funding to treat mental illness and provide supportive housing to those in need of these services, including released inmates. Funding allocations are determined annually as part of the budget cycle. The FY 2024-25 budget will be developed beginning in fall 2023 and ending in spring 2024 during which time staff will determine how much additional funding is available to support these programs.

R7. The Sheriff's Office should commission a study to determine the most effective use of the three jails and any modifications to existing facilities needed to house the expected jail population into the future. This study should be completed by the end of 2024. (F4, F9, F10)

- 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 Sheriff's Office and County Administrative Office have been exploring the best approach to conduct this study, known as a Facility Needs Assessment. In the next six months, they will determine whether to issue a Request for Proposals to identify a consultant for this assessment.



SANTA CRUZ
COUNTY
GRAND JURY

Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

Responses to the findings and recommendations in the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report, “Envisioning the Future of our Jails.....”

Caitlin Smith <Caitlin.Smith@santacruzcounty.us>

Tue, Aug 8, 2023 at 4:35 PM

Good Afternoon,

Please see attached for the Board of Supervisors, the Public Defender, and Sheriff's responses to the findings and recommendations in the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report, “Envisioning the Future of our Jails – We Continue to ‘Kick The Can’.”

Best,

Caitlin C. Smith

County Supervisors' Analyst

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

[701 Ocean Street, Room 500](#)

[Santa Cruz, CA 95060](#)

831-454-2200 main





831-454-3516 direct

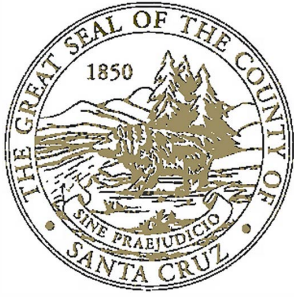
caitlin.smith@santacruzcounty.us

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4 attachments

-  **Future of our Jails response Cover letter.pdf**
37K
-  **Future of our Jails Report-Board of Supervisors response.pdf**
321K
-  **Future of our Jails Report-Sheriff's response.pdf**
256K
-  **Future of our Jails Report-Public Defender Response.pdf**
212K



County of Santa Cruz

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

701 OCEAN STREET, SUITE 500, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4069
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FIRST DISTRICT

ZACH FRIEND
SECOND DISTRICT

JUSTIN CUMMINGS
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FOURTH DISTRICT

BRUCE MCPHERSON
FIFTH DISTRICT

August 8, 2023

The Honorable Syda Cogliati
Santa Cruz Courthouse
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Response to the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report titled "Envisioning the Future of our Jails – We Continue to 'Kick The Can'"

Dear Judge Cogliati:

The purpose of this letter is to formally transmit the responses of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, the Santa Cruz County Public Defender, and the Santa Cruz County Sheriff to the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report titled "Envisioning the Future of our Jails – We Continue to 'Kick The Can'."

Sincerely,

ZACH FRIEND, Chair
Board of Supervisors

ZF: cs
Attachment

CC: Clerk of the Board
Santa Cruz County Grand Jury



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

Santa Cruz County Sheriff

to Respond by July 24, 2023

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

Envisioning the Future of our Jails

We Continue to “Kick The Can”

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Please follow the instructions below when preparing your response.

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 - 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. **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. Permanent mandatory overtime for Corrections Officers has a negative effect on them that leads to high turnover, and the need to hire more COs and train them, which is inefficient and demoralizing for the Sheriff's Office.

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

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

F2. Overcrowding at the Main Jail would be alleviated if the Blaine Street Women's Jail and the second unit at Rountree could be reopened.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

Blaine Street was reopened on 5/19/23. Opening the second unit at Rountree would help ease overcrowding but would not solve it entirely.

Overcrowding is a result of many different factors including but not limited to our administratively separated population, different classifications of incarcerated persons, and factors such as mental illness and substance abuse.

F3. Keeping women who do not need to be in a high security facility in the Main Jail is clearly detrimental to their mental health, and to their chances of staying out of jail once released.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

Blaine Street is more conducive to programming and a better overall environment. We disagree that the Main Jail is “clearly detrimental to their mental health, and to their chances of staying out of jail once released.” We believe mental health and recidivism are more complex issues and cannot be reduced to merely the environment in which one is housed while in custody; nor is the security level of a custodial facility determinative to its effectiveness of future recidivism rates.

F4. Reopening Blaine Street and the second unit at Rountree would give the Sheriff's Office much more scope to balance the jail population between the three facilities, and would allow some inmates from the Main Jail to move to Rountree and take advantage of the programming available there.

