



[Issue](#) | [Background](#) | [Findings](#) | [Conclusions](#) | [Recommendations](#) | [Responses](#) | [Attachments](#)

## San Mateo County Jails

### Summary

The San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury is mandated by California Penal Code to inquire into the condition and management of detention facilities within the county.

The Maguire Correctional Facility (Maguire) and the Women’s Correctional Center (WCC), both located in Redwood City, are well run but have overcrowded facilities. The professionalism and quality of the staff at both locations are noteworthy, especially given the demands placed on everyone by a high inmate/staff ratio.

However, striking differences exist at the facilities themselves. The larger men’s jail, Maguire, is relatively new, clean, well organized and maintained. Total jail security is facilitated from a control room from which all areas of the jail can be monitored visually on the closed circuit television system, and from which locking and unlocking of doors and gates can be controlled. The newer section of Maguire features “pods,” large open living areas where staff and inmates mingle and communicate. In the “pods” inmates gather for activities and classes, take their meals, and exercise. A library is available, the medical area is well staffed, the visiting areas are bleak but numerous, and a childcare area is on the premises. In comparison, the women’s center is old and overcrowded, is understaffed, offers even less space per inmate than Maguire, has inadequate visiting facilities with no childcare provision, and does not offer a minimum security option.

Among the Grand Jury recommendations are: replacement of the women’s facility, alleviation of the overcrowding situation at both jails, expansion of the “Choices” program at both jails, and development of a plan for a minimum security facility for women.



## **San Mateo County Jails**

### **Background**

The San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury is mandated by California Penal Code to inquire into the condition and management of detention facilities within the County.

### **Procedure**

The Grand Jury visited the jails on December 2, 2004 for all or part of the day. The members followed a list of suggested questions and items to be observed at each location. The Grand Jury visited the Maguire Correctional Facility (Maguire), the holding cells for the Superior Court in the Hall of Justice and Records, the Women's Correctional Center (WCC), the Medium Security Transitional Facility (Men's Honor Camp), the Electronic Monitoring Office and the Sheriff's Work Program. The Grand Jury interviewed staff at all these facilities, and reviewed documents from the California Board of Corrections, including inspection reports and state regulations. In addition, the Jury read pamphlets provided for inmates, such as "Inmate Rules and Regulations & General Information" (English and Spanish), "Correctional Health Services Information for Inmates," and "Choices, A Pathway to Change."

### **The Maguire Correctional Facility**

The California Board of Corrections rates every jail for its appropriate capacity and monitors adherence to mandated guidelines, from the square feet allocated to each inmate to the minimum number of hours for exercise. Maguire has a rated capacity of 688, but in October 2004, 925 inmates were housed there, at 134% of capacity. This overcrowding has resulted in a staff-to-inmate ratio of 1:64. The ideal ratio according to the California Board of Corrections is 1:45. The population was so high that new beds had to be added to a multi-purpose room not designed to accommodate inmates. Overcrowding is an ongoing, serious problem that can lead to increased assaults on staff and other inmates, high stress levels for staff, increased overtime costs, and higher turnover of staff.

The jail staff works 12-hour day shifts, 7 out of 14 days on a two-week cycle. The night shift works 12-hour shifts on an 8-week cycle for 84 hours per 14-day period. But with a 50% turnover in staff in the last five years, vacancies are filled temporarily by overtime work, resulting in about 40% of any given shift comprised of staff permanently assigned to other department programs. This overtime staff, if unfamiliar with jail operating procedures, may have a higher than usual number of errors.

Along with overcrowding there is also a rising number of “at risk” inmates and inmates with mental illness. Inmates are classified “at risk” if they are assaultive, gang affiliated, pose a risk of escape, or are in need of protective custody. In 2003 and 2004, half of the inmates were classified “at risk”.

Management at Maguire states that the mentally ill are the most resource-intensive group of offenders to manage in terms of staff, space, and funds. California Department of Justice statistics reveal the number of mentally ill inmates in county and state correctional facilities is growing at a rate of 8% per year. As of October 2004, Maguire was handling 148 mental health cases (16% of all inmates) with 61 new cases that month, necessitating an expense of \$69,340 in psychotropic medication costs last quarter.<sup>1</sup> The Sheriff’s office provides specialized training to assess, monitor, and dispense medication to this growing population of inmates.

