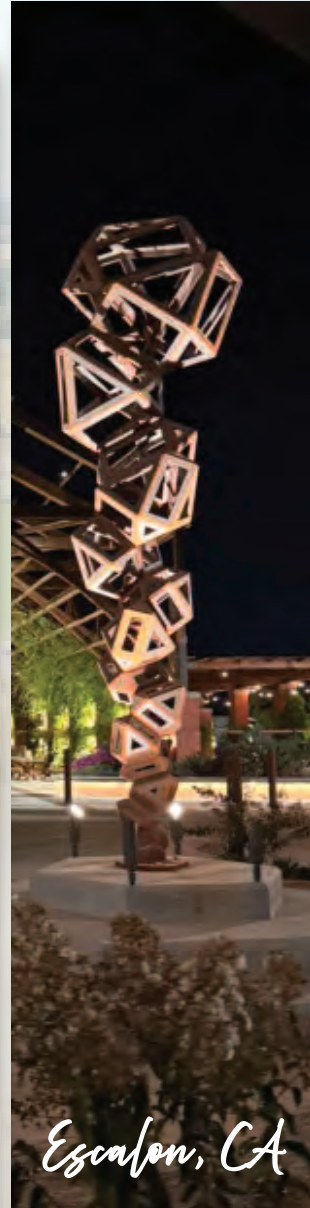


San Joaquin County



FINAL REPORT

2025 - 2026 CIVIL GRAND JURY

Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction	5
Section 2: Investigations	21
Section 3: Continuity	63
Section 4: Law and Justice	107
Section 5: Impact and Innovation	125
Section 6: Civil Grand Jury	191

Introduction

Section 1:

Introduction

Letter from Advising Judge 7

Letter from Foreperson 9

2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Roster
and Officers 11

Presentations and Tours 14

About San Joaquin County 16

San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors 18



Superior Court of California, County of San Joaquin
180 E. Weber Avenue, Ste 1306J
Stockton, CA 95202
Telephone: (209) 992-5695

June 15, 2026

The Superior Court of California, County of San Joaquin thanks and commends the 2025-2026 Grand Jurors for their conscientious efforts on behalf of all San Joaquin County citizens. The Grand Jurors undertook and completed their duties with great industry, intelligence and care.

The Grand Jury is composed of qualified individuals who applied for membership, those drawn from the community and individuals nominated by community leaders. The chosen citizens serve as an independent body under the court's authority. The 2025-2026 San Joaquin County Grand Jury now takes its place in a long history of citizen involvement in civic life which was born in the English Common Law of 1166, adopted during the American Colonial period and codified in California in the 1880s. The 2025-2026 Grand Jurors' thoughtful and constructive recommendations will help ensure the highest quality civic life to which all citizens are entitled.

As the Grand Jury Advisor and Supervisor, it has been my privilege to review the work of the 2025-2026 Grand Jury. The Grand Jurors also received well considered advice from their highly experienced Advisors, Assistant County Counsel Ms. Kimberly Johnson, the Assistant District Attorney Mr. Richard Price and the invaluable assistance of the Superior Court administrators, Ms. Ruby Atwal and Ms. Krystal Gonzalez. Among their accomplishments, the Grand Jurors undertook consideration of the work of governmental institutions responsible for the daily life of municipalities and their citizens. The Grand Jurors also made careful efforts to follow through on the work of their predecessors thereby assuring the community that the San Joaquin County Grand Jury as an institution sustains its role in the County's civic life. The Grand Jury Final Report educates the public through well written accounts of the work, findings and recommendations of these devoted citizens. The Grand Jurors' recommendations are deserving of careful consideration by government officials and the citizenry.

The efforts, commitment, collective wisdom and experience of these dedicated individuals will continue to better the civic life of all San Joaquin County residents. To each member of the 2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury, for your many accomplishments, the Superior Court extends its congratulations and gratitude.

Hon. George J. Abdallah, Jr.
Supervising Judge of the San Joaquin County Grand Juries



Civil Grand Jury

County of San Joaquin
180 E. Weber Avenue, Ste. 1114
Stockton, CA 95202

June 10, 2026

Hon. Lance G. Jacot
Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California
County of San Joaquin
180 E. Weber Avenue, Ste. 1306J
Stockton, CA 95202

Hon. George J. Abdallah, Jr.
Advising Judge to the Civil Grand Jury
Superior Court of California
County of San Joaquin
180 E. Weber Avenue, Ste. 1306J
Stockton, CA 95202

Judge Jacot and Judge Abdallah:

On behalf of the 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury, I respectfully submit to you and the citizen's of San Joaquin County the Final Report for our term.

The duty of the Civil Grand Jury is to investigate and report on the affairs of local government and to investigate allegations of misconduct against public officials. This can include breaches in public trust, inefficiencies in government operations and the mismanagement of public resources. The Civil Grand Jury is also mandated to inquire into all detention facilities located in the county. Throughout this term, the Civil Grand Jury took this responsibility seriously and carried out their work with professionalism and respect for the process.

This report reflects the collective efforts of the jury during the past twelve months. It is the result of hours of research, interviews, investigations, and site visits. Each finding and recommendation represents thoughtful discussion, collaboration, and corroboration among jurors before conclusions were reached.

While much attention is often directed toward identifying shortcomings, it is equally important to acknowledge those agencies and departments that operate efficiently and responsibly. Recognizing good governance is a necessary part of maintaining public trust.

During our work, we were reminded that accountability is essential to effective governance. When oversight is absent and accountability is not expected, decision-making can shift toward what serves individual interests rather than the broader needs of the community. At the same time, we also learned that our county is fortunate to be served by many hardworking, dedicated, officials and staff who take pride in their work and in serving the public.

During our term, we received 34 complaints. Though we could not investigate all of them, each one was given due consideration. Before our term ended we had conducted numerous interviews, received over 27 presentations and participated in 17 tours.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the departments and individuals who generously gave their time to present information, arrange tours and educate the Jury on various aspects of governmental operations.

We would like to bring special attention to the exceptional support received from our Judicial Secretaries, Irving Jimenez, who was only with us for a few months and Krystal Gonzalez, who stepped in seamlessly. You made our job easier and kept us moving forward. To our legal advisors, County Counsel, Kimberly Johnson and ADA, Richard Price—your steady guidance and patience meant more than words can say. To the CGJA, your training and continued support gave us the knowledge and tools needed to serve effectively.

I would like to express my gratitude to Judge Abdallah for placing your trust in me to serve as Foreperson. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to take part in this. It has been an honor to serve the court under your leadership.

To my fellow jurors, thank you for your trust and dedication. It has been a privilege to serve alongside a group committed to public service.

Finally, I encourage every resident to consider serving on the Civil Grand Jury. Democracy is strongest when everyday people step forward. Our government—and our community—grows better when we show up and take part.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrystena M. Rockett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chrystena M. Rockett, Foreperson
2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury

CIVIL GRAND JURY MEMBERS

Alex Reynon	Stockton
Ameni Alexander	Tracy
April Marco	Manteca
Ce'Mara Griffith	Stockton
Chrystena Rockett*	Tracy
David Cook	Stockton
David Matsuyama*	Manteca
Gary Armstrong	Lodi
Heather Smiddy	Tracy
Jerry Ruiz*	Stockton
Melissa Case	Stockton
Patrick Piggott	Stockton
Roberto Alaniz	Manteca
Robert Gianelli	Stockton
Sheila Holloway*	Tracy
Sheila Ward-Shaw*	Stockton
Steve Beebe	Stockton
Vern St. Clair	Lodi

Resigned during the year: Bret Deboer, Chris Dickey

*Holdover from 2024 – 2025 Civil Grand Jury

2025 - 2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury



*Back row, left to right: Vern St. Clair, Robert Gianelli, Heather Smiddy, Jerry Ruiz
Middle row, left to right: Gary Armstrong, David Cook, Sheila Holloway, Melissa Case, April Marco
Front row, left to right: Patrick Piggott, Ameni Alexander, Ce'Mara Griffith, Chrystena Rockett, Steve Beebe,
Sheila Ward-Shaw, Roberto Alaniz Not pictured: David Matsuyama, Alex Reynon*

2025-2026 SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

CIVIL GRAND JURY OFFICERS

Chrystena Rockett, Foreperson
David Matsuyama, Pro-tem
Steve Beebe, Pro-tem
Alex Reynon, Secretary
Robert Gianelli, Sergeant at Arms
Sheila Holloway, Parliamentarian
Melissa Case, Treasurer
Ce'Mara Griffith, IT/Technology

CIVIL GRAND JURY COMMITTEES

Complaints
Continuity
Editorial
Health, Education and Social Services
Independent Special Districts
Investigations
Law and Justice
Social

PRESIDING JUDGES OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

Honorable Lance G. Jacot, Presiding Judge
Honorable Jayne Chong-Soon Lee, Assistant Presiding Judge

CIVIL GRAND JURY ADVISORS AND LEGAL STAFF

Advising Judge to the Civil Grand Jury
Honorable George J. Abdallah, Jr.

Irving Jimenez, Judicial Secretary
Krystal Gonzalez, Judicial Secretary
Melody Cosgrove, Judicial Secretary
Kimberly Johnson, County Counsel
Richard Price, Assistant District Attorney

PRESENTATIONS AND SITE TOURS

Presentations by San Joaquin County Divisions, Departments, Agencies and Commissions

Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures

Auditor – Controller

CENCAL Fire and EMS Authority

City of Stockton Office of Violence Prevention

County Administrator’s Office

District Attorney’s Office

Emergency Medical Services

Health Care Services Agency

Human Services Agency/Child Services

Office of Emergency Services

Port of Stockton*

Purchasing and Support

Registrar of Voters*

San Joaquin County General Hospital*

San Joaquin Local Agency Formation Commission (SJLAFCO)

San Joaquin County Office of Education*

Stockton Metropolitan Airport

Presentations by City Departments or Agencies

City of Stockton Animal Services

City of Stockton Office of Violence Prevention

Lodi Access Center*

Manteca Homeless Navigation Center*

Tracy Emergency Homeless Shelter*

Tracy Fire Station 96

Other presentations and Tours

California Health Care Facility*

Central Valley Low Income Housing Corporation

Haven of Peace*

San Joaquin County Continuum of Care

St. Mary's Community Services/Zeiter Navigation Center*

**Presentation included facility tour*

ABOUT SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

Population	797,334(2024)
Area	1,426 square miles
Climate	Mediterranean (hot, dry summers and mild winters)
Type of Government	Council-Administrator
Governing Body	Elected Board of Supervisors
Number of Cities	8 – Escalon, Lathrop, Lodi, Manteca, Mountain House, Ripon, Stockton, and Tracy

San Joaquin County is widely recognized for its rich agricultural heritage, supported by fertile soils and a favorable climate. These conditions make the county one of the most productive agricultural regions in California. Key crops include cherries, almonds, olives, and winegrapes, along with a strong presence in dairy, livestock, and poultry production. The Lodi region alone encompasses approximately 82,000 acres of winegrapes and contributes roughly 20 percent of California’s total wine production, supported by more than 700 independent growers cultivating over 125 grape varieties.

San Joaquin County is also distinguished by its cultural diversity. It is consistently ranked among the top five most diverse counties in California with a wide range of ethnic communities and religious traditions contributing to the region’s character. This diversity is reflected in longstanding institutions such as Temple Israel in Stockton, which maintains the oldest continuously used Jewish cemetery west of the Rocky Mountains, and the Gurdwara Sahib Stockton, established in 1912 and recognized as the oldest Sikh temple in the United States.

The City of Stockton, the county seat, serves as a major economic center and is home to the Port of Stockton, the largest inland deep-water seaport on the West Coast. Located along the banks of the San Joaquin River more than 70 nautical miles from the Pacific Ocean, the port plays a vital role in international trade, with key exports including bagged rice, bulk sulfur, and wood pellets.

Each of the county's eight cities contributes to its economic and cultural vitality. Mountain House, incorporated on July 1, 2024, is California's newest city. Tracy has evolved from its origins as a railroad hub into a growing community that connects the Central Valley to the Bay Area. Lathrop is currently among the fastest-growing cities in the state. Ripon is known for its annual Almond Blossom Festival, while Escalon is home to one of the largest walnut processing facilities in the country. Manteca and the surrounding areas are notable for producing more than one million pounds of pumpkins each year.

Beyond the incorporated cities, San Joaquin County includes several unincorporated communities such as Linden, Woodbridge, and Lockeford. These areas offer a rural lifestyle rooted in agriculture, with access to vineyards, orchards, and local festivals that reflect the county's deep farming traditions.

San Joaquin County also has a rich historical legacy. On September 8, 1869, the completion of the San Joaquin River Bridge marked the final link of the Transcontinental Railroad, solidifying the region's role in national transportation and commerce. Today, the county includes 18 islands and more than 1,000 miles of inland waterways, further contributing to its unique geographic and economic landscape.

Together, these characteristics—agricultural strength, economic opportunity, cultural diversity, and historical significance—make San Joaquin County a dynamic and vibrant place to live, work, and visit.

San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors

Phone: (209)468-2350 E-Mail: allboardmembers@sjgov.org

The Board meets regularly on Tuesdays at 9:00am unless noticed otherwise.

Mario Gardea

SUPERVISOR - DISTRICT 1

Jan 2025 - Jan 2029

mgardea@sjgov.org

Paul Canepa

SUPERVISOR - DISTRICT 2

Jan 2023 - Jan 2027

pcanepa@sjgov.org

Sonny Dhaliwal

SUPERVISOR - DISTRICT 3

Jan 2025 - Jan 2029

sdhaliwal@sjgov.org

Steven J. Ding

SUPERVISOR - DISTRICT 4

Jan 2023 - Jan 2027

sding@sjgov.org

Robert Rickman

SUPERVISOR - DISTRICT 5

Jan 2025 - Jan 2029

rrickman@sjgov.org

This page left intentionally blank.

Investigations



Section 2: Investigations

Stockton City Council
Governance in Turmoil - Case #0125 23

San Joaquin Local Agency Formation
Commission Coordinating and Planning Growth
Case #0225 47

2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury



Stockton City Council

Governance in Turmoil

Case No. 0125

Release Date: June, 2026



Front of Stockton City Hall (Photo by: Civil Grand Jury)

SUMMARY

What began as an investigation by the 2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury (25-26 CGJ) into complaints regarding alleged Brown Act violations of confidentiality by Stockton City Council (SCC) members revealed far deeper problems with the business of City governance. A pattern of repeated conflicts between Council members emerged over time, suggesting a power struggle within the Council. Key members of the Council appeared to put their personal and political interests ahead of their duty to make sound business and policy decisions for the residents of Stockton. The absence of a permanent full-time City Manager for most of the 2025 calendar year resulted in a lack of checks and balances that typically define the City Council/City Manager system of governance. This report examines how internal battles at City Hall came to dominate the SCC, often at the expense of the City and its citizens whom the Council members were elected to serve.