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

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

F5. Lack of programming at the Main Jail is bad for inmate welfare, both their mental health while on the inside, and their ability to stay out of the criminal justice system once released.

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

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

The Sheriff's Office believes in the value of programming for incarcerated persons. We believe it can have a positive effect on their well-being, should they choose to participate. We believe mental health and recidivism are much more complex than issues such as environment and access to programming.

F6. Programs such as those run by the Public Defender’s Office and CAFES that reduce recidivism are effective because they give former inmates the mental health and/or substance abuse treatments they need, as well as case management and supportive housing.

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

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

F7. Lack of continuing care for released inmates, most especially those with mental illness, SUD and/or who will be homeless after release, significantly contributes to recidivism, which then contributes to the need for a new jail.

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

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

F8. Some continuing care does exist, but is massively underfunded, especially for former inmates who need supportive housing.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

Funding for these programs is outside the purview of the Sheriff's Office. There is a need for additional continuing care in the community, particularly for those suffering from mental illness or substance abuse disorders.

F9. The Main Jail is old, has been overcrowded, and does not meet current requirements for incarceration.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

The Main Jail is old, overcrowded and in need of replacement. The Main Jail is not conducive to modern Corrections practices and would not be built the same way under current practices, policies, and community expectations. However, the Main Jail has passed all Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) Inspections and does meet current requirements for use as a corrections facility.

F10. The Main Jail might be adequate for incarcerating inmates who need to be in a high security facility, providing it can be renovated to meet current incarceration requirements for a much reduced population.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

The current Main Jail needs to be fully replaced. The building is old, resulting in continual and costly maintenance, and lacks the modern design and infrastructure needed to ensure efficient and secure operations.

A new jail facility can address these shortcomings by incorporating state-of-the-art systems, improved inmate management techniques, and enhanced facilities for staff and inmates alike, while prioritizing the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders through better programming spaces, educational resources, and medical and mental health services. Additionally, a new facility can be designed with sustainability in mind, promoting energy efficiency while creating a safer and more effective environment for both staff and inmates that meets modern correctional standards.

Furthermore, continued operation of multiple facilities in different parts of the County is costly and not an efficient use of limited staffing resources. We believe consolidating facilities to a smaller geographic area would allow more efficient utilization of staffing.

Recommendations

R1. In the next budget cycle the Board of Supervisors should allocate more funding to the Sheriff's Office to be used to increase Correctional Officer pay, and/or give out increased hiring or retention bonuses as the Sheriff's Office determines. (F1)

- 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 Santa Cruz Correctional Officers Association (COA) bargaining unit negotiates their contract directly with the County, not the Sheriff's Office. On September 13, 2022, the Board of Supervisors approved a three-year agreement resulting in an approximate 11% increase with additional incentives for Supervising Correctional Officers (4%) and a Longevity/Retention Bonus for all Correctional Officers with over eight-years of service (3%). In addition, the Board approved a recruiting and hiring incentive program in October 2021 that pays, \$10,000 to a new hire in the classification of Corrections Officer and/or lateral transfer upon completion of the new hire probationary period which is one year or 2080 County service hours.

The Sheriff's Office would support any additional increases in an effort to better recruit and retain Correctional Officers.

R2. The Blaine Street Women’s Jail should be reopened as soon as practical, but definitely before the end of 2023. (The reopening is imminent and will occur mid May 2023) (F2 – F4)

- 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:

Blaine Street facility was reopened on 5/19/23.

R3. After Blaine Street, the second unit at Rountree should be reopened as soon as sufficient staffing is available, and preferably by the end of 2023. (F2, F4, F5)

- 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 Sheriff's Office will continue to recruit, hire, and retain Correctional Officers. When staffing permits, we plan to reopen the second housing unit at Rountree. We do not have a timetable for that at this time.

R4. Programming at the Main Jail, both that intended to stimulate and entertain inmates, and that intended to provide them with skills for life on the outside, should be restarted as soon as practical and as Covid restrictions allow. (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 Sheriff's Office restarted in-person programming in May 2022. Contracted organizations must recruit and train staff to provide programs. We are continually evaluating new programs but are somewhat limited at the Main Jail by lack of classrooms and space to conduct group programs.

R7. The Sheriff's Office should commission a study to determine the most effective use of the three jails and any modifications to existing facilities needed to house the expected jail population into the future. This study should be completed by the end of 2024. (F4, F9, F10)

- 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 Sheriff's Office and County Administrative Office have been exploring the best approach to conduct this study, known as a Facility Needs Assessment. In the next six months, we will determine whether to issue a Request for Proposals to identify a consultant for this assessment.