## **Old Maguire**

Maguire is divided into two parts, an old and a new section. The older section of Maguire is managed with indirect supervision, which is considered an outdated model for management of correctional facilities. Indirect supervision at Old Maguire has two staff members at all times located in a locked room with glass windows, allowing staff to observe the two separate sides of the old section. One side houses general population inmates and the other houses inmates in protective custody.

Inmates are housed on two floors in large dorms with showers, bathroom facilities, TV and a telephone. Outside the dorms is a large but sparse living area that is used by one side at a time for five hours during the day and four hours per night. That means that inmates spend 15 hours of each day in their dorms. The exercise area is on the roof of the facility and can only be utilized on weekends. Despite the drawbacks, the old Maguire section is a preferred area for many prisoners. As of October 2004, one floor was at 188% of capacity, exceeding its maximum capacity, and one floor was at 175% of capacity. Management informed the State Board of Corrections about being out of compliance and requested that extra beds be added.

## **New Maguire**

The newer part of Maguire relies on direct supervision with staff mingling and communicating with the inmates in the pod. A pod is a cluster of cells arranged around a

---

<sup>1</sup> Psychotropic medication is defined as a pharmacological drug used to treat a mental disorder, or any drug prescribed to stabilize or improve mood, mental status, or behavior.

common area. The pod consists of two floors, with the ground floor as the common area and the second floor as the location for cells that may hold one or more inmates.

Security. The main security area is a large communication control room manned by two staff members at all times with monitors for the closed circuit security television systems and communications. From this room the deputies monitor the common areas, intake area, loading and unloading docks, and the general common areas of the pods.

All pod locations have a panic button, when activated by staff, sets off the alarm in the control center. The control center then creates a lockdown situation where all doors are locked, gates are closed, etc. Staff assigned to the communication control center are cross-trained so that in the event of an emergency, they can do any of the tasks required in the control center.

Intake. The intake area processes approximately 50 inmates per day, including both men and women. Inmates are photographed, fingerprinted, classified, cataloged into the facility, and receive a brief medical assessment. The intake area has several types of padded cells, depending on the degree of safety required for the inmate. An inmate high on drugs or alcohol and/or showing signs of emotional or mental instability, is placed in a padded cell (safety cell) with nothing but a hole in the floor for the toilet facility. These inmates are given a protective gown, made of special material, held together by Velcro straps, so that they cannot inflict injury on themselves. A nurse and/or mental health specialist then goes into the holding cell to evaluate and classify the inmate. Any inmate who is simply inebriated, but not a threat to themselves or others, is placed in a sobering cell. This room is also a padded, with a toilet and washbasin behind a short block wall, and a long bench serving as a cot. These cells are approximately 10 x 6 feet and well lit. Once the inmates are processed and given a medical evaluation, they are taken from the intake holding cells to their assigned pods or released.

Classifying the inmate is a time and labor intensive part of the intake process. An inmate's classification influences decisions associated with housing, education, use of the library and medical facility, and court appearances. An inmate classified with known or suspected gang affiliations will not be housed or transported to court with members of rival gangs. An inmate classified as homosexual, effeminate, or arrested for child molestation must be housed separately from the general population.

The medical assessment is based on information provided by the inmate to the medical staff. If a bilingual staff member is not available, a translator can be called if necessary. If the inmate does not indicate having a communicable disease at intake, he/she is assigned with the general population. It is up to the inmate or staff to bring a health problem to the attention of the nursing staff, and all inmates housed at Maguire are given TB tests. If requested by the inmate or staff, pregnancy testing can also be performed.

Inmates are required to sign a copy of the rules, either in Spanish or English, for the facility. A verbal repeat of the rules is provided during orientation in the pods. The lack of bilingual staff remains a problem.

Strip searches may be used if the arrest involves violence, narcotics, weapons, or reasonable suspicion of a hidden weapon, drugs or other contraband. Reasonable suspicion is based on factors such as criminal history, suicide risk, arrest on warrant for violent crime or for distribution of controlled substances, refusal of arrestee to identify oneself, or lying about their identity. All probationers and parolees coming into custody are subjected to a visual body cavity search after a supervisory review and written approval are obtained. No person arrested on any charge can be subjected to a physical body cavity search unless specifically authorized by a search warrant issued by a magistrate. Current policy is that staff members of the same sex will search arrestees in the privacy of a search room.

