



OFFICE OF
SHERIFF-CORONER

COUNTY OF SAN JOAQUIN

7000 Michael N. Canlis Blvd.
French Camp, California 95231-9781

September 17, 2020

Patrick Withrow
Sheriff-Coroner
Public Administrator

*The Honorable Xapuri B. Villapudua, Presiding Judge
San Joaquin County Superior Court
180 East Weber Avenue, Suite 1306J
Stockton, California 95202*

Dear Judge Villapudua:

**RE: RESPONSE TO 2019-2020 GRAND JURY FINDINGS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS – HOMELESSNESS IN SAN JOAQUIN
COUNTY**

*Listed below are the Sheriff's Office responses to findings and
recommendations made by the 2019-2020 Grand Jury in regard to
"Homelessness in San Joaquin County – Building on a Foundation:
Collaboration and Communication".*

GRAND JURY FINDINGS & SHERIFF'S OFFICE RESPONSES

FINDING F1.1: None of the four Designated Lead Departments has provided a plain language website that describes their efforts in addressing and limiting the impacts of homelessness, leaving many San Joaquin residents with the false impression that the County is doing little or nothing to address homelessness.

Response to Finding F1.1: *The respondent (San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office) agrees with the finding. The San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office will be adding this content to the department's webpage.*

FINDING F1.2: The Community Car Program adds value to the community by reducing response times for calls for service, supporting the Encampment Response Team, and limiting the impacts of homelessness in San Joaquin County.

Response to Finding F1.2.: *The respondent (San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office) agrees with the finding. The Community Car Program is not a new*

*Letter to: The Honorable Xapuri Villapudua, Presiding Judge
San Joaquin County Superior Court
Re: Response to 2019-2020 Grand Jury Findings & Recommendations
September 17, 2020
Page 2*

idea for the Sheriff's Office. This Office had a Community Car Program deployed in many communities throughout San Joaquin County from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. The program was abandoned in the early 1990s due to budget constraints.

In the 1990s, the Sheriff's Office adopted the Community-Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) and Scanning Analysis Response Assessment (SARA) philosophies. These philosophies promoted and supported organizational strategies to address the causes and reduce the fear of crime and social disorder through problem-solving tactics and police-community partnerships. Interactions between law enforcement and residents within our communities are central to these philosophies.

The Community Car concept also incorporates these philosophies. Through the redeployment of the Community Car Program, the Sheriff's Office returned to addressing and solving problems within our communities. Community Car deputies foster community partnerships by implementing problem-solving strategies that ultimately build trust between the Sheriff's Office and the communities they serve.

The Community Car Program seeks to reduce crime and the fear of crime by: identifying and abating community nuisance, blight, and substandard living conditions; identifying and comprehensively responding to emerging crime trends; enhancing community safety; and protecting life and property. As a result, the Sheriff's Office is able to:

- Reduce the response times of calls for service*
- Increase Sheriff's Office presence in problem areas*
- Address problems that cause a reduction in the quality of life of community residents*
- Create and strengthen relationships with members of the public in communities served by the Sheriff's Office*

FINDING F1.4: The four Designated Lead Departments are successfully prioritizing homelessness and implementing the Quality of Life Policy to address and limit the impacts of homelessness in San Joaquin County.

Response to Finding F1.4: The respondent (San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office) agrees with the finding. In February and March of 2020, the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office spearheaded a multi-agency operation to

Letter to: The Honorable Xapuri Villapudua, Presiding Judge
San Joaquin County Superior Court
Re: Response to 2019-2020 Grand Jury Findings & Recommendations
September 17, 2020
Page 3

eradicate massive homeless encampments along an approximate five-mile stretch of the Diverting Canal between Highway 99 and West Lane, in unincorporated areas of Stockton. These encampments were proven to be the root cause of multiple incidents of arson, theft, burglary, environmental waste, and major damage to the infrastructure protecting the community from flooding.

Deputies, along with social service providers, contacted over 150 individuals and offered them drug-treatment assistance, housing, financial assistance, and mental-health services. Only one person accepted these resources when offered.

After days of reaching out and offering assistance, the encampments were posted with "72 Hours to Vacate" notices. After the noticed time had expired, efforts began to remove the encampments and to clean and revitalize the entire area. The operation resulted in 15 arrests, the disposal of over 78 tons of trash and debris, the removal of over 85 tires, and the disposal of over 100 containers of human waste.

Crime decreased significantly in the residential and commercial areas surrounding the canal. Children and parents were once again able to enjoy walking and riding bikes along the canal again without fear of becoming crime victims. The area continues to be well-maintained to this day as a result of efforts by the Sheriff's Community Car Deputies.

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS & SHERIFF'S OFFICE RESPONSES

The San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office was directed by the Grand Jury to respond to Recommendation R1.2. The response to that recommendation is as follows:

RECOMMENDATION R1.2: By October 1, 2020, the Sheriff's Office assign four additional deputies to the Community Car Program, for a total of eight deputies.

Response to Recommendation R1.2: *The Sheriff's Office intends to assign a total of 22 Deputies to the Community Car Program; however, the Sheriff's Office currently has 41 vacant Deputy Sheriff positions. Being able to achieve the goal of assigning 22 Community Car Deputies will depend greatly on the success of the recruitment and hiring process. The Sheriff's Office is currently*

Letter to: *The Honorable Xapuri Villapudua, Presiding Judge*
San Joaquin County Superior Court
Re: *Response to 2019-2020 Grand Jury Findings & Recommendations*
September 17, 2020
Page 4

in the midst of a massive recruitment effort that includes purchasing television and digital ads, streamlining the background and testing process, and offering a signing bonus to new hires.

Based on current staffing projections, the Sheriff's Office will assign two additional Deputies to the Community Car Program effective September 28, 2020; two additional Deputies in December 2020; and two-to-four additional Deputies in March of 2021.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Withrow", written over a horizontal line.

PATRICK WITHROW
Sheriff – Public Administrator

PW/JML:vmm

cc: *Kathy Miller, Chairperson, Board of Supervisors*
Rachel DeBord, Clerk of the Board
Monica Nino, County Administrator
ec: *Undersheriff Matt Lenzi*
Assistant Sheriff Shelby Oliver