SANTA CRUZ
COUNTY
GRAND JURY

Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

Responses to the findings and recommendations in the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report, “Envisioning the Future of our Jails.....”

Caitlin Smith <Caitlin.Smith@santacruzcounty.us>

Tue, Aug 8, 2023 at 4:35 PM

Good Afternoon,

Please see attached for the Board of Supervisors, the Public Defender, and Sheriff's responses to the findings and recommendations in the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report, “Envisioning the Future of our Jails – We Continue to ‘Kick The Can’.”

Best,

Caitlin C. Smith

County Supervisors' Analyst

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

[701 Ocean Street, Room 500](#)

[Santa Cruz, CA 95060](#)

831-454-2200 main

831-454-3516 direct

caitlin.smith@santacruzcounty.us

To email all five members of the Board of Supervisors at once,

please use: BoardOfSupervisors@santacruzcounty.us

4 attachments



Future of our Jails response Cover letter.pdf
37K



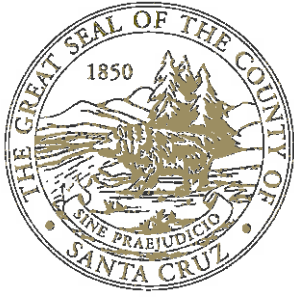
Future of our Jails Report-Board of Supervisors response.pdf
321K



Future of our Jails Report-Sheriff's response.pdf
256K



Future of our Jails Report-Public Defender Response.pdf
212K



County of Santa Cruz

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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FIFTH DISTRICT

August 8, 2023

The Honorable Syda Cogliati
Santa Cruz Courthouse
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Response to the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report titled "Envisioning the Future of our Jails – We Continue to 'Kick The Can'"

Dear Judge Cogliati:

The purpose of this letter is to formally transmit the responses of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, the Santa Cruz County Public Defender, and the Santa Cruz County Sheriff to the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report titled "Envisioning the Future of our Jails – We Continue to 'Kick The Can'."

Sincerely,

ZACH FRIEND, Chair
Board of Supervisors

ZF: cs
Attachment

CC: Clerk of the Board
Santa Cruz County Grand Jury



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

Santa Cruz County Public Defender

to Respond by August 23, 2023

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

Envisioning the Future of our Jails

We Continue to “Kick The Can”

Responses are **invited** from appointed agency and department heads, appointed committees, and non-profit agencies contracted to the county which are investigated by the grand jury. You are not required to respond by the California Penal Code [\(PC\) §933\(c\)](#); if you do, [PC §933\(c\)](#) requires you to make your response available to the public.

If you choose to respond, 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 the 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. **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

F6. Programs such as those run by the Public Defender's Office and CAFES that reduce recidivism are effective because they give former inmates the mental health and/or substance abuse treatments they need, as well as case management and supportive housing.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

The Santa Cruz County Office of the Public Defender (PDO) strongly agrees with this finding. The holistic model employed by PDO, which provides social workers and client advocates as part of the confidential legal team, provides for earlier identification of mental health and substance use disorders and seamless connection to supportive services.

F7. Lack of continuing care for released inmates, most especially those with mental illness, SUD and/or who will be homeless after release, significantly contributes to recidivism, which then contributes to the need for a new jail.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

PDO agrees that the inaccessibility of continuing care and housing resources for people exiting custody contributes to cascading consequences. Too often, people are released to the streets with no housing and no ability to access treatment upon release and end up back in custody in short order. An investment in intensive case management and supportive or transitional housing resources for those exiting custody would likely lead to a reduction in recidivism.

F8. Some continuing care does exist, but is massively underfunded, especially for former inmates who need supportive housing.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

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

There is a need for additional continuing care in the community, particularly for those suffering from mental illness or substance use disorders. Supportive housing is especially critical for former inmates who are unhoused and struggling with these challenges. There is also a need to make continuing care that does exist less diffuse and difficult to access.

Recommendations

R5. The Public Defender's Office should receive funding in the next budget cycle to provide adequate anti recidivism programs. (F7 – F9)

—

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 FY 2023-24 budget provides PDO with funding to provide holistic representation to the people we represent. This holistic model of representation supports county-wide efforts to reduce recidivism and connect people to meaningful, stabilizing services and support in the community. PDO will continue to request funding to support this important work during the next budget cycle, which begins in fall 2023 and ends in spring 2024.