Kitchen. The kitchen area is clean and well equipped for the daily preparation of 3,000 meals for the 900 plus inmates. Meals at Maguire cost approximately \$4.62 per day per inmate, for an annual budget of \$2.1 million. Two shifts of inmates prepare the meals, consisting of a hot dinner and cold breakfast and lunch. They also prepare bag lunches to give prisoners in the intake area who may not have eaten for some time.

A dietary specialist or nutritionist plans all the meals served at Maguire. If inmates have religious or health-related dietary restrictions, the menus are adjusted to meet their needs. The Sheriff's staff is also served meals but from a separate, upgraded menu.

Since inmates work in the kitchen, all utensils are logged in and out every shift to prevent inmates from making weapons. The utensils are mounted on shadow board for easy monitoring.

Pods. This facility has nine separate living areas or pods where most activities take place, including meals, exercise, and classes. This minimizes the movement of inmates and increases security. Because staff is able to mingle with the inmates in the pod, they gain a familiarity with the inmates, facilitating communication and allowing staff to sense where trouble may be starting.

There are maximum-security areas where only one inmate at a time is allowed out for recreation, and lower risk pods where inmates can mix. During a good part of the day, the inmates are in their cells, with either one or two inmates to a cell. While problem inmates are always housed alone, suicidal inmates are never housed alone. If an inmate is a known or suspected gang member, he is never housed with competing known or suspected gang members.

Adjacent to the pods is a small recreational area where one or more inmates can exercise. The exercise equipment is limited in number and type so that none can be turned into weapons.

Inmates can earn privileges such as extra TV and phone time by working around the facility. This includes serving meals, cleaning rooms, and working in the kitchen. The

Maguire staff stated they would like to take the inmates out in the community to work if the resources were available.

Inmates have a variety of educational opportunities. Classes offered through the Service League include Narcotics Anonymous (NA), Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Domestic Violence counseling, and AIDS education. Participation in some of these programs is voluntary while others are court ordered. In addition to these classes, which are available to everyone, two pods have special programs. A selected group of inmates can qualify for CHOICES, a substance abuse intervention program based on the Delancey Street model. Another pod has literacy programs, including English as a Second Language (ESL), instruction on basic English reading and writing skills, General Education Diploma (GED) tutoring, and Project READ. A newer literacy program for inmates who are fathers, Fathers and Family, tape records the inmate reading a children's book, and has the tape delivered to the inmate's child.

Not all staff emphasize the importance of attending these classes. As a result some shifts have lightly attended classes while during other shifts the classes are full. The presence of the television may be a factor in lack of class attendance by inmates.

Medical. The medical area is equipped to care for minor injuries and illnesses, and is staffed by one doctor and three nurse practitioners. A dentist visits regularly, and an orthopedic surgeon is on call. Inmates with severe injuries or illnesses are transferred to a hospital.

Library. Maguire has a recreational library and a law library, although inmates must request and receive approval to access the law library. Most of the inmates use the libraries, with 7,803 inmate requests for the law library services alone in the last 12 months. Carts of books for recreational reading are taken to the pods and rotated twice a month. There are currently 6000 books in the recreational library that serves both Maguire and the Women's Correctional Center.

Commissary. The commissary is open four days a week and sells food, beverages, and toiletries. The staff has made an effort to provide a variety of items with choices changing once a month. Inmates can place an order twice a week with a maximum of \$50 or 16 items per order; orders are filled within 24 hours. Each inmate may establish an account balance, which is debited for each purchase, and administered by the jail. Inmates with no source of funds are provided small care packages. Inmates in the CHOICES program are required to give one item from each of their personal orders to an indigent inmate. Commissary profits go to an Inmate Welfare Fund used for Service League programs. This commissary also services the Women's Correctional Center. The Grand Jury observed the commissary to be efficiently run with an effort to meet inmate needs.

Visiting. Inmates may have visitors for 45 minutes for a maximum of twice a week in a seven-day period. The visiting area is bleak with individual stalls and thick glass

separating inmates from the visitor. A large childcare area in the lobby is available to the families on weekends, staffed by Service League volunteers.

**Release.** Inmates are released from as early as 4:00 a.m. to as late as midnight. Upon release, inmates are given bus passes and information about the Service League location and programs.

