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# San Mateo County Detention and Rehabilitation Facilities

## Jail Overcrowding Continues

### Issue

What is San Mateo County doing to reduce overcrowding in its jails and to facilitate the reentry of detainees into society?

### Background

A detailed description of detention facilities in San Mateo County (County) can be found in the 2004-2005 San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury Final Report and will not be repeated here. The previous three San Mateo County Civil Grand Juries (prior Grand Juries) and the print media have detailed the overcrowding at the County's detention facilities, particularly the Women's Correctional Center (WCC), an antiquated facility that in late 2006 housed 160-220% of its rated capacity of 84 inmates. Maguire Correctional Facility (MCF or Maguire), the newer men's jail, is also overcrowded, operating at roughly 130% of its 688 inmate rated capacity. The last three Grand Juries recommended prompt replacement of the WCC.

The problem of persistent overcrowding at the County's detention facilities contributed to the formation of a Jail Crowding and Facilities Task Force (also referred to as the Jail Overcrowding Task Force or JOTF) to examine both anticipated facility needs and measures such as alternative sentencing and rehabilitation programs to reduce the inmate population. The purpose of this Grand Jury report is to review current efforts by the County to:

- Replace the women's jail
- Reduce overcrowding in the men's jail
- Increase rehabilitation and treatment programs for inmates
- Implement programs to help inmates re-enter society successfully.

## Investigation

The 2006-2007 San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) inspected the men's jail, the women's jail, the new juvenile detention facility or Youth Services Center and Camp Glenwood, the boy's honor camp.

Grand Jurors interviewed members of the Sheriff's Department, the Probation Department, members of the Board of Supervisors and a Superior Court Judge. Several Grand Jurors also attended meetings of the Jail Crowding and Facilities Task Force.

## Findings

The County's detention facilities are severely overcrowded. The WCC is rated at 84 beds, but the average population was 139 in October 2006 and peaked at 185 in November 2006, 220% of rated capacity. A recent study<sup>1</sup> forecast the need for 316 women's beds in 2026, almost four times the present rated capacity. MCF, rated at 688 beds, has operated at 130% of rated capacity for the last three years. The same study suggests a need for 1,697 beds for men in 2026, over twice Maguire's rated capacity.

The overcrowding problem has been exacerbated in the last decade by the loss of 421 beds as several facilities were closed, largely as a result of budget cuts. The facilities closed were the Work Furlough Facility (140 beds), the North County Jail (16 beds), the Medium Security Facility (96 beds), and the Men's Honor Camp (144 beds). The former 25-bed Women's Honor Camp was converted to a 45-bed Men's Minimum Security Transitional Facility, and 25-30 female inmates with special needs have been moved to Maguire.

There are several negative effects of the WCC overcrowding:

- Additional stress on staff and inmates puts both at risk
- Inmates with serious health or mental issues must be housed in Maguire
- Egregiously inadequate visiting facilities
- No accommodation for mother-child visits
- Lack of classroom and special program areas
- Lack of flexibility in separating potentially hostile inmates.

The overcrowding problem at WCC is severe and further aggravated by its obsolete dormitory design, which hinders separation of individuals and functions. The WCC is also subject to flooding in periods of heavy rain and high tides. As the 2005-2006 Grand Jury concluded, the WCC is "a crowded disgrace and must be replaced".

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<sup>1</sup> Maple Street Correctional Facilities Needs Assessment Report, March 26, 2007

The effects of overcrowding at Maguire are less severe, and the County is able to offer a range of rehabilitation programs there. Its multiple-pod design with individual cells around communal areas allows greater flexibility in oversight and separation of inmates. Both Maguire and the WCC are well managed.

The Board of Supervisors recently commissioned a Needs Assessment study for male inmates, to be completed in July 2007. This study<sup>2</sup> will address the same issues as the recently-completed needs assessment study for women inmates referred to above and discussed later in this report.

