



County of Santa Cruz

Civil Grand Jury
701 Ocean Street, Room 318-I
Santa Cruz, Ca 95060
(831) 454-2099

Wed, Dec 16, 2020 at 12:45 PM

The Grand Jury mislabeled the Homelessness Report's packet of Findings and Recommendations assigned to the Santa Cruz City Council as a Requested Response. Their response is required under Penal Code §933(c).

The Santa Cruz City Manager left a voicemail message on the above date confirming that the Santa Cruz City Council approved its response to the Homelessness report on 9/23/2020.

The Correspondence Committee on behalf of

Richard H. Goldberg

Richard H. Goldberg, Foreperson
2020–2021 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury



Santa Cruz County
Civil Grand Jury

Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

RE: Santa Cruz City Council Response Packets for “A Failure to Communicate – Restoring Trust and Accountability in Santa Cruz City Government” and “Homelessness: Big Problem, Little Progress It's Time To Think Outside The Box.”

1 message

Ralph Dimarucut <rdimarucut@cityofsantacruz.com>
To: "grandjury@scgrandjury.org" <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>
Cc: Suzanne Haberman <shaberman@cityofsantacruz.com>

Wed, Sep 23, 2020 at 3:26 PM

Hello,

Attached please find the Santa Cruz City Council Response Packets for “A Failure to Communicate – Restoring Trust and Accountability in Santa Cruz City Government” and “Homelessness: Big Problem, Little Progress It's Time To Think Outside The Box.”

Thank you,

Ralph Dimarucut

Principal Management Analyst
City Managers Office

City of Santa Cruz

831.420.5017

2 attachments

 **A Failure to Communicate.pdf**
292K

 **Homelessness Big Problem, Little Progress - City Council of Santa Cruz .pdf**
274K



**The 2019–2020 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury
Requests that the**

City of Santa Cruz City Council

**Respond to the Findings and Recommendations
Specified in the Report Titled**

**Homelessness: Big Problem, Little Progress
It's Time To Think Outside The Box**

by September 28, 2020

Findings

F1. The inaccuracy of the HUD PIT Count results in significant numbers of homeless adults and children not being counted and therefore not receiving needed services.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

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

Agree. However, this is the HUD count methodology which we are required to utilize.

F2. The lack of coordination between key stakeholders is a significant barrier to the efficient and capable implementation of homelessness solutions.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

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

Coordination between key stakeholders exists but is insufficient. There is regional coordination through the Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) that acts as the HUD mandated Continuum of Care. The HAP is a collaboration of the five jurisdictions in Santa Cruz County (the County and the Cities of Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Capitola, and Scotts Valley) along with homeless housing and services providers. There are also regional efforts to develop enhanced regional homeless governance options.

F3. The public opposition to homeless solutions is partially due to a lack of education, engagement, and political will by City and County leadership.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

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

Over the past 20 years, City leadership has worked to understand and tackle the complex issue of homelessness. Beginning with the Homeless Issues Task Force (HITC) formed in the year 2000 to the most recent work of the Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness (CACH) that completed its work in 2020, City leadership has created, staffed, or participated in multiple efforts to educate and engage the public on the topic of homelessness and worked in an effort to reduce opposition to a wide variety of possible solutions in our community.

Generally speaking, a lack of political will is defined retrospectively when looking at failed programs and initiatives. However, it is important to point out that while not all of recommendations that resulted from these City-led efforts over the years were able to gain traction, some of the solutions have been accepted and even embraced by the public. These are demonstrated by the City’s continual support of the Continuum of Care (the Homeless Action Partnership), employment programs for people experiencing homelessness, such as the Homeless Garden Project, an annual emergency winter shelter program, homeless outreach and engagement efforts, such as the Downtown Outreach Workers, and homelessness diversion efforts, such as Homeward Bound and rental assistance programs.