### **Women's Correctional Center**

In October 2004 there were 121 women incarcerated in the Women's Correctional Center (WCC). The WCC was designed in 1976 and was already outdated by the time it was built in 1980. Before construction was completed, the California Department of Corrections had increased the square footage allotted to each inmate by 10 square feet per person, or a 40% increase in dayroom space and a 25% increase in dorm space. Despite the new standards, the WCC is operating at 144% of capacity as judged by standards that are 25 years out of date. Even by the old guidelines, the facility is more crowded than Maguire, and by current space standards, the population level would be considered intolerable.

The facility is staffed at a minimum level by four officers on each shift. One officer out sick reduces the staff by 25%. If vacancies occur, either staff from Maguire fill in or officers are given overtime duty. Since Maguire is already at a minimum staff level, there have been times when no resources were available to replace vacancies and the women's facility was forced to manage with a dangerously low number of officers.

The former Women's Honor Camp, adjacent to the main facility, was closed recently and inmates moved into the main facility, adding even more to the overcapacity in the WCC. The Men's Honor Camp was closed at the same time; however, the Sheriff moved some of the Men's Honor Camp inmates into the former Women's Honor Camp location, and renamed it the Minimum Security Transitional Facility. There is currently no honor camp or minimum security option for women. As a result, the women have no opportunity to work outside the facility, except for one person participating in an outside baking program. Women inmates can serve meals and clean the dorms and dayrooms in exchange for extra privileges, but no longer can work in the kitchen now run by men from the Minimum Security Transitional Facility.

**Dormitories.** The dormitories surround a day room and appear neat and clean with some exercise equipment. Of the two outside areas, one can no longer be used by the women since the Men's Transitional Facility moved next door. Although the outdoor area is much smaller than Maguire's, it has some pleasant greenery and tables. Since a suicide occurred at the WCC in 2003, all inmates use the outside area at one time, with no inmates in their dorm unsupervised. The outside area is small, however, and crowding can lead to confrontations among the inmates. The situation that existed at the time the suicide occurred was corrected by replacing shower bars in the women's shower rooms with break-away shower rods.

This facility was designed strictly for warehousing individuals during their incarceration. Unlike Maguire it did not incorporate space for rehabilitation programs. Other than a small room for the CHOICES program, there is only one communal day room available for one class at a time. Inmates have access to Service League programs including NA, AA, CHOICES, GED tutoring, and Project READ, but because of space limitations, the Service League cannot provide the variety or frequency of programs the men receive at Maguire. The WCC shares the law library with Maguire. An inmate must submit a written request, and if approved, the inmate will be accompanied there.

Security. The WCC is far less secure than Maguire. One person is responsible for phones, paperwork, intake, money, and all nine administrative segregation rooms. The Grand Jury observed that all were filled on our visit. For any break, a staff person must get a deputy from the main floor, leaving only one person to handle all 121 inmates. A security system project is underway to provide 16 new high-resolution color cameras. Depending on the inmate, she may be allowed to walk from the visiting room to the dorm unescorted because staff can observe her on camera.

All doors in the facility are key-locked doors. Doors to the dorms, interior passageway doors, and all exterior doors can be unlocked by either key or the control panel at the deputy station.

Kitchen. The small kitchen at the facility is clean and well organized.

Medical. Mental health issues dominate the medical needs of the women inmates with 18% of the women classified as seriously mentally ill and 25% of the population on psychotropic medications. Up to 35% of the women in this facility suffer from Attention Deficit Disorder and 80%-90% have a drug or alcohol problem that may manifest itself as the inmate experiences withdrawals during detoxification. These inmates can be aggressive or violent and require a full complement of trained staff to handle all the needs associated with these conditions.

Visiting. Women inmates have two public visiting rooms and one attorney (contact) visiting room. Their visiting hours are in the evenings with the exception of Saturday and Sunday. They are allowed two visits a week for 30 minutes. Because of space restrictions, there is no place for childcare. Women may not have physical contact with their children unless approved by the court. Some staff discourage visits from children because they believe the environment is unpleasant and children should not be there.

A San Mateo County Jails Facts data comparison sheet is attached as Appendix A.

## **Men's Transitional Facility**



The Men's Transitional Facility (MSTF) houses male inmates who have not committed a crime of violence. The rated capacity for this facility is 46. They are housed here in the evening, and during the day they work in the kitchen, cleaning, or gardening. Many are also part of a fire safety crew cutting brush in the county. Men are here from a few weeks to a couple of months. Because of other job opportunities, very few participate in the Service League programs.