During the investigation, additional questions emerged about certain decisions and actions taken by the SCC, individual Council members, and the Interim City Manager. Many of these issues evolved into public accusations of impropriety, incompetence and corruption. Community frustration with the behavior of Council members in public meetings grew rapidly. Consequently, the 25-26 CGJ investigation expanded over time to examine many of these decisions and actions to determine if any were violations of law, the City Charter, City Ordinances, administrative regulations or misconduct of public officials. Through document review, interviews, and in person and online observation of SCC meetings, the 25-26 CGJ determined that the issues and the scope of this investigation would extend well beyond the initial complaints of alleged Brown Act violations.

The investigation identified systemic problems related to governance, leadership instability, internal conflict, and adherence to legal and ethical standards. The scope of the investigation was expanded to assess the overall effectiveness, conduct, financial accountability, and capability of the SCC to fulfill its management responsibilities. The 25-26 CGJ found that persistent dysfunction and ethical challenges within the SCC limited its role as the legislative body of city government. Rather than tending to the business of the City, entrenched

infighting, a consistent 4–3 voting division, and public disputes between Council members have become the hallmarks of this Council. These conditions resulted in executive instability in the City Manager’s office marked by the sudden resignation of then City Manager Harry Black and the subsequent controversial appointment of Interim City Manager Steve Colangelo. Allegations of improper involvement by Council members in personnel matters, and departures from established governance protocols created uncertainty and poor morale in multiple City departments.

The 25-26 CGJ identified concerns regarding the cost to taxpayers of internal investigations initiated by SCC members, which provided little or no evidence of demonstrable benefit. The Council’s failure to comply with statutory requirements for timely responses to prior civil grand jury reports further undermined their accountability. Together, these issues reflect a breakdown in effective governance that diverted attention from stated priorities and impaired the City’s ability to serve its residents. Additionally, the departure of numerous skilled and experienced employees has cost years of institutional knowledge and hundreds of thousands of dollars in severance payments, which clearly affect the City budget.

It is noted here that two members of the 2025-2026 CGJ were recused from all phases of this report, including investigations, deliberations, interviews, and the drafting of this report.

ACRONYMS

25-26 CGJ	2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury
Cal. Pen. Code	California Penal Code
EDD	Economic Development Department
FPPC	Fair Political Practices Commission
ICM	Interim City Manager
ICMA	International City/County Management Association
NOFA	Notice of Funding Availability

SCC Stockton City Council

SMC Stockton Municipal Code

SMP Social Media Platform

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY

The San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury is charged with evaluating the effectiveness and integrity of city and county governmental operations and inquiring into the “willful or corrupt misconduct of public officers” pursuant to Cal. Pen. Code §919(c). In fulfilling this duty, the 25-26 CGJ examines whether public entities operate in a manner consistent with the law, sound governance principles, and the public interest.

BACKGROUND

Stockton City Council at a Glance

Council Member	Position/Title	District	Term Begins	Term Ends
Christina Fugazi	Mayor	NA	January 2025	December 2028
Jason Lee	Vice Mayor	6	January 2025	December 2028
Michelle Padilla	Council member	1	January 2023	December 2026
Mariela Ponce	Council member	2	January 2025	December 2028
Michael Blower	Council member	3	January 2023	December 2026
Mario Enriquez	Council member	4	January 2025	December 2028
Brando Villapudua	Council member	5	January 2023	December 2026

Table 1 - Stockton City Council by name, title, district, year elected and year term ends.

The City Manager’s 2025-2026 Proposed Budget letter of May 15, 2025 submitted by the Interim City Manager includes the following statement:

“The FY 2025-26 Proposed Budget will focus on three strategic priorities: maintaining public safety, addressing homelessness, infrastructure and maintenance. These areas reflect the

direction provided by the Mayor and City Council and are of utmost importance to Stockton's residents. This budget continues to prioritize targeted investments while preserving the city's commitment to responsible fiscal management."

These priorities are ambitious, necessary, and reflect the challenges facing the City of Stockton. The 25-26 CGJ acknowledges that progress has been made in certain areas and recognizes the importance of sustained focus and collaboration to achieve these goals.

However, the 25-26 CGJ's investigation revealed that the SCC's attention and resources were repeatedly diverted away from these priorities by internal conflict, leadership disputes, and governance controversies. Instead of functioning as a cohesive legislative body, the Council has frequently been consumed by disputes and infighting among its members, allegations of misconduct, and competing political agendas.

Central to these concerns has been instability within the City Manager's office, including the appointment of multiple Acting and Interim City Managers following the departure of the former City Manager in January 2025. Allegations surrounding these appointments—including claims of improper pressure to terminate City staff, including department heads—have contributed to uncertainty within City Hall, diminished employee morale, and created confusion regarding lines of authority. In the past year alone, the City has lost a significant number of experienced and valuable employees at a considerable cost in severance pay. The cost to hire and train new employees is also an added financial burden to the City.

The 25-26 CGJ also observed that public disagreements between Council members have been conducted in SCC meetings and through press conferences, formal complaints, and on social media platforms. Such conduct exacerbates divisions within the SCC, contributes to public distrust, and exposes the City to additional legal and financial risk.

The 2023-2024 Civil Grand Jury Final Report listed multiple Findings and Recommendations regarding the creation of hostile work environments and how to deal with them. The City of Stockton has been repeatedly incomplete in their response to the Investigative report in terms of both content and timeliness. Cal. Pen. Code §§ 933 and 933.05 require the City to

respond properly and in a timely manner. Timely and substantive responses are a critical component of governmental accountability and reform. Failure to adhere to these requirements undermines the effectiveness of the 25-26 CGJ process and signals a disregard for oversight and transparency. The SCC, as of the writing of this report, has yet to respond in accordance with the requirements of the Cal. Pen. Code to either the 23-24 or the 24-25 CGJ final reports. The 25-26 CGJ Continuity Report on the City of Stockton, in this Final Report, addresses these concerns.

METHODOLOGY

The 25-26 CGJ received multiple complaints alleging possible Brown Act violations within the SCC. Upon investigation of these allegations, it became obvious that alleged Brown Act violations were not the only issues hindering the effective performance of the duties and responsibilities of the SCC. The 25-26 CGJ conducted multiple interviews with SCC members and City staff members, both current and past. The first step in any investigation is to prioritize the interviews to define the scope of the inquiry and to establish a clear objective. It should be noted that two SCC members and several former and current City staff declined to be interviewed. These actions denied the 25-26 CGJ crucial firsthand information, different perspectives and possibly any details that could clarify the complaint. Members of the Civil Grand Jury attended City Council meetings and City Council Committee meetings. We also viewed various meetings online.

Materials Reviewed:

- City of Stockton Charter
- Stockton City Council Policy Manual
- Transcripts of Civil Grand Jury interviews
- City emails, memoranda and other internal and external communication and documents

- Attended virtual Council meetings and listened to recordings of Council meetings, and reviewed relevant documents.
- Complaints received by the Civil Grand Jury
- “Ethics, Liability and Best Practices Handbook for Elected Officials Second Edition 2019. Tami A. Tanoue, Sam Light, Robert Widner, Christina McCormack
- “An Overview of Ethics Laws Governing Municipal Officials in California,” Burke, Williams and Sorensen LLP

Other sources reviewed include:

- Cassie Dickman, “Mayor Fugazi ‘unilaterally’ dissolves city manager search committee. Policy shows she didn’t have the authority.” Stocktonia News, June 27, 2025, <https://stocktonia.org/news/local-government/2025/06/27/mayor-fugazi-unilaterally-dissolves-city-manager-search-committee-policy-shows-she-doesnt-have-that-power/>
- “Stockton mayor dissolves city manager search committee, citing alleged Brown Act. Violations,” June 30, 2025, <https://www.recordnet.com/story/news/politics/government/2025/06/30/stockton-mayor-dissolves-city-manager-search-committee-citing-alleged-violations/84379444007/>
- “Stockton mayor alleges potential Brown Act violation amid city manager search.” Evening News, ABC 10, September 15, 2025.
- “Stockton vice mayor calls for action amid city manager allegations.” Evening News.ABC 10, September 15, 2025.
- “Interim City Manager quietly hires veteran city manager as \$11K per month advisor.” Tracy News Today, September 15, 2025, <https://tracynewstoday.com/interim-city-manager-quietly-hires-veteran-city-manager-as-11k-per-month-advisor/>

- Hope Munoz, “Council member, vice mayor squabble as DEI money debate heats up.” Stocktonia News, June 25, 2025.
<https://stocktonia.org/news/local-government/2025/06/25/>
- Cassie Dickman, “ Possible city manager appointment, search ad hoc committee on Stockton council agenda” Stocktonia News, July 15, 2025.
<https://stocktonia.org/news/local-government/2025/07/15/>
- Chris Woodyard, “Stockton spent \$50K to prop up comedy show featuring the vice mayor. Two months later, the city is asking why.” August 6, 2025.
<https://stocktonia.org/news/politics/2025/08/06/>
- Chris Woodyard, “Vice Council member Jason Lee demands \$25,000 in damages plus an apology-or he’ll sue Stockton.” September 3, 2025.
<https://stocktonia.org/news/local-government/2025/09/03/>
- Madilynne Medina, “Calif. vice mayor accused of giving \$50K to ‘Wild ‘N Out.’ Now he’s suing.” <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/calif-vice-mayor-suing-city-wild-n-out-21041602.php>
- Attended Stockton City Council Meetings
- Reviewed City of Stockton Charter, SMC Codes and Civil Service Rules
https://www.stocktonca.gov/government/city_clerk/
- ICMA International City/County Management Association online knowledge database.
<https://icma.org/topics/form-government>
- City of Sacramento <https://www.cityofsacramento.gov/clerk/good-governance-and-compliance>
- City of San Francisco <https://sfethics.org/>
- City of Santa Clara <https://www.santaclaraca.gov/our-city/government/city-committees/governance-and-ethics-committee>

- City of Riverside <https://www.riversideca.gov/cityclerk/boards-commissions/board-ethics>

Interviews Conducted:

- Stockton City Council members
- City of Stockton staff

DISCUSSION OF FACTS

A. Decorum And Conduct

In the 2024 election three new SCC members were elected along with a new Mayor. The new Mayor had served on the SCC from 2016 to 2020, while new Council members had no prior elective service in Stockton or elsewhere. This new slate of SCC members ran on the promise of forward progress for the City of Stockton and its residents. Initially, the newly elected members and the established members appeared to be making a good faith effort to work together. The reality of the situation quickly devolved into something quite different.

The breakdown of decorum and conduct within the SCC is directly related to a series of questionable decisions and resulting actions by the Mayor and council members. These decisions were made in the absence of an experienced City Manager who would normally provide guidance and advice. The Council members' unreserved and sometimes derogatory and verbally offensive comments in Council meetings and on social media contributed greatly to the polarization of the SCC. Ultimately, the loss of trust and respect amongst Council members has resulted in the current dysfunction.

Since the beginning of the new term on January 7, 2025, the SCC has faced episodes of internal discord, leadership challenges, and governance instability. Public records and media coverage document the many disagreements among Council members and contentious Council meetings characterized by sharp exchanges and personal accusations. Votes frequently divide the body along consistent inflexible lines. This Council drama has attracted considerable attention from residents and prompted widespread concern about the Council's

ability to operate as an effective governing board. A self-serving, dysfunctional SCC erodes public trust and weakens City Hall operations.

Elected officials' participation and communication on Social Media Platforms (SMPs) is an individual decision. However, each individual Council member should assess the effect of their interaction with the SMP on public perception of the integrity and honesty of the individual Council members and the entire SCC.

The two major failures in proper decorum and civil conduct were between the Mayor and the Vice Mayor and between the Vice Mayor and Council member Villapudua. There is little doubt that all of these officials ran for office with the intent of making positive changes in the City of Stockton. However, a desire for greater control of the City's decision-making process, which typically should include the SCC, City Manager, City Attorney, Chief Financial Officer and the public, seems to motivate some of these disputes. Additionally, unresolved interpersonal conflicts among Council members have led to turmoil and disruption of public meetings.

The void left by the resignation of the City Manager and the terminations of the Chief Financial Officer and the Assistant Chief Financial Officer early in 2025 contributed to the instability in City government. The absence of an effective City Manager left a void in the "balance of power" between the SCC and City Administration, particularly with respect to adherence to City administrative processes and procedures.

SCC decisions and actions to appoint an Acting or Interim City Manager were problematic and quickly sparked disagreements between some Council members.

The appointment of an Ad Hoc Committee by the Mayor to find and recommend a recruitment firm for the City Manager position, and to screen and narrow down the number of applicants for consideration by the Council, also became an issue. Two SCC members were appointed by the Mayor to serve with her on that three-member committee. The Ad Hoc Committee completed one half of its mission before being disbanded by the Mayor for alleged Brown Act violations.

Concurrent with the City Manager issues, the Mayor raised questions about the Vice Mayor's motives in promoting certain projects and activities. Several official investigations of the Vice Mayor were launched at the initiation of the SCC; some ultimately concluded that there was no violation of law, and some are still pending at the release of this report.

The SCC budgets \$500,000 yearly to fund all City investigations, including those initiated by the SCC itself. In a typical year, \$200,000 to \$300,000 of this budgeted amount is used. The entire \$500,000 was exhausted by the first half of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026. It is important to note that not all of this budgeted amount was spent on SCC investigations. As of the date of the release of this report, the 25-26 CGJ has been unable to verify the amount spent on SCC investigations.

Poor decorum and conduct were most evident in social media postings by the Vice Mayor and during SCC meetings by the Mayor. The Vice Mayor, in particular, vented his arguments and complaints through social media, which also included inflammatory personal attacks on the Mayor's conduct and family.

On November 12, 2025, during an SCC meeting, in what appeared to be a retaliatory action, the Mayor played a video recorded by the Vice Mayor posted on social media that criticized the City and made disparaging and lewd remarks about the Mayor.