Additionally, in 2018 the City and County of Santa Cruz established the “2x2 committee” which consists of two council members (currently the Mayor and Vice-Mayor) and the Third and Fifth District Supervisors who grapple with the state of homelessness in their jurisdictions. The overarching goals have included: improving regional coordination and communication; identifying funding and obtaining clarity regarding funding policies to better utilize regional resources; and increasing the prioritization of the regional homeless policy and quality of life initiatives in our community.

The 2x2 committee meets at least once a month with meeting frequency increasing as urgent needs in the area of homelessness arise. This ongoing work amongst City and County leadership and staff demonstrates that there is a level of political will to find effective solutions to homelessness in the City of Santa Cruz.

F4. Santa Cruz County elected officials have been unable to combat NIMBYism, which is a significant barrier to getting projects approved and built to support the homeless.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

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

F5. Inconsistent and unclear funding sources and processes inhibit the effective implementation of solutions that require long-term planning and sustained operations.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

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

F6. The Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) is not organizationally equipped with the appropriate authority, structure, leadership, staff, training, or processes and, as a result, is ineffective in its mission of reducing homelessness.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

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

The HAP is a federally required COC for HUD recipients. Many of the homeless issues are outside the scope of the HAP. The ongoing work between our county governments is envisioned to strengthen local homelessness response and administration thereof.

F12. There are parcels of land throughout the County that appear to be unused or underutilized and could possibly be used to build housing for the homeless.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

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

F13. Santa Cruz County law enforcement response to homeless, addiction, and mental health issues has the potential to criminalize social, medical, and psychological conditions. This requires law enforcement to perform the role of social worker; a role for which they lack the resources and mental health training.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

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

F14. There is a lack of leadership from County and City officials to engage the business community in exploring potential solutions to homelessness.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

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

City officials have engaged with the business community to not only explore potential solutions, but to work together to bring solutions to homelessness to the City of Santa Cruz. One most recent and notable example was the City's engagement with the Downtown Association of Santa Cruz to learn about the nonprofit organization discussed in this Grand Jury Report, the Downtown Streets Team. Council members, city staff, business owners, community members and the Downtown Association worked together to educate themselves and others about this award winning and evidence-based work-experience program that helps people in their recovery from the state of homelessness. While engagement has occurred, there are opportunities for more.

F16. Santa Cruz County and Cities, despite owning numerous parking lots, choose not to utilize their parking lots for safe parking programs, which results in an underutilization of resources that could help reduce homeless parking in neighborhoods and business districts.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

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

The City of Santa Cruz has been working with the Association of Faith Communities (AFC) to provide access to and use of city owned parking lots and other city-owned properties for the organization’s Safe Sleeping Parking Program. One such effort is described in this Grand Jury report, “*witness testimony stated the Santa Cruz City Police Department provides an overnight parking program for three vehicles on a nightly basis in their downtown parking area.*” Further research into this would have shown that the SCPD parking lot is, in fact, a designated space that the City has provided for AFC’s programming. More recently, the City has also been able to provide AFC with access to Lot #17 for additional capacity for the Safe Spaces parking program.

The City of Santa Cruz encourages the County and neighboring cities to work with AFC to increase the capacity for the Safe Spaces parking program in our region.

F17. Faith-Based Organizations are an underutilized resource in the effort to end homelessness.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

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

The City of Santa Cruz has been working in a collaborative way with the Association of Faith Communities in our mutual efforts to bring resources and solutions to those experiencing homelessness within the City.

Should additional Faith-Based Organizations in the community have interest in sharing their time, energy, and talent to help our effort to end homelessness, the City of Santa Cruz would be more than receptive to engage with them.

F19. Santa Cruz County lacks an organization that is accountable for tracking the cost of homelessness, allocating funding, and measuring the effectiveness of funding which results in the inability to make progress toward solving the homeless problem.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

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

Efforts to build capacity for accountable for tracking the cost of homelessness, allocating funding, and measuring the effectiveness of funding is ongoing. The County Human Services Department is launching a new Housing for Health Division in Fall 2020. The new Housing for Health Division will develop and track housing data and increase evaluation capacity.