The Sheriff and Courts are to re-establishing opportunities for Work Furlough. Beds at MSTF are set aside for inmates with jobs who can continue with their employment. This will permit them to provide support to their families while they are incarcerated. Although this will not increase inmate housing, it will re-allocate existing beds.

### **Transportation Bureau**

The Transportation Bureau handles approximately 31,000 inmates a year. There are 58 staff members, including bailiffs for each courtroom and transportation deputies responsible for moving the inmates. An outside contractor is used to transport inmates around the state and for extraditions.

### **Security of the Holding Cells at the Hall of Justice and Records**

When inmates are scheduled for court appearances, they are transferred from the jails to holding cells located at the Hall of Justice and Records in Redwood City or the Superior

At the present time, family court is on the sixth floor of the Hall of Justice and Records, and transportation staff would like the family court moved to a more accessible area in the event an incident requires additional Sheriff's staff assistance. Deputies believe the emotion and stress associated with issues in family court may cause otherwise calm and controlled people to turn angry and violent.

### **The Service League of San Mateo County**

No overview of the jail facilities would be complete without discussing the Service League. This agency is present from the beginning of the incarceration process, providing orientation to in-jail programs and services, teaching classes, and assisting inmates upon their release. Volunteers are on site every day providing educational programs and facilitating communication with staff when problems arise.

The Service League is a nonprofit agency with 560 volunteers and 28 paid employees funded primarily from the Inmate Welfare Fund and the Alcohol and Drug Division of the Human Services Agency. Its primary goal is to provide rehabilitative and social services to county inmates, their families, and those recently released from jail.

Along with the programs already discussed, the Service League provides religious services in the jails for all faiths and various denominations, and provides Bibles, Korans and other religious materials in both English and Spanish at no cost to the inmates. Jury clothes for court appearances and a message/request program are also available. Last year the League handled over 142,000 inmate requests and family messages. Despite the high volume, requests are processed within three to five business days.

After release 5%-6% of the inmates have no support system. The Service League can provide emergency, short-term lodging, food, transportation, counseling and referrals resulting from advocacy and resource development in the county. Additionally, the Service League sponsors the Freedom and Recovery (FAR) program, a transitional clean and sober living environment for homeless men recently released from jail. It also offers women an option of a residential alcohol and drug treatment facility called Hope House.

The Service League meets monthly with staff from Maguire and WCC as part of the Program Review Committee. The Service League has noticed a marked improvement in the treatment of inmates over the years and has had success in bringing new programs into Maguire due primarily to the support of the Sheriff and the Captain of the Maguire Correctional Facility. The Sheriff continues to work with the Service League to offer additional programs and educational opportunities that would benefit both male and female inmates, using money available from the Inmate Welfare Fund. These programs include Choices, Bridges, Project Read, GED, ESL, Anger Management, and Life Skills.

### **Sheriff's Work Program**

Men and women sentenced to less than 90 days are eligible to serve out their term in work days instead of jail. This program currently has 438 people enrolled with approximately 115 working on any given day. Only nonprofits and public agencies qualify as work locations and the inmate must pay to participate, though indigent people can receive assistance. This program could accommodate up to 600 people. As jail overcrowding has increased, the threshold for allowing people to participate has decreased. Courts recommend the program, but the Sheriff's Department has the final say. The program seemed to be well organized, practically funds itself, and the Sheriff's Department continues to find new public entities and nonprofits willing to take on this responsibility.

## **Electronic Monitoring**

The Sheriff runs an electronic monitoring program currently used by nine inmates. An inmate must have at least a 30-day sentence and must pay to participate. The Probation Department is now testing this system with youth at Hillcrest. The new monitors use Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to track inmates at all times. Staff can go online at anytime and learn where an inmate has been, at what times, and what is their current location. The Court has been reluctant to use electronic monitoring as a sentencing tool, primarily because it is cautious about releasing offenders into the community, and concerned about their re-offending during a modified form of custody.

## **Task Force on Jail Overcrowding**

On September 15, 2004, the Jail Overcrowding Task Force representing many county departments, met to suggest possible solutions for overcrowding. A second meeting was held on October 21, 2004, followed by individual meetings with representatives of the Sheriff's Office in November and December. Supervisors Mike Nevin and Mark Church then met on December 9, 2004, to consider the reports from the earlier meetings. There have been several subsequent meetings that will result in a final report to be considered by the Board of Supervisors at a future meeting.