The behavior of the Mayor and the Vice Mayor reflects badly on themselves, the SCC and City government in general. More importantly, there is a loss of confidence and trust in City government by its residents.

B. Interim City Manager Appointment and Aftermath

Paramount among the problems instigated by the SCC was the resignation of City Manager Harry Black on January 9, 2025 and the ensuing succession of Acting and Interim City Managers. After Harry Black resigned, Deputy City Manager Will Crew was appointed to fill the position on a temporary basis. Within a very short time, Mr. Crew was then replaced by Interim City Manager (ICM) Steve Colangelo. Mr. Colangelo, according to multiple interviews,

was hand-picked by Mayor Fugazi and hired on a 4-3 vote by the SCC on February 4, 2025, was signed to a six-month contract.

The City of Stockton operates under a City Council-City Manager form of government. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) states that this form of local government combines strong political leadership (elected governing body) with the professional experience of an appointed manager or administrator. In accordance with the ICMA, best practices point to this form of local government.

In this structure, the SCC serves as the legislative body and is responsible for setting policy and providing overall direction, while the City Manager and professional staff handle the City's daily operations. Effective governance under this model relies on the observance of professional ethics, legal mandates and internal guidelines established by the SCC.

In order for this system to function properly, it requires the City Manager to be experienced in city government leadership and conversant in directing its various departments. The Interim City Manager had no experience in city government and did not fulfill the requirements the SCC established when it hired a search firm to find candidates to fill the City Manager position full-time.

This inexperience negatively affected staff, who were required to work amid shifting priorities, inconsistent direction, and heightened political scrutiny. As attested to by multiple 25-26 CGJ interviews, the Interim City Manager instructed SCC members to contact City staff directly with issues within their respective districts. Historically, and in accordance with the City Charter, these issues should be addressed to the City Manager, who would then direct staff. Members of the SCC have repeatedly violated Section 408 of the City Charter, which states that:

Interference with City Manager: Neither the Council nor any of its members nor the Mayor shall interfere with the execution by the City Manager of his or her powers and duties, nor in any manner dictate the appointment or removal of any City officers or employees whom the City Manager is empowered to appoint except as expressly provided in Charter Section 406.

However, the Mayor and Council members may express their views and fully and freely discuss with the City Manager anything pertaining to the appointment and removal of such officers and employees. Except for the purpose of inquiries and investigations under Charter Section 406, the Council, its members and the Mayor shall deal with City officers and employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the City Manager, City Attorney, City Clerk or City Auditor, solely through the City Manager, City Attorney, City Clerk or City Auditor, respectively, and neither the Council nor its members nor the Mayor shall give orders to any of the subordinates of those appointees, either publicly or privately, except as otherwise provided in this Charter.

Section 408 specifies that except for informational requests, all SCC interaction with City staff pertaining to City business shall be conducted through the City Manager. Circumvention of City Charter Section 408 weakened City staff's confidence in City leadership and contributed to decreased morale and increased turnover in key administrative positions, making it difficult to recruit and retain qualified staff. This has resulted in a toxic environment, along with unreliable governance, increased the City's exposure to legal and financial risk, including potential open meeting law violations, budgetary challenges, and additional costs to taxpayers associated with internal investigations and consulting services.

Mr. Colangelo's tenure was not extended at the end of the initial six months, and Will Crew was again made Acting City Manager until a full-time City Manager could be hired. Johnny Ford was hired as the new City Manager with a November 19, 2025, start date.

C. SCC Power Struggles

Transparency is perhaps the most often used and abused word heard in SCC meetings and documents. The Ralph M. Brown Act of 1953 was enacted to address concerns regarding transparency. When the new SCC was sworn in on January 7, 2025, there was optimism that its members would act collaboratively and in a collegial manner to further the best interests of the City and its citizens. Mayor Fugazi appointed Jason Lee, a new member of the SCC, with no prior elective governmental experience, to the post of Vice Mayor. Initially the

relationships on the Council appeared to promise goal-oriented action which would reflect positively on the Council as a whole and its members individually.

This initial optimism was replaced by dysfunction. After only a few months, the SCC began facing episodes of internal discord, leadership challenges, and governance instability.

Numerous Brown Act violations, unverified, have been alleged by members of the SCC against one another. Accusations, once again unverified, of unethical and possibly criminal actions from SCC members against other SCC members, have helped exacerbate the toxic environment during SCC meetings. The use of online forums to attack one another without rebuttal or defense, has left the public unable to trust the SCC to pursue an honest and open work environment. Public records and media coverage document the many disagreements among Council members, contentious Council meetings characterized by sharp exchanges and personal accusations, and votes that frequently divide the body along consistent partisan lines. This Council drama has attracted considerable attention from residents and prompted widespread concern about the Council's ability to operate as a unified and effective governing body.

In addition to internal power struggles, members of the SCC have attempted to circumvent Charter policy (Section 408 of the City Charter as previously referenced) in order to further their control, both individually and collectively, over City functions and departments. This has led to confusion among City staff, which will require valuable time and resources to correct.

In a truly transparent environment, the members of the SCC would be able to identify and address important issues for the City. They should resolve their differences in an amicable manner and further the business of the City. Instead, the City has been led down a seemingly never-ending path of discord, hostility and an inability to work together on the part of the SCC.

D. Ethics, Brown Act, and Code of Conduct Enforcement

In the context of municipal government, ethical behavior generally means the conduct of public business in a way that earns and maintains the public's trust. Although elected officials

and city employees are guided by laws, charter provisions, ordinances, and adopted policies, ethical conduct goes beyond simply following the rules. It is dependent upon personal integrity, honesty, and a genuine commitment to uphold both the intent and the requirements of those rules. Ethical behavior also recognizes that achieving a desired result does not justify using improper means.

During its investigation, the 25-26 CGJ reviewed the extent to which the SCC emphasizes ethics and ethical behavior for its elected officials. The City of Stockton Council Policy Manual Chapter 2.03: Code of Ethics for Elected Officials and Commissioners addresses this area. The policy merely states that officials are required to take the State prescribed two-hour ethics training course as established by State Law commonly known as AB 1234. The course is to be taken during the first year of service, and every two years thereafter. Beyond the training requirement, the City's Code of Ethics does not include any guidelines or procedural instructions for elected officials or commissioners.

The 25-26 CGJ investigation included a review of ethics policies from several other cities in California, and it was noted that some are more comprehensive when compared to the City of Stockton policy, including key points covered in AB 1234 training. A comprehensive written policy serves as a reference document for elected officials during the course of their term of service.

One area in which current policies fall short is in addressing campaign contributions. According to the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) Assembly Bill 571 cities without a statutory campaign contribution limit revert to the state limit of \$5,900 per candidate per election. Currently Stockton does not have campaign contribution limits beyond AB571. An especially concerning problem is the ability of City Council members or persons running for City Council to contribute to another City Council member or person running for City Council. This gives the obvious impression of attempting to create consistent voting blocs to influence City policy. The public needs to be assured that SCC members are voting with the best interests of the citizens of Stockton in mind and not the narrow interests of a few. A possible

solution to this problem is to establish a contribution limit to candidates, as the City of San Francisco's \$500 and the City of Oakland's \$600 have done.

The 25-26 CGJ also reviewed the SCC Code of Conduct, which is included in the Council Policy Manual Chapter 3.13: Council Member and Commissioner Conduct Policy. This policy is much more detailed and specific in terms of behavioral expectations and requirements and requires that the elected official or appointed commissioner read and sign the policy at the time of assuming office.

The 25-26 CGJ investigation revealed that the SCC has a chronic pattern of Ethics and Code of Conduct violations extending back several years. This pattern suggests that the current implementation of these policies is not adequate. The SCC needs in depth training on the Political Reform Act, Government Code Section 1090, Common Law Conflicts, AB571, Levine Act, Brown Act and Public Records Act. Adhering to these already existing guidelines would go a long way to restoring public confidence in the SCC and would help eliminate future problems.

Given the SCC's history of Brown Act and Code of Conduct violations, the 25-26 CGJ has concluded that the City of Stockton should establish its own Board or Commission to oversee compliance with Ethics, Brown Act, Conflict of Interest, and Code of Conduct rules and regulations. The body must be independent from the SCC and have the resources and authority to receive complaints, investigate thoroughly, and enforce remedial actions.

The Sacramento Ethics Commission, established in 2017, presents a viable blueprint for the establishment of an Ethics Commission for the City of Stockton. The City of Sacramento's ordinance for their Ethics Commission is Chapter 2.112 of the Sacramento City Code.

Most large cities in California have some form of Ethics Commission or Board. The 25-26 CGJ found that the placement of such bodies within city government provides greater authority and access to information to address alleged violations of rules, laws, ordinances and policies. This commission would bridge the gap between current ethics standards and needed additional standards. This would provide the public with a greater sense of trust in the

decisions and actions of the SCC. The Ethics Commission would be an effective body to address the purported Brown Act violations which are reported on a regular basis.

City staff are trained and qualified to investigate and make recommendations regarding City contracts and grants to private entities doing business with the City of Stockton. It is important to recognize City staff has the expertise to ensure decisions are made in accordance with legal compliance, financial feasibility and are operationally sound. Although the SCC is not mandated to follow staff recommendations, their recommendations to the City Council should be carefully considered.

A Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) is an official public announcement made by government agencies or organizations stating that grant or loan funding is available to be distributed. It outlines exactly how much money is available, it's purpose, who is eligible and how to apply.

According to the State Housing NOFA Scoring Matrix, City staff rates projects according to a variety of criteria which should be considered when awarding money. After the November 2025 NOFA posting, City staff rated eight applicants. After completing their rating, staff then submitted the applications to an AI based evaluation program for further confirmation of an unbiased rating. AI confirmed staff's recommendations and the City Economic Development Department (EDD) then presented their findings to the SCC. After review, at the April 14, 2026 SCC meeting, the SCC, with a predictable 4-3 vote, chose to ignore these qualified professional recommendations and awarded money to developers who scored lower on the prioritized list of applicants. Again, while SCC is under no obligation to follow City staff recommendations, SCC's actions put into question why they have ignored their own staff's work.

The public business conducted by the SCC has too often been marred by the infighting, discord and accusatory language which has undermined the public's trust in government. To effectively function, the SCC must have the trust and confidence of the people of Stockton. Without it, positive progress in the City will be impossible.

FINDINGS

- F1 The very public conflicts among Council members have seriously undermined public faith in the Council's ability to conduct business transparently and professionally.
- F2 In violation of City Charter Section 408, the Stockton City Council has directly interfered with the duties and responsibilities of City staff. These actions have contributed to operational challenges within City government that will require additional time and resources to resolve.
- F3 Public records and media coverage indicate that the Stockton City Council has experienced ongoing internal conflict, including frequent disagreements, contentious meetings, and voting patterns that consistently divide the Council and lead to Council improprieties and the appearance of improprieties.
- F4 The Stockton City Council has attempted to bypass established protocols regarding fiscal matters, thus raising the possibility for further delays in the approval process and the possibility of the District Attorney's intervention.
- F5 The Stockton City Council appears not to follow the ethics principals that are set forth in AB 1234, and the Stockton City Council Code of Conduct, which erodes public trust in the Council as a governing body.
- F6 The use of social media platforms (SMPs) and public forums such as press conferences to further personal agendas and air grievances is inappropriate.
- F7 The Stockton City Council has shown disrespect to City staff and communicated with staff in a manner contrary to Section 408 of the City Charter, contributing to a loss of skilled and professional employees and resulting in a substantial financial loss to the City.

- F8 In their efforts to influence decisions made by the Stockton City Council, outside of Council chambers, some Council members have pursued personal agendas and advancement of business interests, thus compromising transparency.
- F9 The City of Stockton does not have an ordinance regarding limiting campaign contributions beyond state law, leading to a lack of transparency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1 Within 90 days of the issuance of this report, the Stockton City Council should provide the Civil Grand Jury with written documentation detailing the actions taken to comply with the Stockton Council Policy Manual provisions governing member conduct, including standards applicable to meetings, public statements, online activity, professionalism, decorum, and mutual respect (F1, F3 and F5).
- R2 By December 31, 2026, all Stockton City Council members should complete formal training conducted by the City Manager on Charter Section 408, all Charter provisions governing Council conduct, and the requirements of the Stockton Council Policy Manual. Written verification of completion should be submitted to the Civil Grand Jury (F1, F3 and F5, F7).
- R3 By December 31, 2026, the Stockton City Council should receive training from the City Manager on established City policies and procedures governing fiscal matters, including the approval, funding, and oversight of City projects (F4, F7).
- R4 By December 31, 2026, the Stockton City Council should demonstrate documented and measurable efforts toward establishing an Ethics Commission or similar body, including clear steps taken, draft frameworks, and publicly visible actions showing active development. The goal should be to formally establish and operationalize the Commission by January 2028 (F1, F5, F6, F7 and F8).

- R5 By December 31, 2026, the City Manager and City Attorney should rewrite and expand the City of Stockton Council Policy Manual Chapter 2.03: Code of Ethics for Elected Officials and Commissioners, to include more specific information and explanation of ethical behavior and action requirements (F1, F5, F6, F7 and F8).
- R6 Effective upon publication of this report, members of the Stockton City Council, when speaking or posting in their official capacity or on matters related to City business, should refrain from using social media platforms or public forums to make disparaging or demeaning statements about fellow Council members or City staff (F1 and F6).
- R7 By December 31, 2026, the Stockton City Council should establish written guidelines regarding Council members' use of social media platforms and public forums in order to discuss City business and to maintain proper decorum (F1 and F6).
- R8 By December 31, 2027, the Stockton City Council should establish their own ordinance limiting campaign contributions by individuals and organizations in city elections as exemplified by San Francisco, Oakland and Los Angeles. This ordinance should include all monetary, in kind and campaign committee contributions. This will allow public transparency in campaign finances. (F9)

CONCLUSION

The City of Stockton and the Stockton City Council have a recent history of not responding to Civil Grand Jury reports in a timely or appropriate manner according to the requirements of Cal. Pen. Code §933.05. As previously stated, it is imperative that these responses be submitted in appropriate form and content in order for governmental transparency and adherence to law be maintained.

The Stockton City Council has a history of issues with dysfunction and collegiality. The Council seated in 2025 has continued this unenviable trend. Public input at City Council meetings clearly shows the frustration and dissatisfaction by Stockton citizenry regarding Council

members' relationships with one another. Their failure to maintain basic decorum, coupled with seemingly endless infighting, undermines the Council's effectiveness and weakens the City's ability to conduct its business responsibly.