F21. If underutilized parcels of land throughout Santa Cruz County were identified, such as the area near Coral Street in Santa Cruz and the parcel adjacent to the County Government Mental Health Building in Watsonville, these parcels could potentially be used to increase the number of beds and services to support the homeless.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

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

Recommendations

R1. Santa Cruz County and Cities should coordinate to perform a count of the number of homeless individuals in the County annually, and use that contact opportunity to encourage individuals to enroll in the Smart Path system. (F1)

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

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The financial cost of performing an annual count throughout the County would need to be considered. Additional analysis of utilizing the contact opportunity to encourage SmartPath enrollment is also needed. The process for conducting the current count should also be evaluated to ensure a more accurate representation of our unhoused population. However, at this time there is no coordinated plan to implement this recommendation.

R2. The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and City Councils should jointly develop programs, services, and housing equitably distributed throughout each district and city in the County, communicating to the public an itemized list of such and broken down by supervisorial district by July 1, 2021. (F2)

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

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

Planning work on a regional scale is happening on a broad-based engagement process. A 3-year strategic plan is under development and set for adoption in October by the County. A Santa Cruz County 6-month action plan has been adopted and underway through December and a second plan will be implemented in January 2021.

R3. By December 31, 2020, the Santa Cruz Administrative Officer (CAO) and Cities should create a Community Task Force that includes City Managers, nonprofit leaders, former homeless individuals, media personnel, community members, and political leaders to create good will and encourage collaboration in solving homeless issues. (F3, F4)

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

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

Governance work is ongoing. An advisory commission to the Board of Supervisors is under consideration. An interjurisdictional community task force is not under discussion at this time. Jurisdictions are partnering on immediate need matters through the COVID-19 Shelter and Care Taskforce with a limited scope to COVID response.

R4. Santa Cruz County and Cities should collaborate to develop a JPA that would be responsible for setting short- and long-term goals to reduce homelessness, measuring the cost of homelessness, allocating funding, and tracking the effectiveness of funding by July 1, 2021. (F5, F6, F19)

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

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

On August 4, 2020, the County Board of Supervisors approved a Santa Cruz County Homeless System Planning Six-Month Work Plan and directed County staff to coordinate with local municipalities and community partners for further consideration and implementation. The six-month work plan reflects the primary strategies and activities planned for the community-wide homelessness response for the period from July to December 2020. The first six-month work plan for the Homeless Response System includes 6 goals, the 6th of which, includes standing up a new governance, planning, evaluation, and communications structure.

R9. By December 31, 2020, the City of Santa Cruz should evaluate whether closing Coral Street permanently to thru traffic, to make more space available for additional housing and services for the homeless, would be a viable option.
(F13)

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

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The City, County and Housing Matters are working collaboratively to evaluate the programmatic and design needs to increase access to services and shelter on Coral Street and in adjacent private property. These plans include changing traffic patterns and parking requirements on Coral Street while ensuring that current business operations remain viable and life safety requirements are met. Work is ongoing and several factors continue to impact the viability of this option.

R12. By December 31, 2020, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors and the County's City Managers should direct appropriate agencies and staff to implement a city and countywide safe parking program using the successful model of the Association of Faith Communities (AFC). This should include investigating whether college campus parking lots could be incorporated into this program. (F16)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

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

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

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

A Safe Parking program has been implemented in the City of Santa Cruz and the City of Santa Cruz supports expanding the program to County lots. County staff has engaged campuses and they were not interested in participating in the program at this time.

R13. Santa Cruz County and Cities should coordinate a retreat for all Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) in the County to collaborate on how to work cohesively on the issue of homelessness. (F17)

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

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The City of Santa Cruz welcomes and encourages participation from Faith-Based Organizations in helping address the issue of homelessness.

However, coordinating a Countywide effort to collaborate on how the County, Cities, and Faith-Based Organizations from around the County should address the issue of homelessness should be conducted and led by a Countywide agency. The City of Santa Cruz would be a willing participant should such an event be organized.