## **Conclusions**

Since the Grand Jury visits to the jails last year, many of the small problems have been rectified. Unfortunately, major problems with the men's and women's jail continue to exist. Both jails are severely overcrowded with a high turnover of employees. Women still do not have a minimum security option available nor work opportunities similar to those available in the men's facility.

On a positive note, the Board of Supervisors convened a task force on jail overcrowding with a broad range of representatives to look at possible solutions to these intractable problems, particularly the lack of financial resources.

The Jurors generally felt satisfied with the men's jails, especially noting the professionalism of the staff, the overall appearance of the facility, and the educational programs. Such was not the case with the women's facility. Although the facility was neat and clean and the jury was impressed with the staff, jurors expressed serious concerns about security, staffing, and space, reiterating many of the observations from the previous year.

The Grand Jury recognizes that solving these problems requires substantial resources and agreement from several parties, including the courts, probation, Board of Supervisors, and District Attorney among others. Despite these obstacles, the Grand Jury urges the

Sheriff to continue to push for changes that will decrease crowding and bring the women's facility up to par.

## **Recommendations**

1. The Board of Supervisors should continue with the sub-committee on Jail Overcrowding and the Jail Overcrowding Task Force to determine the most feasible solutions to the problem and implement those solutions.
2. The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should immediately develop a plan to replace the existing Women's Correctional Center with a new facility that meets the California Board of Corrections current standards. This new facility should include room for multiple classes, child care, an honor camp, and more opportunities for work inside the facility.
3. The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should complete installation of the security cameras in the Women's Correctional Center immediately.
4. The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should make expanding the Choices program a priority in both the men's and the women's jails.
5. The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should add one additional staff person to the Women's Correctional Center.

## Appendix

### 2004-2005 San Mateo County Grand Jury Jails Visit – Jails Facts

SAN MATEO COUNTY JAILS FACTS Item	Maguire Aug-03	Maguire Oct-04	Women's Aug-03	Women's Oct-04
Staff to inmate ratio	1 to 64	1 to 64		3 to 131
Ideal ratio	1 to 48	1 to 48		5 to 131
% of high risk inmates	52%	53%		11%
Avg. number of inmates	914	925		121
Sentenced	393	436		74
Non-sentenced	521	489		47
BOC rating	688	688		84
Maximum capacity	1083	1083		153
Bookings	18426	18266		3320
Cost per day to house an inmate	\$95.17	\$120		\$174.34
Inmate assaults:				
On staff	10	31		3
On other inmates	58	33		35
Number of escape attempts	3	1		1
Number of escapes	0	0		0
<b>Combined Maguire and Women's Correctional Facility</b>				
Percent of inmates believed to be aliens	5.90%	5%		
Dollars spent on medication in prev. quarter	\$45,581	\$77,853		
Dollars spent on psychotropic medications in previous quarter	\$66,030	\$89,882		
Number of mental health cases open	133	252		
Average number felony inmates	526	572		
Average number non-felon inmates	548	533		
Cost per meal per inmate		\$1.54		



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

County Manager's Office

**DATE:** August 3, 2005  
**BOARD MEETING DATE:** August 16, 2005  
**SPECIAL NOTICE:** None  
**VOTE REQUIRED:** None

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** John L. Maltbie, County Manager  
**SUBJECT:** 2004-05 Grand Jury Response

**Recommendation**

Accept this report containing the County's response to the 2004-05 Grand Jury reports: San Mateo County Jails and Homeland Security in San Mateo County; and the County's update to the June 21<sup>st</sup> response on Improving Water Quality Flowing to the Ocean and Bay.

**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. It is also the County's policy to provide periodic updates to the Board and the Grand Jury on the progress of past Grand Jury recommendations requiring ongoing or further action. To that end, attached are the County's responses to the Grand Jury's reports on Homeland Security in San Mateo County issued June 2, 2005 and San Mateo County Jails issued June 14, 2005. An update to the County's June 21, 2005 response to the Grand Jury on Improving Water Quality Flowing to the Ocean and Bay has also been included.

# San Mateo County Jails

## Findings:

Agree with the findings. While jail overcrowding continues to be a problem, on-going steps are being taken to address overcrowding issues and identify solutions. Working with other Divisions within the Sheriff's Office as well as the Courts and other San Mateo County Criminal Justice Agencies, Jail Administration is reviewing alternative approaches to managing jail overcrowding and increases in gang and mentally ill inmate populations.