Termination of contract and at-will employees add expense and lower employee morale. Long term employees are an invaluable organizational asset, stewards of both institutional knowledge and community relationships. They enhance operational efficiency, reduce turnover cost and provide stability. Tenured staff serve as mentors thus strengthening productivity. A stable workforce is essential to timely and efficient delivery of City services.

The citizens of Stockton are ultimately the ones who suffer from these actions by the Stockton City Council. As the Stockton City Council seems unable or unwilling to enforce decorum and civility on themselves, there appears to be little that the people of Stockton can do to stop this unfortunate momentum. At the end of the day, the ballot box is the final arbiter.

NOTES

Present and past San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury Final Reports and Responses can be accessed on the San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury website at:

<https://www.sicourts.org/divisions/civil-grand-jury>

RESPONSES REQUIRED FOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

California Penal Code §933(c) and §§933.05(a) and (b) require that specific responses to all Findings and Recommendations contained in this report be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin County Superior Court within 90 days of receipt of the report unless the responder is an elected County officer or agency head where such responses are required within 60 days.

For Findings: Pursuant to California Penal Code §933.05(a) the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following for each Finding:

1. *The respondent agrees with the Finding.*
2. *The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the Finding; in which case the response shall specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reason(s) therefore.*

For Recommendations: Pursuant to California Penal Code §933.05(b) the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following for each Recommendation:

1. *The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.*
2. *The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.*
3. *The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for*

discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.

- 4. The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation of the reason(s) therefore.*

RESPONSE DEADLINES

Response from the City of Stockton is required within 90 days from receipt of this report.

Mail or hand deliver response to:

The Honorable Lance G. Jacot, Presiding Judge
San Joaquin County Superior Court
180 E Weber Ave, Suite 1306J
Stockton, California 95202

Email response to:

Ms. Krystal Gonzalez
Staff Secretary to the Civil Grand Jury
San Joaquin County Superior Court
civilgrandjury@sjcourts.org

DISCLAIMER

Civil Grand Jury reports are based on documentary evidence and the testimony of sworn or admonished witnesses, not on conjecture or opinion. However, the Civil Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing such evidence except upon the specific approval of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court or another judge appointed by the Presiding Judge (Cal. Pen. Code §§911, 924.1 (a) and 929). Similarly, the Civil Grand Jury is precluded by law from

disclosing the identity of witnesses except upon an order of the court for narrowly defined purposes (Cal. Pen. Code §§924.2 and 929).

2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury



San Joaquin Local Agency Formation Commission

Coordinating and Planning Growth

Case No. 0225

Release Date: June, 2026



Aerial view of California's San Joaquin Valley (Adobe Stock Photo)

SUMMARY

The San Joaquin Local Agency Formation Commission (SJLAFCo or The Commission) is responsible for reviewing and approving proposed jurisdictional boundary changes including annexations and detachments of territory to and or from the cities and special districts within San Joaquin County. The primary purpose of SJLAFCo, as with all the other 57 counties' LAFcos in the state of California, is to promote the orderly formation of local governmental agencies for efficiently extending government services, to preserve agricultural land resources, and to discourage urban sprawl.

San Joaquin County has one of the largest numbers of special districts when compared with the other counties in the state of California. The total number of local agencies under the jurisdiction of SJLAFCo is 109, including eight cities and 101 special districts.

Local government agencies throughout the county whose boundaries are regulated by SJLAFCo include all the county's cities, certain county agencies and all special districts in the county. Special districts are limited-purpose local governments that provide specialized services like fire protection, water, sewers, parks, and electricity to a community. They are separate from cities and counties.

SJLAFCo is also responsible for incorporation of new cities and formation of new special districts, and for consolidations, mergers, and dissolutions of existing districts. SJLAFCo must act on local agency boundary changes and adopt Spheres of Influence (SOI) for the county's cities, local agencies and special districts.

In accordance with California Government Code (Cal. Gov. Code) §56425, SJLAFCo is required to determine the SOI of each city and each special district within the county, and for reviewing and updating them every 5 years as necessary. To prepare and update SOIs in accordance with Cal. Gov. Code §56425, The Commission must conduct a Municipal Service Review (MSR), which is a comprehensive review of all the agencies that provide the identified service, or services, within the designated geographic area. The Commission may assess various alternatives for

improving efficiency and affordability of infrastructure and service delivery within and contiguous to the sphere of influence, including, but not limited to, the consolidation of governmental agencies.

ACRONYMS

25-26 CGJ 2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury

BOS San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors

Cal. Gov. Code California Government Code

Cal. Pen. Code California Penal Code

CKH Act Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000

FY Fiscal Year

LAFCo Local Agency Formation Commission

MSR Municipal Service Review

RCFD Ripon Consolidated Fire District

SJLAFCo San Joaquin County Local Agency Formation Commission

SOI Sphere of Influence

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY

California Penal Code (Cal. Pen. Code) §925 requires that: *...the grand jury shall investigate and report on the operations, accounts, and records of the officers, departments, or functions of the county including those operations, accounts, and records of any special legislative district or other district in the county created pursuant to state law...*

Accordingly, the 2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury (25-26 CGJ) investigated SJLAFCo operations and finances as well as the processes that SJLAFCo uses for its SOI updates and Municipal Service Reviews for the agencies within its jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND

In the state of California after World War II, there was significant growth in the population as well as significant movement of the population away from city centers and toward suburban areas. This caused a high demand for the public services needed for the development of these expanding areas. To accommodate this demand, the state approved the formation of many new local government agencies and special districts to deliver the required public services.

Unfortunately, the formation of these local government agencies was chaotic and haphazard. There was very little planning and much overlap and inefficiency. Another major problem was the rapid loss of agricultural land and open space.

A commission was formed in 1959 to study these problems and to make recommendations regarding the misuse of land resources and the growing complexity of local governmental jurisdictions. As a result of the commission's report in 1963, the California state legislature created Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCos) in every county in California, except San Francisco, which formed a LAFCo in the year 2000.

LAFCos are state-mandated quasi-judicial countywide Commissions whose purview is to oversee boundary changes of cities and special districts, the formation of new agencies, including the incorporation of new cities and districts, and the consolidation or reorganization of special districts and or cities.

For two decades, LAFCos were administered through a complicated series of statutes and enabling acts, and confusion over the application of these laws led to a consolidated LAFCo Act in 1985.

Ultimately, after a new call for reform in local government, and due to subsequent recommendations by the Commission on Local Governance in the 21st Century, the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (CKH Act), was approved by the California State legislature and became effective on January 1, 2001. The CKH Act is codified in Cal. Gov. Code §56000 et. seq.

METHODOLOGY

The 25-26 CGJ researched the operations, management, and budgets of SJLAFCo. We interviewed SJLAFCo staff and the SJLAFCo Commission. We also reviewed applicable California Government Code sections, and we researched other county LAFCos, and various websites related to LAFCos including:

- The SJLAFCo website at <https://www.sjlafco.org>;
- The California Association of Local Area Formation Commissions website at <https://calafco.org>;
- The San Joaquin County Auditor/Controller's Office at <https://www.sjgov.org/departments/aud>; and
- The California State Controller's Office at <https://www.sco.ca.gov>
- Other sources for our research included:
 - Local Agency Formation Commission Municipal Service Review Guidelines (2003) published by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (now known as the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation)
 - Sacramento 2016-2017 CGJ Report on Sac LAFCo

DISCUSSION OF FACTS

The SJLAFCo Commission is comprised of five regular members and three alternate members appointed to four-year terms. The regular members include two members from the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors (BOS), two council members from the incorporated cities in the county, and one member from the general public. The alternate members include one BOS member, one city member and one public member. There is a four-year rotation plan for the city members amongst the county's eight incorporated cities.

The current regular members of The Commission are shown in Table 1:

Member	Appointing Authority
Steven Ding - Chair	Board of Supervisors
Minnie Diallo	City Member, Lathrop
Gary Barton	City Member, Ripon
Mario Gardea	Board of Supervisors
Peter Johnson	Public Member

Table 1 – List of Commission Regular Members and their Appointing Authority

The Commission meets on the second Thursday of each month at 9:00 A.M. in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 44 North San Joaquin Street, 6th Floor, Stockton, California. SJLAFCo staff include one Executive Officer, one Clerk/Analyst, one Administrative Assistant, and one Legal Counselor.

The total operating budget (revenues and expenditures) for SJLAFCo for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026 is \$686,691. The bulk of financing for operations is equally contributed by the county and the cities within the county. The county allocation is \$259,638 and the sum of the individual eight cities' allocation is the same (i.e., \$259,638). These contribution amounts have not increased since FY 2023-2024. Individual city allocations reflect the city's percentage of residents of the total estimated population residing within San Joaquin cities on January 1, 2025. Additional revenue comes from interest income projected to be \$95,455 and from application filing and processing fees projected to be \$71,960 in this fiscal year. These fees are paid by the special districts within the county seeking annexations, detachments or other services provided by SJLAFCo. SJLAFCo has a projected reserve fund balance of \$1,432,240. For more details of the budget, see Table 2 below.

REVENUE	FY 24-25	FY 25-26
Interest Income	\$86,260	\$95,455
County Allocation	\$259,638	\$259,638
Cities Allocation	\$259,638	\$259,638
Application Filing Fees	\$70,000	\$71,960
TOTAL REVENUE	\$629,748	\$686,691

EXPENSES	FY 24-25	FY 25-26
Staff Expenses	\$486,871	\$501,707
Operating Expense	\$188,124	\$184,983
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$674,995	\$686,691

Reserve Fund Balance	\$1,450,357	\$1,432,240
----------------------	-------------	-------------

Table 2 – SJLAFCo Final Budget FY 2025-2026, Abridged

California law requires LAFCos to plan for sustainable services while preventing urban sprawl. They do this by determining SOIs for all local government agencies in their respective jurisdictions.

In accordance with Cal. Gov. Code §56301, ... One of the objects of the commission is to make studies and to obtain and furnish information which will contribute to the logical and reasonable development of local agencies in each county and to shape the development of local agencies so as to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of each county and its communities.

Also, Cal. Gov. Code §56425(g) requires that: *On or before January 1, 2008, and every five years thereafter, the commission shall, as necessary, review and update each sphere of influence.*

An SOI is a planning boundary that may be outside of an agency's legal boundary (such as the city limit line). The SOI designates the agency's probable future boundary and service area. It acts as a guide for future development and annexation, ensuring orderly growth and efficient provision of services like water, sewers, fire protection and other services by promoting cooperation between local agencies.

Factors in determining an agency's SOI include consideration of the current and future land use, the current and future need and capacity for services, and consideration of any relevant communities of interest.

The purpose of an SOI is to ensure the provision of efficient services while discouraging urban sprawl and the premature conversion of agricultural and open space lands by preventing overlapping jurisdictions and duplication of services.

Before updating an SOI, a comprehensive study called an MSR must be completed, and it must be reviewed and approved by SJLAFCo. An MSR evaluates growth projections, infrastructure capacity, financial ability and the effectiveness and adequacy of services (e.g., water, sewer, fire protection) that are provided by local government agencies, like cities or special districts. A comprehensive MSR can identify critical service issues before they become major problems.

SJLAFCo's review of MSR's requires significant effort and sometimes requires specific expertise that requires hiring an outside consultant or consultants.

Other facts related to our investigation include:

- A. SJLAFCo financial policy does not include a requirement for regular independent third-party audits of its finances. The last time an independent audit was conducted was prior to 2001.
- B. Although Government Code requires SOI reviews and updates for each local agency every five years as necessary, the "necessity" of doing five-year reviews is determined by SJLAFCo.

- C. In accordance with SJLAFCo Service Review Policy, December 14, 2012, revision: *Initial Service Reviews should be completed by January 2008 and will be reviewed and **updated as necessary but no later that** (sic) **every five years** (emphasis added) in conjunction with or prior to Spheres of Influence reviews and updates ...*
- D. SJLAFCo's approach to district boundary review is more reactive than proactive. For the most part, SJLAFCo will only initiate a review process when a local agency applies for annexation or other organizational changes.
- E. The standard operating practice is for SJLAFCo to require an MSR if there is a qualifying project that a city or special district determines would be a benefit to their residents, and if an existing MSR is older than 5 years.
- F. In determining when an SOI will be reviewed, SJLAFCo considers a given district's growth rate, and the changes needed to keep up the service delivery goals adopted and measured in the current MSR. If a district is not expanding at a significant rate, an SOI will be done less frequently than every five years.
- G. SJLAFCo has procured a database management (DBM) tool to help organize, track and manage its work. The DBM tool is referred to as the "LAFCo Administrative Tracking Program." It was initiated in June of 2025 and the data entry process for the DBM tool is currently a work in progress.
- H. Besides administrative and legal counsel staff, SJLAFCo has one Executive Director and one half-time Analyst performing SOI and MSR reviews. Outside consultants are used when necessary or when specific expertise is needed.
- I. SJLAFCo does not have a plan to perpetuate its institutional knowledge. There is no plan for mentorship, succession, cross-training, or for updating its policy and procedure documentation.
- J. SJLAFCo does not have either an annual or long-term workplan that is detailed and available to the public.

- K. As of October 2025, there were three MSRs being developed: 1) Rural Fire District Service Review and Governance Study; 2) Woodbridge Irrigation District and 3) Woodbridge Sanitary District.
- L. As stated in the previous paragraph, the county rural fire districts are being reviewed this Fiscal Year (2025-2026). It is significant that it's been fifteen years since the last Rural Fire District review in 2011. In the meantime, Ripon Consolidated Fire District (RCFD) has been struggling to meet financial constraints and service level demands since at least 2020.
- M. In May of 2018, the City of Ripon provided its most recent MSR to SJLAFCo. In that report, the City stated that: *New development within the SOI will lead to population growth and the need for additional service provision.* The report also stated that: *The Fire District's sources of income may have to be expanded in the future to maintain adequate service levels within the City and its SOI with further development.*

Despite these statements in the report, SJLAFCo did not initiate an MSR of the fire district to determine its capacity or financial ability to handle the planned additional growth until just this year.

FINDINGS

- F1 The lack of a policy to regularly conduct independent third-party financial audits means that SJLAFCo cannot assure the public that its funds are spent appropriately and that its financial statements are accurate and transparent.
- F2 It is not clear how SJLAFCo is funding its reserves or how the reserve fund is being managed. SJLAFCo's financial and accounting procedures do not include a policy for the management of its Contingency Reserve Fund. The public is unaware of the scope and purpose of the fund, how the fund is used and replenished, and what the appropriate fund balance ought to be.

