

CITY OF SANTA MARIA
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

110 EAST COOK STREET, ROOM #1 • SANTA MARIA, CA 93454-5190 • 805-925-0951 • FAX 805-349-0657 • www.ci.santa-maria.ca.us

August 8, 2007

The Honorable Judge Rodney Melville
Superior Court
312-M East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93455-5165

Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
Attention: Foreperson
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Honorable Judge Melville & Grand Jury Foreperson:

The 2006-07 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury recently released two reports entitled regarding *Law, Justice and Public Safety: Selected Community Challenges, and Detention Facilities Inspections* which names the City of Santa Maria and the Santa Maria Police Department as affected agencies. As such, the City is required to respond to applicable findings and recommendations within 90 days of the report issuance.

The City of Santa Maria would like to acknowledge the effort of the Grand Jury in preparation of the following two reports.

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING
LAW, JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY: SELECTED COMMUNITY CHALLENGES.

Finding 1: Greater use of medium security detention facilities, staffed by law enforcement and clinical experts, could reduce jail overcrowding and provide more humane treatment for some segments of the inmate population.

City Response: The City agrees with the finding.

Finding 2: Allegations of negligent or improper treatment of inmates in the Main Jail could not be verified but such claims were not isolated.

City Response: The City disagrees partially with the finding to the extent that the City is not in a position to adequately respond to the finding since the Main Jail is outside our jurisdiction and the City was not privileged to the actual investigative interviews conducted by the Grand Jury.

Finding 3: The influence of gang activity in the detention system is pernicious and its impact on the growth of neighborhood gangs may increase if not checked.

City Response: The City disagrees partially with the finding to the extent that the City is not in a position to adequately respond to the finding since the Main Jail is outside our jurisdiction and the City does not have the demographic population of gang-related activity within the County detention system.

Finding 4: The California Civil Code (1714.1 & 1714.3) prescribes the liability of parents or guardians for the misconduct of children within their custody and control.

City Response: The City agrees with the finding.

Finding 5: There is a growing disregard for traffic laws and this can contribute to disregard for the law in general.

City Response: The City agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 1: Develop more medium security detention facilities as alternatives to incarceration in the Main Jail.

City Response: The recommendation requires further analysis on the part of the County of Santa Barbara. However, the City does not have jurisdiction over County issues so any further explanation or timeframe pertaining to this issue would have to be addressed by County officials.

Recommendation 2: Authorize and fund a court appointed ombudsman who is beholden neither to detention authorities nor to inmate advocacy groups and who is devoted to evaluating and reporting on complaints.

City Response: The recommendation requires further analysis on the part of the County of Santa Barbara. However, the City does not have jurisdiction over County issues so any further explanation or timeframe pertaining to this issue would have to be addressed by County officials.

Recommendation 3: Implement a sustainable educational program on the negative impact of gang activity, involving law enforcement and the education experts, focusing on children K-8 and including outreach to parents.

City Response: The recommendation has been implemented. The City has a sustainable educational program on the negative impacts of gang activity by way of their DARE Program, School Resource Officers and their involvement in Fighting Back Santa Maria Valley.

Recommendation 4: The District Attorney should proactively inform parents or guardians that under the provisions of the California Civil Code they are liable for the misconduct of their children.

City Response: The recommendation requires further analysis on the part of the District Attorney's Office. However, since the City does not have jurisdiction over County operations, any further explanation or timeframe pertaining to this issue would have to be addressed by the District Attorney's Office.

Recommendation 5: Place greater emphasis on enforcement and implement a public awareness program regarding the bad habits of drivers and bicyclists.

City Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented during this next fiscal year by way of incorporating the above recommendation into the goals and objectives of the Santa Maria Police Department.

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION REGARDING
DETENTION FACILITIES INSPECTIONS

Finding 1: In all inspections of detention facilities throughout Santa Barbara County, none were found to be substandard with respect to regulations.

City Response: The City agrees with the finding as it pertains to the Santa Maria Police Department.

Finding 2: Inspections revealed no major flaws or shortfalls in staff performance.

City Response: The City agrees with the finding as it pertains to the Santa Maria Police Department.

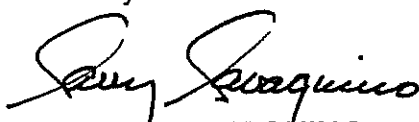
Finding 3: Staff have used initiative and ingenuity to achieve positive results during periods of reduced resources.

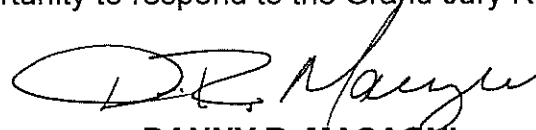
City Response: The City agrees with the finding as it pertains to the Santa Maria Police Department.

Recommendation 3: Supervisory staff should continue to encourage personnel to use initiative to have a positive impact on the work environment.

City Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

The City of Santa Maria welcomes this opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury Report.


LARRY J. LAVAGNINO
Mayor


DANNY R. MACAGNI
Chief of Police