The Women's Correctional Facility is outdated and does not afford sufficient space or programming resources to effectively manage the women inmate population. The County is committed to identifying an appropriate solution to the outdated and outmoded facility.

## Recommendation:

**1. The Board of Supervisors should continue with the sub-committee on Jail Overcrowding and the Jail Overcrowding Task Force to determine the most feasible solutions to the problem and implement those solutions.**

**Response:** Concur. The Jail Overcrowding Task Force will convene to review a final report that recommends on-going monitoring of jail population trends by a position added to Maguire Administration during the FY 2005-06 budget process. Task Force members will be provided with regular updates on jail population trends and recommended solutions as needed. Task Force members will reconvene on a semi-annual or as-needed basis as long as overcrowding issues continue at the jail.

**2. The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should immediately develop a plan to replace the existing Women's Correctional Center with a new facility that meets the California Board of Corrections current standards. This new facility should include room for multiple classes, child care, an honor camp, and more opportunities for work inside the facility.**

**Response:** Concur. In June 2005, the Board of Supervisors adopted the FY 2005-06 Recommended Budget, which includes funds to hire a consultant to conduct a needs and site assessment for a new Women's Correctional Center.

**3. The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should complete installation of security cameras in the Women's Correctional Center immediately.**

**Response:** Concur. Installation of security cameras at the Women's Correctional Center is nearly complete.

**4. The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should make expanding the Choices Program a priority in both the men's and the women's jails.**

**Response:** Concur. The Maguire Correctional Facility will work with Correctional Health Services, the Service League, and the Classification Unit to review solutions for

expanding the Choices Programs and other identified programs throughout the facility to provide accessible services to the inmate population. The existing Women's Correctional Center does not have the physical capacity to expand the Choices Program; however, the County remains committed to the program and will consider its expansion as a part of the Women's correctional programming and facility needs assessment scheduled to begin in the fall.

Jail Administration is also reviewing the possibility of establishing inmate computer workstations with Microsoft Office and limited Internet Access for inmates located in the pod's multi-purpose rooms and will review other optional program enhancements.

**5. The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should add one additional staff person to the Women's Correctional Center.**

**Response:** Concur in part. Given the sustained increase in inmate population at the Women's Correctional Center, the availability of resources to fund one additional staff member per team in FY 2005-06 will be considered at the September Budget Hearings.





# COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

400 COUNTY CENTER • REDWOOD CITY • CALIFORNIA 94063

TELEPHONE (650) 599-1664

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE SHERIFF

June 17, 2005

Honorable Norman J. Gatzert  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice and Records  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Grand Jury Report : SAN MATEO COUNTY JAILS

Dear Judge Gatzert:

In response to the San Mateo Grand Jury's report concerning county jails, we are in agreement with their findings and offer the below clarifications to update and reflect changes since their inspections:

## Summary

### Maguire Correctional Facilities (Detention Division)

The Maguire Correctional Facility (Maguire) and the Women's Correctional Center (WCC), both located in Redwood City, are well run but have overcrowded facilities. The professionalism and quality of the staff at both locations are noteworthy, especially given the demands placed on everyone by a high inmate/staff ratio.

## Response

Concur with these findings;

The Maguire Correctional Facility is the largest housing facility and the only receiving correctional facility for adult offenders in San Mateo County. The Detention Division has been working to develop alternatives to incarceration with the Custody Division, Probation and the Courts to manage the growing inmate population. We are very proud of our well trained and professional staff. We will continue to train our staff in regards to inmate management and progressive discipline steps for establishing positive inmate behavior.

Implementation of our New Facility Training Program tracking and reporting database system will assist in accomplishing that goal.

## **Background**

Overcrowded finding; Maguire Correctional Facility has a rating of 688 inmates, but in October of 2004, 925 inmates were housed there, at least 134% of capacity. This overcrowded has resulted in a staff-to-inmate ratio of 1:64. The ideal ratio according to the California Board of Corrections is 1:45.

Overcrowding remains an ongoing, serious problem that can lead to increased assaults on staff and other inmates, high stress for staff, increased overtime costs, and higher turnover of staff. Along with overcrowding there is a rising number of “at risk” inmates and inmates with mental illness. Inmates are classified “at risk” if they are assaultive, gang affiliated, pose a risk of escape, or are in need of protective custody.