- F3 Best practices of counties such as Fresno, Santa Clara, and Sacramento include detailed workplans for the Fiscal Year with mid-year progress reports. The SJLAFCo budget for 2025-2026, on the other hand, does not include a detailed workplan to support the goals of The Commission. Information regarding the status of current and planned MSR and SOI reviews and the scope and potential costs of planned projects are not provided. There is a lack of transparency with the public about the work that The Commission has accomplished or is planning to accomplish.
- F4 Special District and City SOIs are not reviewed and updated with regularity or consistency. Without regular or consistent service reviews, it is not clear that SJLAFCo can meet its objective of providing for the present and future service needs of the cities and district agencies throughout the county in accordance with Cal. Gov. Code §56301.
- F5 SJLAFCo does not have a plan or status tracking mechanism that is visible to the public for assuring that agency MSRs and SOIs are reviewed and updated every 5 years in accordance with its policy. The public does not have a full picture of what, and when, city or district agencies have been reviewed or are planned for review regarding their service capacity or financial ability.
- F6 Even though Cal. Gov. Code §56425(g) allows for SOI reviews to be carried out “*as necessary*” it is not clear what criteria is used to determine “*necessity*.” The Commission is not fulfilling its objective of furnishing information regarding the logical and reasonable development of the local agencies in the county.
- F7 Given the large number of special districts and other local agencies under SJLAFCo jurisdiction, the SJLAFCo staffing level available for future planning and for active MSR and SOI analyses may not be adequate to perform the work required to fulfill the mission of SJLAFCo.
- F8 The lack of a plan for mentorship, succession, cross-training, or for regular updating of internal policies and procedures could lead to operational inefficiencies during periods of staff transitions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the San Joaquin County Local Agency Formation Commission implement the following by May 4, 2027:

- R1 Review and revise the SJLAFCo financial and accounting procedures to include a requirement for regular (e.g., annual or biannual) independent third-party audits of its financial statements. The revised procedures should include the best practices of other similar LAFCos (F1).
- R2 Review and revise the financial and accounting procedures to include the Commission's policy and requirements for managing, documenting and auditing The Contingency Reserve Fund (F2).
- R3 Develop a policy for a formal review that includes a mid-year progress report of its accomplishments regarding the previous year's goals and present its findings during the appropriate regular Commission meeting (F3).
- R4 Update the SJLAFCo Service Review Policy to be consistent with the best practices of other similar county LAFCos (F3, F4 and F5).
- R5 Update the SJLAFCo Service Review Policy to include a requirement for an annual update of all districts regarding their status of MSR and SOI review and for planning for MSRs for all districts at least every five years unless explicitly determined not to be required or required at a different interval (F5).
- R6 During the annual budget process, develop a complete and detailed workplan, using the best practices of similar LAFCOs, to describe its goals and the work it anticipates accomplishing over the next fiscal year. The plan should consider all districts within the agency's jurisdiction regarding their need for SOI and MSR review, their status regarding previous reviews, and a plan for future reviews in consideration of Cal. Gov. Code §56425(g). The workplan should also detail other planned projects for the next fiscal year (F3, F4, F5 and F6).

- R7 During the annual budget process, consider adding additional staff to assist with forward-looking planning and scheduling. Additional staff could also support the review process for active SOIs and MSRs (F7).
- R8 During the annual budget process, consider an increase in funding for outside consultants with appropriate expertise to support the SOI and MSR review process (F7).
- R9 Develop a plan for mentorship, succession and cross-training of key Commission staff (F8).
- R10 Develop a plan to regularly review and update all Commission policy and procedure documents (F1, F2, F3, F4, and F8).

NOTES

Present and past San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury Final Reports and Responses can be accessed on the San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury website at:

<https://www.sjcourts.org/divisions/civil-grand-jury>

RESPONSES REQUIRED FOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

California Penal Code §933(c) and §§933.05(a) and (b) require that specific responses to all Findings and Recommendations contained in this report be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin County Superior Court within 90 days of receipt of the report unless the responder is an elected county officer or agency head where such responses are required within 60 days.

For Findings: Pursuant to California Penal Code §933.05(a) the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following for each Finding:

1. *The respondent agrees with the Finding.*
2. *The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the Finding; in which case the response shall specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reason(s) therefore.*

For Recommendations: Pursuant to California Penal Code §933.05(b) the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following for each Recommendation:

1. *The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.*
2. *The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.*
3. *The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This*

timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.

4. *The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation of the reason(s) therefore.*

RESPONSE DEADLINES

Response from San Joaquin Local Agency Formation Commission is required within 90 days from receipt of this report.

Mail, or deliver, response to:

The Honorable Lance G. Jacot, Presiding Judge
San Joaquin County Superior Court
180 E Weber Ave, Suite 1306J
Stockton, California 95202

Email response to:

Ms. Krystal Gonzalez
Staff Secretary to the Civil Grand Jury
San Joaquin County Superior Court
civilgrandjury@sjcourts.org

DISCLAIMER

Civil Grand Jury reports are based on documentary evidence and the testimony of sworn or admonished witnesses, not on conjecture or opinion. However, the Civil Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing such evidence except upon the specific approval of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court or another judge appointed by the Presiding Judge (Penal Code Section 911. 924.1 (a) and 929). Similarly, the Civil Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing the identity of witnesses except upon an order of the court for narrowly defined purposes (Penal Code Sections 924.2 and 929).

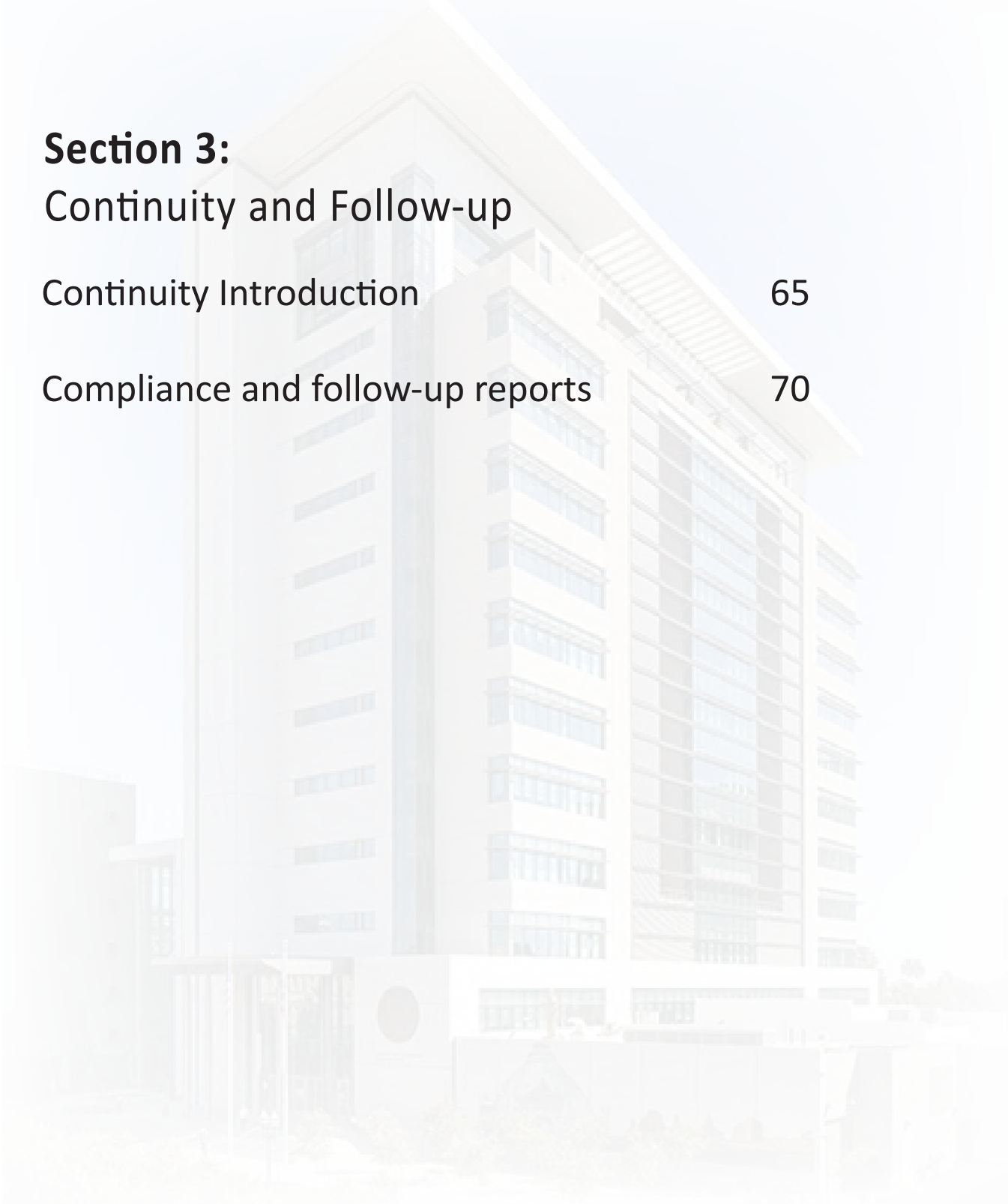
This page left intentionally blank.

Continuity and Follow-Up

Section 3:

Continuity and Follow-up

Continuity Introduction	65
Compliance and follow-up reports	70



2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury



Continuity Report

Compliance Response Review of 2024 – 2025 Civil Grand Jury Reports

Release Date: June, 2026

SUMMARY

Governing boards of local government entities and elected county officials that are subjects of Civil Grand Jury investigations are legally required to respond to the findings and recommendations contained in Civil Grand Jury reports directed to them. These responses must be submitted to the Superior Court within prescribed timeframes and must include statutorily mandated language.

One of the key roles of the Civil Grand Jury is to review agency responses to the final reports issued by prior grand juries. This review is intended to ensure statutory compliance of the agency responses and to ensure continuity with previous grand jury work.

The Civil Grand Jury reviewed agency responses to the 24-25 CGJ Investigative, Follow-Up, and Eyes on San Joaquin County reports and found that one agency, the City of Stockton, failed to submit a compliant response with regard to the requirements of the California Penal Code (Cal. Pen. Code) governing the form of that response.

Complete copies of the final reports and the agency responses may be found on the San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury website at: [SJC Civil Grand Jury Reports](#) .

BACKGROUND

Cal. Pen. Code §933(a) requires the Civil Grand Jury to ... *submit to the presiding judge of the superior court a final report of its Findings and Recommendations that pertain to county government matters during the fiscal or calendar year.* Also, in accordance with Cal. Pen. Code §933(c), governing bodies or department officials are required to respond to the Findings and Recommendations that are directed to them within 90 days of the release of a grand jury's report. Elected County officials are required to respond within 60 days.

Cal. Pen. Code §933.05(a), requires that for each finding, the responding entity or official shall indicate one of the following:

1. *The respondent agrees with the finding.*

- 2. The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefor.*

Cal. Pen. Code §933.05(b) requires that for each recommendation, the entity or official is required to select one of four possible responses:

- 1. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.*
- 2. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.*
- 3. The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.*
- 4. The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation being provided.*

The 24-25 CGJ issued 1 Investigative Report, 5 Follow Up Reports, and 3 “Eyes on San Joaquin County” reports. All 9 reports and their responses were reviewed by the 25-26 CGJ. The reports and response requirements are summarized in Table 1 below. One of the reports, case #0123, City of Stockton: Crisis in Government, required more than a typical review. A more in-depth follow-up was conducted for this report.

This 25-26 CGJ Continuity Report will focus on the reports that required responses and whether those responses met statutory compliance.

Type: INV=Investigation; FU=Follow-up; EoSJ=Eyes on San Joaquin (Informational Report)

Report	Type	Findings	Recommendation	Response Required?
#0124 Old System, New Costs	INV	F1 - F8	R1 - R6	Y
#0123 City of Stockton	FU	F1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 2.3, 3.1	R1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 2.3, 3.1	Y
#0323 City of Tracy	FU	F1.1-1.9, F2.1-2.5, F3.1	R1.1-1.9, R2.1-2.5, R3.1	N
#0318 Cold Cases	FU		1.0, 1.0, R1 - R10	N
#0519 Illegal Dumping	FU		R1.1, R1.2	N
#0218 Micke Grove Zoo	FU		R1.0, R2.0, R3.0	Y
City of Mountain House	EoSJ	F1-F5	R1-7	Y
SJC Office of Education (SJCOE)	EoSJ	F1-F4; F1-F4; F1-F3; F1-F2		N
SJC Registrar of Voters	EoSJ	F1-F3		N

Table 1 – Summary of 24-25 CGJ Reports and Required Responses

METHODOLOGY

The 25-26 CGJ reviewed the responses that were received from the Stockton City Council (SCC), the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors (BOS) and the Mountain House City Council (MHCC) for compliance with Cal. Pen. Code §§933 and 933.05 with regard to:

1. Timeliness: Was the response received in the proper timeframe?
2. Required form of response: Did the entity respond appropriately to the Civil Grand Jury findings and recommendations? Did the response contain the mandated wording in accordance with the requirements of the California Penal Code?

DISCUSSION

The 25-26 CGJ found the response from the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors to Report #0218 Micke Grove Zoo: Honoring the Past, Securing the Future and the response from the Mountain House City Council to the report Eyes on San Joaquin County: City of Mountain House, were in full compliance with Cal. Pen. Code §§933 and 933.05.

The 25-26 CGJ would like to commend these agencies for their timely and compliant responses.

DISCLAIMER

Civil Grand Jury reports are based on documentary evidence and the testimony of sworn or admonished witnesses, not on conjecture or opinion. However, the Civil Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing such evidence except upon the specific approval of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, or another judge appointed by the Presiding Judge (Cal. Pen. Code §§911, 924.1 (a) and 929). Similarly, the Civil Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing the identity of witnesses except upon an order of the court for narrowly defined purposes (Cal. Pen. Code §§924.2 and 929).

Discussions, Findings and Recommendations from the 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury are in text boxes framed in black.

RESPONSE COMPLIANCE

Investigation Report #0124 - Old System, New Costs: Confronting Wastewater Inefficiency in Linne Estates

SUMMARY

The 24-25 CGJ investigated complaints regarding the inefficiencies and rising costs associated with the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) in Linne Estates, revealing operational and design flaws rather than mismanagement.