### **Jail Crowding and Facilities Task Force**

The overcrowding problem and the clear need for new detention facilities have stimulated a review of the entire detention system, including alternative sentencing, pre-sentencing detention, support services and rehabilitation. To conduct this review, the County created a Jail Crowding and Facilities Task Force that includes representatives from County government, the Sheriff's Office, District Attorney's Office, Courts, Probation Department, Private Defender Program, County Manager's Office and Health Services. Members of the Grand Jury attended the JOTF meetings and observed the following:

- The several stakeholders hold and forcefully express different viewpoints, but are working in harmony and respect each other's different views.
- The JOTF is committed to a multi-disciplinary approach to jail overcrowding that includes the design and construction of new jails, innovative sentencing alternatives, enhanced drug, alcohol and mental health rehabilitation programs, and altered court calendars and court staffing to process criminal cases promptly to minimize pre-sentencing detention.
- The JOTF reflects the County's commitment to improve the criminal justice system to enhance the opportunities of the incarcerated jail population to return to productive lives.

### **Women's Detention Facility and Program Needs**

In 2006 the Board of Supervisors commissioned a study to determine the capacity and rehabilitation program needs of a new women's detention facility. The resulting report<sup>3</sup> recommends construction of a new Women's Justice Center consisting of:

- A 316 bed jail facility comprised of:
  - a 158 bed Minimum Security Treatment Facility
  - a 70 bed Medium Security General Population Facility
  - a 72 bed Drug Treatment Unit
  - a 16 bed Maximum Security Facility
- An Outpatient Day Treatment Center serving 48 women on probation
- A 19 bed medical and mental health hospital

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<sup>2</sup> Amendment to Agreement between the County of San Mateo & DMJM H&N, INC, May 1, 2007

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, footnote 1

The report recommends a substantial increase in rehabilitation and self-help programs to prepare inmates for release, viz.:

- Continue the existing CHOICES<sup>4</sup> program in the jail and add a CHOICES 2 program for women living in the Minimum Security Treatment Facility
- Create a formal six-to-nine month aftercare program for inmates who complete CHOICES 2 and are released from custody
- Develop a structured visiting program for women and their children, including overnight stays, to teach parenting skills and strengthen the mother/child bond

The report also recommends the implementation of several programs to help women inmates achieve self-sufficiency in society, some of which are:

- Contract with community shelter providers to expand the number of apartments for women released from custody
- Determine Medi-Cal eligibility for inmates prior to release and help them obtain the support services to which they are entitled
- Work with community and faith-based organizations to provide mentors for women released from custody
- Develop work furlough, educational furlough and community work programs tailored to the needs of women offenders and their children.

While the original Needs Assessment Report recommendations are focused on a new women's facility, the recommendations related to rehabilitation and treatment are equally valid for male inmates. Emphasis on rehabilitation and treatment is also consistent with the state-wide thrust to couple building new jails with programs to reduce recidivism, currently running state-wide at 70%, according to the Governors office.

### **A New Jail Facility for Sentenced Inmates**

The Sheriff's Office has proposed that the County build a new facility to house minimum- and medium-security sentenced inmates of both sexes and that all unsentenced and maximum-security inmates be housed at the existing Maguire facility. The proposed new facility could be configured to provide the rehabilitation and treatment programs for inmates of both genders, recommended in the Needs Assessment Report cited above.

An article in the February 11-12, 2007, *San Francisco Examiner* quotes the Sheriff: "A new men's and women's medium-security facility would allow county-sentenced inmates in prison [*should be "jail", not "prison", ed.*] for more minor offenses, those serving one year or less, to be transferred out of Maguire's more hardened facility. Such a facility would also allow for more alternative sentencing programs such as electronic monitoring, work furlough and increased counseling

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<sup>4</sup> CHOICES is a highly-structured program to reduce recidivism by addressing the inmate problems of substance abuse, poverty, low self-esteem and poor health.

for alcohol and drug abusers, with the goal of substantially reducing the county's 50 percent recidivism rate.”

The Sheriff's Office envisions an incremental approach to the re-entry of inmates into society. This approach would include an early assessment of the inmate for appropriate placement within the jail and would gradually guide inmates back into society as they complete their sentences. Such a systemic approach must also recognize the special needs of women offenders and their children. The approach would emphasize support services such as mental health treatment, addiction alcohol and drug counseling, mentoring, parenting skills, anger management and job skill training. The Sheriff's Office also favors a robust Work Furlough Program, a Sheriff's Work Program and other alternative sentencing options. The new Needs Assessment Study for male inmates referred to above will include a preliminary description of the desired characteristics of such a facility.