## **Response**

Concur with these findings; however, I would note the Board of Corrections does not identify an ideal staff to inmate ratio. Comments indicating opposing gang members are ‘always’ separated during transport and suicidal inmates are ‘never’ housed alone should be interpreted as general preference. Staffing and inmate behavior considerations may interfere with these objectives.

In addition to working with other criminal justice agencies and divisions within the Sheriff’s Office, we are reviewing alternatives to managing jail crowding in conjunction with the increase of gang and mentally ill inmates. The Maguire Correctional Facility continues to collaborate with Correctional Health Services by creating Behavior and Safety Management Plans for “at-risk” inmates, which provide a written guide by inmate management specialists for a successful incarceration period.

We are also in the process of creating a Closed Supervision Pod managed by our Classification Unit. The establishment of this pod will provide improved inmate management for inmates classified as “at-risk” due to gang involvement, suicide potential, escape risk, and physiological needs. The implementation of this housing pod will allow staff to better monitor and control those inmates identified as disruptive and persistent rule violators. It will include those who have been assaultive towards staff and other inmates. It will provide dedicated space to manage inmates with mental illnesses. Thus, this should provide a safer and more controlled environment for staff and inmates.

## **Women's Correctional Center(Custody Division)**

### **Summary**

The WCC was already outdated by the time it was built in 1980. Before the facility was completed square footage allotted to each inmate by the Board of Corrections was increased by 40% in dayroom space and 25% in dorm room space. Despite the new standards WCC still operates around 144% of capacity. Staffing is at a minimum level with four officers on each shift.

The Women's Honor Camp was closed which added to the crowding in WCC. There are no opportunities for women to work outside the facility.

### **Response**

Concur with these findings; the option noted in the report permitting one woman to participate in a baking program outside the facility was eliminated when the provider discontinued the program. Further modifications were made to shower curtains and rods in the dormitories since the Grand Jury's visit to increase staff ability to monitor at risk inmates.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Board of Supervisors should continue with the sub-committee on Jail Overcrowding and the Jail Overcrowding Task Force to determine the most feasible solutions to the problem and implement those solutions.

### **Response**

Concur with these findings; the committee pointed out the need to better understand jail population dynamics and the affects of the Court, District Attorney and Probation. The department is now seeking an analyst to assist in better monitoring the inmate populations and coordinate theses efforts before the committee meets again.

2. The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should immediately develop a plan to replace the existing Women's Correctional Center with a new facility that meets the California Board of Corrections current standards. This new facility should included room for multiple classes, child care, an honor camp, and more opportunities for work inside the facility.

**Response**

Concur with these findings; replacement of the Women's Correctional Center with a facility that meets current standards and provides adequate housing and opportunity for inmates is a departmental priority. A Sheriff's Captain has been assigned to initiate planning for the facility and a management analyst is being sought to develop information on inmate population trends. This recommendation, however, presents a significant financial expenditure for the County. Currently, the source of funding is not identified. A timetable for completion cannot be determined.

3. The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should complete installation of the security cameras in the Women's Correctional Center immediately.

**Response**

Concur with these findings; this work is underway. Several cameras have been installed and wire is currently being laid to finalize work on the project.

4. The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should make expanding the Choices program a priority in both the men's and the women's jails.

**Response**

Concur with these findings;

Choices is a voluntary program which serves willing participants. The Maguire Correctional Facility will work with Correctional Health Services and others to try and expand participation in this worthwhile program to all interested inmates. One meeting with two members of the Board of Supervisors has occurred and a second is scheduled to determine the means of accomplishing an expansion of program services.

We are also reviewing the possibility of training inmates in computer skills by placing computer work stations with Microsoft Office in the pod multi-purpose rooms. The facility is in the process of upgrading our computer workstations and may have enough re-furnished units to accomplish this. In addition we will review other optional program enhancements.

5. The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should add one additional staff person to the Women's' Correctional Center.

**Response**

Concur with these findings. An additional person is needed on each team in the facility to ensure adequate and safe staffing. A request for this staffing will be made to the Board of Supervisors at the September Budget Adjustment meeting

**Closing**

The Sheriff's Office concurs with the findings of the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury on the above mentioned areas and will work towards achieving those identified goals. In conclusion, we appreciate this comprehensive review and provided perspectives from the members of the 2005 Civil Grand Jury.

Sincerely,

DON HORSLEY, Sheriff

Copy: Clerk of the Court  
Grand Jury website  
Board of Supervisors