BACKGROUND

- Linne Estates is part of County Service Area (CSA) 44, established for public services including wastewater treatment.
- The independent WWTP was built by developers and has faced operational deficiencies since the County took over in 2008.
- Homeowners protested the rate increases due to design flaws, leading to ongoing financial deficits.

METHODOLOGY

The 25-26 CGJ reviewed the BOS responses to the findings and recommendations to the 2024-2025 investigation report: Old System, New Costs: Confronting Wastewater Inefficiency in Linne Estates, Case #0124 as well as the original report. Response requirements and Civil Grand Jury conclusions are summarized in Tables 1 and 2 below:

RES: RESPONDENT BOS: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

2024-2025 GRAND JURY FINDINGS	RES	INDIVIDUAL/AGENCY RESPONSES	2025-2026 GRAND JURY OBSERVATIONS
F1. If the City of Tracy agrees to an intertie connection, the County could reduce long-term costs for CSA 44 Zones E and G.	BOS	Agrees.	No further action.
F2. A single WWTP would function more efficiently than two. Maintenance and operational costs could decrease.	BOS	Agrees.	No further action.
F3: Both WWTPs are nearing the end of their service lives and require replacement.	BOS	Partially agrees.	No further action.
F4: The SCADA system that was installed was not a true SCADA system and did not reduce maintenance labor costs.	BOS	Agrees.	No further action.
F5: Maintenance costs have exceeded projections.	BOS	Agrees.	No further action.
F6: Employees must first drive to the DPW facility in Stockton before starting work and then return to Stockton. Facilities near the WWTP work site could benefit the southern County sites by reducing labor costs.	BOS	Partially agrees.	No further action.
F7: The County has been transparent with homeowners.	BOS	Agrees.	No further action.
F8: In 2018, the County adopted a policy that prohibits the formation of CSAs without the approval of the Director of Public Works.	BOS	Partially agrees.	No further action.

Table 1 - Summary of 2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury findings, agency responses, and 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury conclusions.

RES: RESPONDENT BOS: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

2024-2025 GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS	RES	INDIVIDUAL/ AGENCY RESPONSES	2025-2026 GRAND JURY OBSERVATIONS
R1: By October 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors should begin negotiations with the City of Tracy to explore the feasibility of an intertie connection to the City of Tracy WWTP.	BOS	Requires further analysis.	Follow-up with BOS to ensure compliance.
R2: By October 1, 2025, if the intertie is not feasible, the Board of Supervisors should consider consolidating the two smaller WWTPs into a single, more efficient facility.	BOS	Has been implemented.	No further action.
R3: By October 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors should create a plan to replace or upgrade facilities.	BOS	Has been implemented.	No further action.
R4: By October 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors should create a plan to install a true SCADA system to reduce maintenance labor costs.	BOS	Has been implemented.	No further action.
R5: By October 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors should create a plan with current and projected discharge requirements to reduce operating costs.	BOS	Will not be implemented.	No further action.
R6: By October 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors should assess the feasibility of establishing a satellite office to serve the south county.	BOS	Has been implemented.	No further action.

Table 2 - Summary of 2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury recommendations, agency responses and 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury conclusions.

ACRONYMS and DEFINITIONS

SJC San Joaquin County is a county located in the U.S. state of California

BOS San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors

CSA County Service Area

DPW Department of Public Works

WWTP Wastewater Treatment Plant

SJCCGJ San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury

SDS Special District Settlement

SCADA Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition.

Intertie A connection between two systems. (In this case, two sewage systems).

FINDINGS

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Finding F1: If the City of Tracy agrees to an intertie connection, the County could reduce long-term costs for CSA 44 Zones E and G.

***Agency Response:** Agree. Per the term sheets previously negotiated with City of Tracy staff, connecting to the City system for treatment of Zone G and Zone E sewer effluent would be the most economical arrangement long term. However, note that making the interconnection will require several million dollars of infrastructure improvements and likely payment of several million dollars of connection fees to the City. The County's ability to secure grant funds and/or favorable financing terms will greatly affect the amount and timing of sewer rate reductions for CSA 44 sewer customers if an interconnection occurs.*

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Finding F2: A single WWTP would function more efficiently than two. Maintenance and operational costs could decrease.

Agency Response: *Agree. Replacing the two existing WWTPs with a single, modernized WWTP would likely decrease operating costs.*

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Finding F3: Both WWTPs are nearing the end of their service lives and require replacement.

Agency Response: *Partially Agree. The WWTPs have been operating for more than twenty years and are likely in the later portion of their useful lives. Useful life determination is a complex analysis involving (i) operation and maintenance (O&M) costs and projected capital replacement costs for the existing facilities versus the replacement facilities and (ii) the capital cost for the replacement facilities. These factors are influenced by economic conditions, regulatory requirements, available technology, and outside funding opportunities.*

The planned replacement for the existing WWTPs is a single, more modern WWTP. The County is actively seeking outside funding to further develop the replacement alternatives, which will inform useful life determinations for the WWTPs. The WWTPs are currently performing adequately, and the County expects that automation investments being made in the WWTPs, along with various operational changes, will help reduce or slow down increases in O&M costs and in turn extend their useful lives. Depending on trends for the relevant factors in the coming years, it is possible that the WWTPs will have considerable remaining useful lives.

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Finding F4: The SCADA system that was installed was not a true SCADA system and did not reduce maintenance labor costs.

Agency Response: *Agree. As discussed with property owners during outreach for the 2020 Zone E and Zone G rate proposals, the County installed remote monitoring in 2021 as a means to reduce the number of weekly staff site visits to the Zone E and Zone G WWTPs. Anticipating the reduced trips, County staff reduced the labor estimates used to develop the 2020 rate proposals by 25%. However, changes to regulatory requirements*

for nitrogen management eliminated the opportunity to reduce staff visits and instead resulted in slightly higher labor costs.

Note that the remote monitoring systems were never represented to the community as a true Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system (although the term SCADA was unfortunately used in the Engineer's Report), and the lack of full SCADA functionality was not a factor in the County's inability to reduce labor costs.

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Finding F5: Maintenance costs have exceeded projections.

Agency Response: *Agree. Operation and maintenance costs since the 2020 rate increase have exceeded projections, primarily due to regulatory changes for nitrogen management that eliminated the opportunity to reduce staff visits as anticipated and high pandemic-related inflation that resulted in much larger increases in labor and materials costs over several years than the 3% annually the County assumed in the approved 2020 rate proposal.*

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Finding F6: Employees must first drive to the DPW facility in Stockton before starting work and then return to Stockton. Facilities near the WWTP work site could benefit the southern County sites by reducing labor costs.

Agency Response: *Partially agree. Public Works employees assigned to the CSA 44 WWTPs report to the Public Works Hazelton Complex each workday in Stockton (Hazelton), travel to the WWTPs in the Tracy area, and return to Stockton at the end of the day. These employees also report to the sewer lift station site at the San Joaquin General Hospital on almost a daily basis as well.*

The language in the second sentence of this finding is unclear; however, it seems to indicate that having employees housed at a facility in the Tracy area near the WWTP could result in reduced travel time and therefore lower labor costs for the WWTPs and perhaps other special districts in the Tracy / Southwest County area. As outlined in the

response to recommendation R6, such a satellite facility would result in increased labor costs for the CSA 44 WWTPs.

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Finding F7: The County has been transparent with homeowners.

Agency Response: *Agree.*

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Finding F8: In 2018, the County adopted a policy that prohibits the formation of CSAs without the approval of the Director of Public Works.

Agency Response: *Partially agree. This policy was part of the County General Plan update that the Board of Supervisors adopted in 2016.*

2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Discussion, Findings and Recommendations

The 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury has found responses to Findings F1-F8 to be in compliance with Cal. Pen. Code §933.05(a) and determined that no further action is

RECOMMENDATIONS

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation R1: By October 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors should begin negotiations with the City of Tracy to explore the feasibility of an intertie connection to the City of Tracy WWTP.

Agency Response: *This recommendation requires further analysis. A Board representative and/or Board-designated staff will contact the City of Tracy by October 1, 2025, and inquire as to the City's interest in allowing a connection to the City sewer system and treating CSA 44 wastewater; however, the County's ability to begin negotiations depends on the City's willingness to do so.*

As the Grand Jury is aware, the County has made numerous attempts to negotiate such an arrangement with the City over the past nine years. County and City staff reached agreement on a term sheet on at least three occasions during that time, and in each of

these cases, the City Manager stopped the proposal from moving forward to the City Council, most recently in September 2023 after the County reached agreement with the previous City Manager in December 2022. While the County is willing to make another good faith attempt at negotiating an agreement, it will only do so if the City expresses genuine interest in providing the requested service.

2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Discussion, Findings and Recommendations

Finding F1: The BOS did not provide documentation of initiating contact with the City of Tracy regarding their interest in allowing CSA 44 to connect to the city's sewer system.

Recommendation R1: By October 1, 2026, the BOS should follow through with initiating contact with the City of Tracy and provide documentation that it was done.

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation R2: By October 1, 2025, if the intertie is not feasible, the Board of Supervisors should consider consolidating the two smaller WWTPs into a single, more efficient facility.

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation R3: By October 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors should create a plan to replace or upgrade the facilities.

Agency Response to R2 & R3: *These recommendations have been implemented. Given the lack of success to date with connecting to the City of Tracy system, the planned replacement for the existing WWTPs is a single, more modern WWTP. The County is actively seeking outside funding to further develop the replacement alternatives. Senator Schiff and Representative Gray have submitted appropriation requests for the 2026 Federal budget, and if secured, this funding would allow the County to proceed with alternative selection, environmental clearance, and preliminary engineering to some extent depending on the funding amount. Identifying and further developing the replacement alternative will inform useful life determinations for the WWTPs and*

hopefully help position the replacement project for future outside funding opportunities. Note that district customers will likely need to make a significant contribution to the new WWTP even with grant funding availability, so the County will be in touch with the community to hopefully reach consensus regarding WWTP replacement timing.

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation R4: By October 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors should create a plan to install a true SCADA system to reduce maintenance labor costs.

Agency Response: *This recommendation has been implemented. Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems for Zone G and Zone E are planned as part of a \$2.6 million grant-funded project to install SCADA in numerous County Public Works-managed utility facilities, and these systems are scheduled to be operational in September 2025. When fully implemented, these SCADA systems are expected to improve service levels and may reduce operating costs as well.*

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation R5: By October 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors should create a plan with current and projected discharge requirements to reduce operating costs.

Agency Response: *This recommendation will not be implemented. The County is unclear as to what this recommendation is suggesting. There is no way for the County to know in advance what discharge requirement changes might be included in future State regulations or the timing of such changes. Additionally, it is unclear how a plan based on knowledge of future requirements would necessarily result in lower operating costs. The general trend for wastewater regulations in California is to become more stringent over time, which generally increases operating costs.*

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation R6: By October 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors assess the feasibility of establishing a satellite office to serve the south county.

Agency Response: *This recommendation has been implemented. A new satellite utilities field office/ corporation yard would involve facilities to house employees, technology and communications equipment; secure storage space for equipment, supplies, and vehicles; and possibly land acquisition. This satellite facility would involve a substantial investment that would have to result in significant labor savings to be feasible. As outlined below, a South County facility is expected to increase costs for South County special districts, so the County concludes that such a facility is infeasible.*

2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Discussion, Findings and Recommendations

The 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury has found responses to Recommendations R2-R6 to be in compliance with Cal. Pen. Code §933.05(b) and determined that no further action is necessary.

Second Follow-Up Report

Case #0123 - City of Stockton: Crisis in Government

SUMMARY

During the past two years, the Stockton City Council (SCC) has consistently failed to follow the required format for responses to Civil Grand Jury (CGJ) findings and recommendations, as delineated in California Penal Code (Cal. Pen. Code) §933.05(a) and 933.05(b).

The required response format is intended to provide clarity on the agency's agreement or disagreement with findings, and if there is agreement, its intent and timeframe for implementing recommendations. Failure to follow this format has resulted in additional delays and time required for analysis on the part of the CGJ to determine if the SCC responses are compliant.

As of June 2025, the SCC had submitted responses to five of the eleven 23-24 CGJ recommendations that were accepted and where no further action was required. The 24-25 CGJ requested that the SCC respond to the remaining six recommendations by October 1, 2025.

This Second Follow-Up report contains the 25-26 CGJ evaluation of the September 10, 2025, SCC response to the 24-25 CGJ follow-up report.

The 25-26 CGJ has reviewed the responses from SCC to determine if they sufficiently address the 24-25 CGJ findings and recommendations. Agency responses are *italicized*, followed by the 25-26 CGJ determinations and follow-up findings and recommendations.

ACRONYMS

- 22-23 CGJ 2022-2023 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury (Recipient of late complaints related to Brown Act violations of the SCC)
- 23-24 CGJ 2023-2024 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury (Author of the initial Investigative Report #0123)
- 24-25 CGJ 2024-2025 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury (Author of the First Follow Up of Report #0123)
- 25-26 CGJ 2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury (Author of this Second Follow Up of Report #0123)

Cal. Pen. Code § California Penal Code Section Number

CGJ Civil Grand Jury

COS City of Stockton

SCC Stockton City Council

SMP Social Media Platform

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY

One of the key roles of the Civil Grand Jury is to review agency responses to the reports issued by prior grand juries. This report is intended to ensure that the responses are compliant with the Cal. Pen. Code and that previous grand jury work is not overlooked.

BACKGROUND

The 22-23 CGJ initiated an investigation into potential Brown Act violations by members of the SCC. The 23–24 CGJ continued this inquiry and investigated additional complaints of a hostile and ineffective work environment within the Stockton City Government. The 23-24 CGJ Final Report published in June of 2024 included the investigation report entitled “City of Stockton:

Crisis in Government, Case #0123". The investigation report included eleven findings and recommendations for response by the SCC.

As required by the Superior Court, the 24-25 CGJ assumed responsibility for receiving and evaluating responses from the SCC during their term of service between July 2024 and June 2025. Response letters from the SCC were received by the Superior Court on August 21, 2024, and May 14, 2025. The 24-25 CGJ evaluated the responses and determined that five of the eleven original findings and recommendations had been satisfactorily addressed by the SCC.

These findings and recommendations are contained in the 24-25 CGJ Report published in June of 2025. The report also concluded that the remaining six of the eleven original recommendations were not yet sufficiently responded to and required additional follow-up by the SCC with a due date of October 1, 2025. Following established practice, the 25-26 CGJ assumed responsibility for receiving and evaluating the outstanding responses from the SCC.