### **Youth Detention Facilities**

The new Youth Services Center is an impressive facility. Camp Glenwood, while functional, is old and in need of maintenance. Both facilities are well-run by a dedicated and enthusiastic staff.

### **Conclusions**

- The Women's Correctional Center is outdated and chronically overcrowded. It must be replaced. At this time, a replacement facility is still in the conceptual stage, and probably years away from occupancy. Meanwhile, the intolerable conditions persist. Interim solutions such as alternative housing, alternative sentencing, and accelerated re-entry into society are desperately needed and should be promptly pursued.
- The Maguire Correctional Facility, while functional and efficient, is also overcrowded and will become more so with time.
- Solutions to the overcrowding problem must be sought in the context of the entire detention system, taking into account the special needs of women and their children and such factors as innovative sentencing alternatives, treatment for drug, alcohol and mental health problems, job training, and programs to aid the transition from incarceration to society.
- The proposed, new, post-sentencing jail facility to house both men and women, with its emphasis on phased re-entry into society, is a promising solution.
- The juvenile detention facilities are well managed, with an efficient and dedicated staff, but Camp Glenwood is in need of maintenance.

## **Recommendations**

The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff:

1. Continue study of the proposed post-sentence facility for inmates of both genders and move as quickly as possible to fund and build such a facility to replace the Women's Correctional Center
2. Identify and promptly implement interim solutions to overcrowding at the existing Women's Correctional Center
3. Implement the above recommendations in the context of the entire detention system, taking into account the special needs of women; and including innovative sentencing alternatives, treatment for substance abuse and mental problems, and programs to facilitate a phased transition from incarceration into society.



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

# Office of the Sheriff

GREG MUNKS  
SHERIFF

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ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE SHERIFF

September 4, 2007

Honorable John L. Grandsaert  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

## **Re: Grand Jury Report: San Mateo County Detention and Rehabilitation Facilities Report**

Dear Judge Grandsaert:

The Sheriff's Office appreciates the 2006-2007 Grand Jury's careful study of the issues facing the overcrowding of San Mateo County's detention facilities and concerns for the effective re-entry of detainees back into society. The findings underscore the complex issues facing both this agency and the State. They underscore the need to cooperatively find solutions to relieve overcrowding and provide successful re-entry programs for those released from custody and enhance their rehabilitation.

### **Recommendations:**

The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff:

- 1) **“Continue study of the proposed post-sentence facility for inmates of both genders and move as quickly as possible to fund and build such a facility to replace the Women's Correctional Center.”**

### **Response:**

Concur: Time is a critical concern. The jail populations today are beyond safe levels. This severely taxes our ability to manage today's inmate populations. We are out of space and fast approaching a situation where there is literally no room to place more prisoners. The five year delay until a new facility can be constructed will place the system at the breaking point sooner rather than later. Additional jail beds must be found in the interim.

Time should not be the only critical concern, however. The study and needs assessment must provide an accurate guide for developing capacity in the future and identifying the type of beds required. We should not permit the current crisis to force decisions which will not serve

the County's best interests in the extended future. The recommendations must be based on solid information which guides construction planning.

As the needs assessment nears completion, a site for the new facility must be determined and architectural review initiated. This process incorporates the needs assessment to determine the type of building environment. This is where we will match the space with post-sentenced inmate programming and determine staffing. While this process is not a fast one, careful planning helps to prevent costly mistakes with the public's money during construction on a facility that will last years into the future. The funding process will be a combined effort of San Mateo County Government and criminal justice stakeholders.

**2) "Identify and promptly implement interim solutions to overcrowding at the existing Women's Correctional Center."**

**Response:**

Concur: To alleviate the over-crowding issue at the Women's Correctional Center an additional facility(s) must be identified which can provide minimum/medium-security housing for female inmates. Some relief for female inmates may be possible if crowding in the male facility can be addressed which could provide additional space opportunities for the female population to expand into.

The Sheriff will be presenting conceptual choices to address the overcrowding to Board of Supervisors at the end of the month. Fiscal implications are being weighed to assist with the decision making process. In this context, the Sheriff will also be providing the Board with a proposal to ensure re-entry opportunities are included with sufficient housing options.