The SCC response submitted on September 10, 2025, only addressed three of the six outstanding recommendations. The 25-26 CGJ reviewed and evaluated each of the three responses from SCC, as well as the corresponding findings and recommendations for each.

METHODOLOGY

The CGJ reviewed the following documents:

- 23-24 Civil Grand Jury Report on Case #0123: City of Stockton: Crisis in Government
- City of Stockton, letters dated August 21, 2024, and September 10, 2024 (initial response)
- City of Stockton letter dated May 14, 2025 (2nd Follow-up response)
- 24-25 Civil Grand Jury Follow-Up Report on Case #0123: City of Stockton: Crisis in Government
- City of Stockton letter dated September 10, 2025 (3rd Follow-up response)

This report contains the SCC responses to recommendations that were included in the September 10, 2025, 3rd Follow-up response letter, and the 25-26 CGJ determination of their

adequacy in addressing the findings and recommendations contained in the 24-25 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury Report.

For those recommendations where the SCC response was complete and adequate, the 25-26 CGJ has noted “no further action is needed.” For those recommendations where the SCC response was not adequate or where additional information is needed by the 25-26 CGJ, the CGJ has specified that information and has established a new deadline for SCC response. Finally, for those recommendations that the SCC has not yet responded to, the 25-26 CGJ has established a new deadline for SCC responses.

The following Table is a summary of 24-25 CGJ recommendations and responses received, and the 25-26 CGJ conclusions:

Recommendation	Response	25-26 CGJ Conclusion
R1.1 Stop enabling Social Media Platforms from interfering with city government.	No response to this recommendation in 9/10/25 letter.	See 25-26 CGJ recommendation R1.1 in this report.
R1.2 Establish policy for addressing threatening communications.	Response received 9/10/25. Copies of existing (2009) Policy and Protocol submitted	See 25-26 CGJ recommendation R1.2 in this report.
R1.3 Adopt ordinance for election transparency.	No response to this recommendation in 9/10/25 letter.	See 25-26 CGJ recommendation R1.3 in this report.
R1.6 Standardize employment rules in Mayor’s Office	Response received 5/14/25.	No Further action is needed.
R2.3 Establish Brown Act Violation Policy: Investigation results released to CGJ within 7 days.	Response received 9/10/25. Policy adopted by City Council.	No Further action is needed.
R3.1 Investigate City’s Ethics Hotline.	Response received 9/10/25. Implementation in process.	See 25-26 CGJ recommendation R3.1 in this report.

Table 1 - Summary of 24-25 CGJ Recommendations and Responses, and 25-26 CGJ Conclusions

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Threatening Work Environment Recommendations

R1.1: By October 1, 2025, the City Council should stop allowing outside influences to interfere with city government through their ongoing association with individuals connected to them.

(Note: The 23-24 CGJ recommendation that preceded the above 24-25 CGJ recommendations read as follows: R1.1: By September 1, 2024, the City Council should stop enabling the SMP (Social Media Platform) from interfering with effective city government through their continued association and/or support of individuals associated with the SMP.)

The agency response to the 23-24 CGJ recommendation was as follows:

8-21-24 Agency response: *The City acknowledges the Grand Jury's recommendation R1.1.*

The agency response to the 24-25 CGJ recommendation was as follows:

9-10-25 Agency response: (No response was submitted)

2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Discussion, Findings and Recommendations

F1.1: SCC member communication through Social Media Platforms (SMPs) is an individual decision. However, comments made by Council members in any public forum or setting, including SMPs, are subject to City Council censure if those comments violate City Policies, Confidentiality Rules, or the City Code of Ethics.

R1.1: By September 23, 2026, SCC should review and adhere to City Policies, Confidentiality Rules, and the City Code of Ethics requirements when engaging in interviews or public dialogue through SMPs.

R1.2: By October 1, 2025, the Stockton City Council should establish a policy for addressing threatening communications directed at City officials and employees. The policy should include forwarding threats to the District Attorney's office.

9-10-25 Agency response: *The City Acknowledges the Grand Jury's recommendation R1.2. City of Stockton Administrative Directive HR-64 - Workplace Violence Crisis Management Policy, addresses the procedure for handling threats received by City Official and employees. The city further developed written Workplace Violence Prevention Plans in accordance with guidance received from Cal/OSHA.*

2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Discussion, Findings and Recommendations

F1.2: The 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury reviewed the policy and procedure submitted by the SCC. It is noted that these documents were implemented by the City in 2009 and did not include a written Workplace Violence Prevention Plan as referenced in the City's September 10, 2025, response.

R1.2: By September 23, 2026, the SCC should submit additional supporting documentation as listed below:

- Workplace Violence Prevention Plan.
- Appendix A to Administrative Directive HR-64: Protocol for Responding to Workplace Violence.
- A copy of materials used for training employees, supervisors, managers and city elected officials on workplace violence prevention, reporting and response.
- Training plan or explanation of training approach (e.g., initial and periodic refresher training).
- List of workplace violence investigations conducted in last two years, including dispositions.

R1.3: By October 1, 2025, the Stockton City Council should develop a policy on election transparency.

(Note: The 23-24 CGJ recommendation that preceded the above 24-25 CGJ recommendations read as follows: R1.3: By March 31, 2025, the City should adopt an ordinance similar to the City of San Francisco Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code Section 1500 et seq., to strengthen election transparency. That ordinance requires political consultants and candidates to file reports directly to the City in all municipal elections listing business relationships, financial investments, and who they pay for political help or receive in-kind support from, as well as indicating whom they provide support to in elections.)

8-21-24 Agency response: *The Interim City Clerk brought this item to the City Council's Legislative and Environmental Committee for an introductory discussion, on July 17, 2024, as item 3.2 (agenda). The Committee members discussed and provided to staff feedback, including consideration of the above-mentioned code language from the City of San Francisco. This item will continue to be updated under the direction of the Council Committee before being finalized to go to the full Council for approval and adoption. Supporting documents from the July 17th Committee meeting are included as Attachment R1.3.*

9-10-25 Agency response: (None)

2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Discussion, Findings and Recommendations

F1.3: The Agency response dated September 10, 2025, did not provide an update on Stockton City Council's efforts to finalize and adopt an election transparency ordinance.

R1.3: By September 23, 2026, the Stockton City Council should submit an update to the Civil Grand Jury on its progress in developing and adopting an Election Transparency Ordinance.

R1.6: By March 31, 2025, the City shall enact a policy that all employees of the Mayor’s office be under the same mandated employment rules and laws as the rest of the City staff.

5-14-25 Agency Response: *The City Council acknowledges the Grand Jury’s recommendation R1.6. However, the recommendation and report do not contain sufficient information to respond other than as follows:*

Under Stockton Charter section 1102(n) all the Mayor’s appointees “shall serve at the pleasure of the Mayor in the unclassified service; and shall serve under such terms and conditions, salaries and benefits as are similar to other unclassified employees. All unclassified, at-will employees of the City must adhere to all applicable employment rules and laws.”

9-10-2025 Agency Response: (None)

Discussion: A review of other major cities in California indicates that the use of unclassified positions to support the Mayor’s office and other key management and specialized roles is common practice. This provision for the Mayor’s office allows the elected official to more directly select and hire qualified individuals to support the functions of his/her office.

As stated in the city’s response dated May 14, 2025, all classified, at will employees of the City must adhere to all applicable employment rules and laws. Employment rules and laws, including but not limited to those that apply to ethical behavior, criminal actions, non-discrimination and personal conduct, apply to both classified and unclassified employees.

2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Discussion, Findings and Recommendations

The 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury has found the response to Recommendation R1.6 to be in compliance with Cal. Pen. Code §933.05(b) and determined that no further action is necessary.

Brown Act Recommendations

R2.3: By October 1, 2025, The Stockton City Council shall enact a policy requiring all findings from investigations into alleged Brown Act violations to be submitted to the Civil Grand Jury within seven days of receipt by the Council.

9-10-25 Agency Response: *Via Resolution 2025-09-09-1602 the City Council has adopted Council Policy Manual Chapter 3.15, Brown Act Investigations. The policy provides: "If by majority vote the City Council orders an investigation into alleged Brown Act violation(s), all findings from the investigation regarding the alleged Brown Act violation(s) shall be submitted to the Civil Grand Jury within seven (7) days of receipt by the City Council."*

2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Discussion, Findings and Recommendations

The 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury has found the response to Recommendation R2.3 to be in compliance with Cal. Pen. Code §933.05(b) and determined that no further action is necessary.

Grievance Process

R3.1: By October 1, 2025, the Stockton City Council shall hire an independent third party to investigate the City's Ethics Hotline process to regain employee and public trust in the system.

9-10-25 Agency Response: *The City Acknowledges the Grand Jury's recommendation R3.1 and the importance of ensuring employees have confidence in the City's Ethics Hotline process. The Ethics Hotline was previously maintained by the City's external City Auditor and is currently maintained by the Stockton City Attorney's Office. The City Council provided direction to staff during its September 09, 2025 meeting that the functions of the Ethics Hotline be retained in the City Attorney's Office pending*

the issuance of an RFP for the retention of an external City Auditor. Upon retention of a firm following that RFP process, the external auditor will review and maintain the City's Ethics Hotline process.

2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Discussion, Findings and Recommendations

F3.1: The City of Stockton's response is acceptable. However, additional information is requested.

R3.1: Upon execution of the contract to maintain the City's Ethics Hotline, the Stockton City Council shall notify the Civil Grand Jury.

RESPONSE COMPLIANCE

For Follow-Up Report #0218 - Micke Grove Zoo:

Honoring the Past, Securing the Future

SUMMARY

Micke Grove Zoo (MGZ) was established as part of a community vision by William and Julia Micke, who donated land to San Joaquin County in 1938 for a public park. In 1957, William Micke built the zoo in memory of his wife and created a trust fund to support both Micke Grove Park and the zoo. Significant improvements in the late 1980s led to Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) accreditation, which MGZ held from 1990 to 2006. As animal care standards increased under AZA and U.S. Department of Agriculture requirements, the zoo transitioned away from large animals toward smaller species housed in renovated exhibits. Over time, aging infrastructure created renewed maintenance and upgrade challenges. In 2005, MGZ's application for AZA re-accreditation was deferred, and accreditation was denied in 2006 due to insufficient progress in addressing identified deficiencies. Since that time, San Joaquin County has made limited progress in repairing or replacing exhibits to meet appropriate animal care standards.

METHODOLOGY

The 25-26 CGJ reviewed the response to the 2024-2025 follow-up report: Micke Grove Zoo: Honoring the Past, Securing the Future, as well as the original report. Mandatory responses to the findings and recommendations and 25-26 CGJ conclusions are summarized in the following table.

RES= Respondent BOS=Board of Supervisors

2024-2025 GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS	RES	INDIVIDUAL/AGENCY RESPONSES	2025-2026 GRAND JURY OBSERVATIONS
R1.0: By October 1, 2025 the Board of Supervisors will continue efforts to restore and expand MGZ and secure accreditation.	BOS	Has been implemented.	No further action.
R2.0: By October 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors will direct the Parks Department to identify and develop additional revenue streams, such as concessions, a gift shop, and special events, to help the MGZ become financially self-sustaining.	BOS	Has been implemented.	No further action.
R3.0: By October 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors will direct General Services to present a Master Plan for the county's parks, which includes MGZ.	BOS	Has been implemented.	No further action.

Table 1: Listing of 2024-2025 Recommendations requiring a response.

ACRONYMS

- AZA Association of Zoos & Aquariums
- BOS San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors.
- MGZ Micke Grove Zoo.
- SJC San Joaquin County

RECOMMENDATIONS

2024 – 2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation 1.0: By October 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors will continue efforts to restore and expand MGZ and secure accreditation.

Agency Response: *Has been implemented. The Micke Grove Zoo (MGZ), under the direction of the General Servies (sic) Department, Parks and Recreation Division, began participating in the Association of Zoos & Aquariums' (AZA) Pathway Toward Membership program in 2024-2025. This program helps to prepare non-member zoos to apply for accreditation, typically over a period of up to five years. The MGZ has begun working with its assigned peer consultant, and staff expect to apply for AZA accreditation within the next five years. AZA accreditation will increase the MGZ's eligibility for non-County funding and grants, promote operational excellence, and improve the ability to attract and retain high-quality staff.*

2024 – 2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation 2.0: By October 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors will direct the Parks Department to identify and develop additional revenue streams, such as concessions, a gift shop, and special events, to help the MGZ become financially self-sustaining.

Agency Response: *Has been implemented. The MGZ, under the direction of the General Servies (sic) Department, Parks and Recreation Division, will explore options to enhance revenue streams in addition to establishing new agreement(s) with organizations to support the MGZ to reduce the reliance on the County's General Fund and become more financially self-sustaining. The Department and the County Administrator's Office are in ongoing negotiations to potentially contract with the San Joaquin Zoological Society for fund-raising activities subject to Board of Supervisors approval.*

2024 – 2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation 3.0: By October 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors will direct General Services to present a Master Plan for the county's parks, which includes MGZ.

Agency Response: *Has been implemented. The General Services Department, Parks and Recreation Division, in cooperation with the Purchasing and Support Services Department, released a Request for Proposals (RFP) #25082 – Ten Year Master Plan for Parks and Recreation (including the MGZ) on July 3, 2025.*

Proposals were due no later than August 22, 2025. In Fall of 2025, a recommendation to award a contract for master planning services will be presented to the Board of Supervisors.

2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Discussion, Findings and Recommendations

The 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury has found responses to Recommendations R1.0 – R3.0 to be in compliance with Cal. Pen. Code §933.05(b) and determined that no further action is necessary.

RESPONSE COMPLIANCE

Eyes on San Joaquin County

Growth ... City of Mountain House, San Joaquin County's Newest City

SUMMARY

On March 5, 2024, voters in the Mountain House Community Services District overwhelmingly approved city hood, with 90.81% in favor, marking the community's transition to the 483rd city in California and the eighth in San Joaquin County. Officially incorporated on July 1, 2024, Mountain House's rapid growth prompted review by the 2024–2025 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury. Once severely impacted by the 2008 recession—when home values dropped nearly 50% and the community was labeled by multiple media sources as the most “underwater” in the nation—Mountain House has since experienced a dramatic recovery. By late 2024, some home values exceeded \$1 million, reflecting nearly a 70% increase since 2020 and signaling renewed residential and commercial investment.