**3) "Implement the above recommendations in the context of the entire detention system, taking into account the special needs of women; and including innovative sentencing alternatives, treatment for substance abuse and mental problems, and programs to facilitate a phased transition from incarceration into society."**

**Response:**

Concur: The Sheriff's report to the Board of Supervisors at the end of the month will lay out a number of options for consideration. The options will address both the male and female populations and will recognize the need to provide gender specific programming opportunities. The options will require financial commitment from the County, but will serve as pilot programs for the eventual construction and opening of the new facility.

Sincerely,

Greg Munks, Sheriff

cc: The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
Grand Jury website





**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
**Inter-Departmental Correspondence**

County Manager's Office

**DATE:** September 20, 2007  
**BOARD MEETING DATE:** October 2, 2007  
**SPECIAL NOTICE:** None  
**VOTE REQUIRED:** Majority

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** John L. Maltbie, County Manager  
**SUBJECT:** 2006-07 Grand Jury Response

**Recommendation**

Accept this report containing the County's responses to the following 2006-07 Grand Jury report: San Mateo County Detention and Rehabilitation Facilities

**VISION ALIGNMENT:**

**Commitment:** Responsive, effective and collaborative government.

**Goal 20:** Government decisions are based on careful consideration of future impact, rather than temporary relief or immediate gain.

This activity contributes to the goal by ensuring that all Grand Jury findings and recommendations are thoroughly reviewed by the appropriate County departments and that, when appropriate, process improvements are made to improve the quality and efficiency of services provided to the public and other agencies.

**Discussion**

The County is mandated to respond to the Grand Jury within 90 days from the date that reports are filed with the County Clerk and Elected Officials are mandated to respond within 60 days. To that end, attached is the County's response to the Grand Jury report on San Mateo County Detention and Rehabilitation Facilities, issued on July 12, 2007.

# San Mateo County Detention and Rehabilitation Facilities

## Findings:

Staff is in general agreement with the Grand Jury's findings.

## Recommendations:

The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff:

1. **Continue study of the proposed post-sentence facility for inmates of both genders and move as quickly as possible to fund and build such a facility to replace the Women's Correctional Center**

**Response:** Concur.

Time is a critical concern. The jail populations today are beyond safe levels. This severely taxes our ability to manage today's inmate populations. We are out of space and fast approaching a situation where there is literally no room to place more prisoners. The five year delay until a new facility can be constructed will place the system at the breaking point sooner rather than later. Additional jail beds must be found in the interim.

Time should not be the only critical concern, however. The study and needs assessment must provide an accurate guide for developing capacity in the future and identifying the type of beds required. We should not permit the current crisis to force decisions that will not serve the County's best interests in the extended future. The recommendations must be based on solid information that guides construction planning.

As the needs assessment nears completion, a site for the new facility must be determined and architectural review initiated. This process incorporates the needs assessment to determine the type of building environment. This is where we will match the space with post-sentenced inmate programming and determine staffing. While this process is not a fast one, careful planning helps to prevent costly mistakes with the public's money during construction on a facility that will last years into the future. The funding process will be a combined effort of San Mateo County Government and criminal justice stakeholders.

2. **Identify and promptly implement interim solutions to overcrowding at the existing Women's Correctional Center**

**Response:** Concur.

To alleviate the over-crowding issue at the Women's Correctional Center an

additional facility(s) must be identified which can provide minimum/medium-security housing for female inmates. Some relief for female inmates may be possible if crowding in the male facility can be addressed that could provide additional space opportunities for the female population to expand into.

The Sheriff presented conceptual choices to address the overcrowding to Board of Supervisors at the final budget hearings on September 25, 2007. Fiscal implications are being weighed to assist with the decision making process. In this context the Sheriff will also be providing the Board with a proposal to ensure re-entry opportunities are included with sufficient housing options. The Grand Jury will be appraised of any decisions made by the Board.

3. **Implement the above recommendations in the context of the entire detention system, taking into account the special needs of women; and including innovative sentencing alternatives, treatment for substance abuse and mental problems, and programs to facilitate a phased transition from incarceration into society.**

**Response:** Concur.

The Sheriff's report to the Board of Supervisors at the end of the month will lay out a number of options for consideration. The options will address both the male and female populations and will recognize the need to provide gender specific programming opportunities. The options will require financial commitment from the County, but will serve as pilot programs for the eventual construction and opening of the new facility.

**Response:**

The Sheriff provided like responses to the Grand Jury on September 4, 2007.