METHODOLOGY

The 25-26 CGJ reviewed the response to the 2024-2025 investigation report: Eyes on San Joaquin County: Growth ... City of Mountain House, San Joaquin County's Newest City, as well as the original report. Mandatory responses to the Findings and Recommendations and Civil Grand Jury conclusions are summarized in the following tables.

RES=Respondent

MHCC=Mt. House City Council

LSD=Lammersville School District

2024-2025 GRAND JURY FINDINGS	RES	INDIVIDUAL/ AGENCY RESPONSES	2025-2026 GRAND JURY OBSERVATIONS
F1: MH continues to be a ‘bed-room community’ as the Valley Link Project offers only future benefits that rely on ongoing regional coordination and State & Federal funding/ investment	MHCC	Partially disagrees	No further action.
F2: MH remains an isolated community due to a lack of local transit options.	MHCC	Partially disagrees.	No further action.
F3: Incorporation of MH has allowed the City to retain a greater share of revenue and to make local land decisions	MHCC	Agrees	No further action.
F4: MH’s high performing schools and rapid population growth present opportunities and challenges for infrastructure	MHCC	Partially disagrees.	No further action.
F5: MH continues to pursue retail and commercial opportunities to offer essential services and retail options to its residents.	MHCC	Agrees.	No further action.
F6: MH continues to promote economic growth to increase employment opportunities within city boundaries	MHCC	Agrees.	No further action.

Table 1 – Summary of responses to recommendations and grand jury conclusions.

RES=Respondent

MHCC=Mt. House City Council

LSD=Lammersville School District

2024-2025 GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS	RES	INDIVIDUAL/AGENCY RESPONSES	2025-2026 GRAND JURY OBSERVATIONS
R1: City Council should pursue regional and state partnerships to advance transportation projects such as Valley Link.	MHCC	Has been implemented.	No further action.
R2: CC should explore partnering with Tracy or other entity to improve connectivity to the local Tracy area, ACE and BART transit systems, as well as within city limits.	MHCC	Requires further analysis.	No further action.
R3: CC should continue to evaluate law enforcement and public safety staffing needs, along with infrastructure requirements, as the city's population increases.	MHCC	Has been implemented.	No further action.
R4: CC should engage in proactive planning and funding for k-8 schools and MH HS construction and educational programs to accommodate the expected student growth.	MHCC	Will not be implemented.	No further action.

Table 2 – Summary of responses to recommendations and grand jury conclusions.

2024-2025 GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS	RES	INDIVIDUAL/ AGENCY RESPONSES	2025-2026 GRAND JURY OBSERVATIONS
R5: Lammersville School District Board and MH City Council should maintain proactive planning and funding for k-8 schools and the construction and educational programs of MH HS to meet expected student growth.	LSD	Will not be implemented.	No further action.
R6: MH CC should identify additional funding opportunities to support the future growth of MH HS	MHCC	Will not be implemented.	No further action.

Table 2 continued- Summary of response to recommendations and grand jury conclusions.

ACRONYMS and DEFINITIONS

- ACE Altamont Corridor Express
- AP Advanced Placement courses
- BART Bay Area Rapid Transit
- BOS San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors
- CFA Comprehensive Financial Analysis
- CSD Community Service District
- CTE Career Technical Education
- K-8 Kindergarten - 8th grade
- LAFCo Local Agency Formation Commission
- LUSD Lammersville Unified School District
- MH Mountain House
- MHCC Mountain House City Council

MHHS Mountain House High School

Rail Authority Tri-Valley San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority

RTD Rapid Transit District

SJC San Joaquin County

FINDINGS

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Finding F1: Mountain House continues to be a "bedroom community" as the Valley Link Project offers only future benefits that rely on ongoing regional coordination and State and Federal funding/investment.

Agency Response: *The City of Mountain House partially disagrees with Finding 1. While it is true that Valley Link is a future-facing project, and progress has been slower than anticipated, the City's characterization as a "bedroom community" overlooks significant shifts in workforce patterns and ongoing local and regional efforts. Approximately 30 percent of Mountain House residents now work from home full-time, and another 20 percent do so occasionally. In addition to remaining an active partner in the Valley Link project, the city is now a member of the San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG), positioning us to better advocate for County, State, and Federal transportation funding. This commitment was demonstrated through our recent federal funding advocacy trip to Washington, D.C., as part of the SJCOG One Voice delegation. The city continues to engage in regional discussions, raise concerns, and ensure that our transportation needs are heard and addressed.*

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Finding F2: Mountain House remains an isolated community due to a lack of local transit options.

Agency Response: *The City of Mountain House partially disagrees with Finding 2. While the City recognizes the need for expanded local transit options, it is actively working to address this issue. As noted above, the City's membership in the San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG) strengthens our ability to advocate for County, State, and Federal*

transportation funding, including near-term transit improvements. This commitment was recently demonstrated through our participation in the SJCOG One Voice federal advocacy trip to Washington, D.C. In addition, City staff is working closely with Caltrans, SJCOG, and local transit operators to identify and advance short-term transit opportunities. Staff is also conducting an analysis of unmet transit needs and will present its findings and potential solutions to the City Council within the current budget year. However, the conclusion that the city "remains an isolated community" overlooks the City's intentional investments in its shared spaces, recreational infrastructure, and community programming. These efforts significantly improve connectivity within the city and to nearby areas. Over the past year, the city has hosted over 30 public events-many bringing record-breaking attendance, demonstrating that residents are actively engaged and connected. Long-term planning is also underway through the City's update to its Recreation Master Plan and the City's first General Plan, both of which will guide decisions about future community investments and community needs. Recent projects include new and upgraded parks with accessibility for residents at all stages of life. Major amenities currently planned include a new tennis center, amphitheater, state-of-the-art community recreation center, and an outdoor aquatics center. With these projects, the city is becoming a central place where residents can enjoy entertainment, recreation, and a strong sense of community. These efforts reflect a commitment to building a city that is active, inclusive, and well-connected.

Therefore, while improving local transit remains a work in progress, the city is actively creating spaces and services that reduce isolation through thoughtful design and long-term planning.

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Finding F3: The incorporation of Mountain House has allowed the city to retain a greater share of revenue and to make local land decisions.

Agency Response: *The City of Mountain House agrees that incorporation has allowed it to retain a greater share of revenue and to make local land use decisions.*

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Finding F4: Mountain House's high-performing schools and rapid population growth present opportunities and challenges for infrastructure.

Agency Response: *The City of Mountain House partially disagrees with Finding 4. While the City acknowledges the opportunities presented by its high-performing schools and rapid population growth, the finding fails to fully recognize the City's long-term planning and investment in proactive and sustainable infrastructure management.*

For instance, the City has implemented a rigorous pavement management program that keeps local streets in well-maintained condition, avoiding millions in future replacement costs. These same infrastructure management principles are applied across all major systems, including utilities and parks. In addition, the city is investing in "smart" infrastructure that is designed to be cost-effective, efficient, and low maintenance. This approach prioritizes long-term sustainability as the community grows. Major upgrades, such as the recent expansion of the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant and citywide stormwater improvements, are directly linked to supporting current and future growth. The City is also planning for long-term capacity through projects like the Aquifer Storage and Recovery Well and continues to incorporate clean energy and water conservation practices. The city is proactively addressing growth-related challenges through forward-thinking infrastructure planning.

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Finding F5: Mountain House continues to pursue retail and commercial opportunities to offer essential services and retail options for its residents.

Agency Response: *The City of Mountain House agrees that it continues to pursue retail and commercial opportunities to offer essential services and retail options for its residents.*

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Finding F6: Mountain House continues to promote economic growth to increase employment opportunities within the city's boundaries.

Agency Response: *The City of Mountain House agrees that it continues to promote economic growth to increase opportunities within its boundaries.*

2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Discussion, Findings and Recommendations

The 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury has found responses to Findings F1-F6 to be in compliance with Cal. Pen. Code §933.05(a) and determined that no further action is necessary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation R1: By October 1, 2025, the City Council should pursue regional and state partnerships to advance transportation projects such as Valley Link.

Agency Response: *The City Council has implemented Recommendation 1. The city actively seeks to expand its partnerships both at local and federal levels to advance transportation projects. As the Civil Grand Jury notes in its report, the city is now a member of the San Joaquin County Council of Governments (CoG), comprising all eight cities within the County. The COG plays a critical role in allocating regional, state, and federal transportation funding, and the City is now a recipient of such funds, some of which are specifically for transportation projects. Furthermore, in May 2025, City officials and staff traveled to Washington D.C. to represent the City of Mountain House and advocate for funding its proposed Mountain House Regional Mobility Hub project. Accordingly, the city has and continues to pursue means to advance transportation goals.*

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation R2: By October 1, 2025, the City Council should explore partnering with the City of Tracy or another entity to improve connectivity to the local Tracy area, ACE, and BART transit systems, as well as within its city limits.

Agency Response: *Recommendation 2 requires further analysis. City staff is currently assessing unmet transit needs and plans to present findings and potential strategies to*

the City Council within the current budget year. This work is essential to identifying viable options for improving connectivity within the city, to the local Tracy area, and to regional systems such as ACE and BART.

As noted above, City staff is working closely with Caltrans, the San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG), the City of Tracy's Transit Division, Altamont Corridor Express (ACE), and San Joaquin Regional Transit District (SJRTD) to address both near-term and long-term regional transit needs. In parallel, the city continues to collaborate with the County of Alameda on the design and construction of roundabouts on Grant Line Road at Mountain House and Altamont Pass Roads. These projects, anticipated to break ground within the next year, will improve traffic flow and safety while advancing the City's connectivity goals with neighboring communities and regional transit systems.

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation R3: By October 1, 2025, the City Council should continue to evaluate law enforcement and public safety staffing needs, along with infrastructure requirements, as the city's population increases.

Agency Response: *The City Council has implemented Recommendation 3. Public safety remains one of the City's highest priorities, and the city continues to evaluate and address staffing, and infrastructure needs to support a rapidly growing population. Within the first year of incorporation, the city opened Fire Station No. 2 in north Mountain House. This investment has significantly improved response times, expanded service coverage, and enhanced overall emergency preparedness. The city has also expanded its Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), equipping more trained volunteers to provide vital support during community emergencies.*

Public safety efforts extend to everyday protections as well. The City's Crossing Guard Program now includes 20 trained crossing guards stationed at multiple school sites, ensuring students and families can safely navigate intersections during peak school hours.

Law enforcement capacity has grown through the addition of another dedicated motorcycle deputy and the continuation of contracts with the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office and Rank Security. Partnering with the Sheriff's Office gives the city access to a wide range of resources that extend far beyond what could be maintained through an in-house police force. This includes specialized units such as SWAT, K-9, detectives, and other specialty teams, along with a significantly larger pool of deputies than the city could employ directly. These resources can be deployed when needed, ensuring the city is prepared to respond quickly and effectively to incidents of any scale.

The city has also invested in enhanced traffic safety infrastructure, implemented advanced data systems to better track and address safety concerns, and launched a real-time emergency alert system to keep residents informed during critical events.

Through these strategic actions, the city has met and exceeded expectations for maintaining a safe, secure, and well-prepared community. Public safety remains a cornerstone of Mountain House's continued growth and quality of life.

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation R4: By October 1, 2025, the City Council should engage in proactive planning and funding for K-8 schools and Mountain House High School construction and educational programs to accommodate the expected student growth.

Agency Response: *Recommendation 4 will not be implemented by the City Council because the city does not have jurisdiction over schools. The Lammersville Unified School District (LUSD) is responsible for schools in Mountain House, and the City has no authority to direct the actions of its Board of Trustees, including decisions over funding or educational programs. However, the city will maintain its strong and collaborative relationship with LUSD and will continue to be a supportive partner on matters within the City's subject matter jurisdiction. This includes, where appropriate, land use and development planning, shared use of facilities where feasible, and support for youth and after school programs.*

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation R5: By October 1, 2025, the Lammersville Unified School District Board of Governors and City Council should maintain proactive planning and funding for K-8 schools and the Mountain House High School construction and educational programs to meet the expected student growth.

Agency Response: *Recommendation 5 will not be implemented by the City Council. The city restates its response and reasoning in Recommendation 4.*

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation R6: By October 1, 2025, the City Council should identify additional funding opportunities to support the future growth of Mountain House High School.

Agency Response: *Recommendation 6 will not be implemented by the City Council. The City Council respectfully reiterates that it does not have jurisdiction over LUSD, which is responsible for identifying school funding needs. Under state law, cities are limited in their ability to establish or allocate funding sources. Additionally, the City does not have the authority to compel the LUSD Board of Trustees to take fiscal action. That said, the city maintains a strong partner to LUSD and will continue to collaborate on long-range planning through its land use and development review process. However, identifying funding for school facilities is not within the City's scope of authority.*

2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Recommendation R7: By October 1, 2025, the City Council should prioritize retail and commercial development to increase tax revenues and create employment opportunities within its city limits.

Agency Response: *The City Council has implemented Recommendation 7. Retail and commercial development is a priority for the City Council, and it is actively being advanced through the City's first Economic Development Strategy, which is a key initiative under the City's adopted Strategic Plan. This strategy provides a roadmap to guide how the city attracts new businesses, supports existing ones, and grows the local economy and workforce. The City has begun to assess current economic conditions and engaged developers to ensure availability of commercial sites. Key infrastructure, such*

as the planned extension of Mountain House Parkway north of Byron Road, is expected to have an immediate impact on business opportunities. With just a couple of more approvals needed, the City plans to have Mountain House Parkway and Great Valley Parkway open for northbound travel by next year.

Through these strategic actions, the city has demonstrated that it is prioritizing retail and commercial developments to grow tax revenues and employment opportunities.

2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Discussion, Findings and Recommendations

The 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury has found responses to Recommendations R1-R7 to be in compliance with Cal. Pen. Code §933.05(b) and determined that no further action is necessary.

Disclaimer

Civil Grand Jury reports are based on documentary evidence and the testimony of sworn or admonished witnesses, not on conjecture or opinion. However, the Civil Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing such evidence except upon the specific approval of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, or another judge appointed by the Presiding Judge (Penal Code Section 911, 924.1 (a) and 929). Similarly, the Civil Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing the identity of witnesses except upon an order of the court for narrowly defined purposes (Penal Code Sections 924.2 and 929).

This page left intentionally blank.

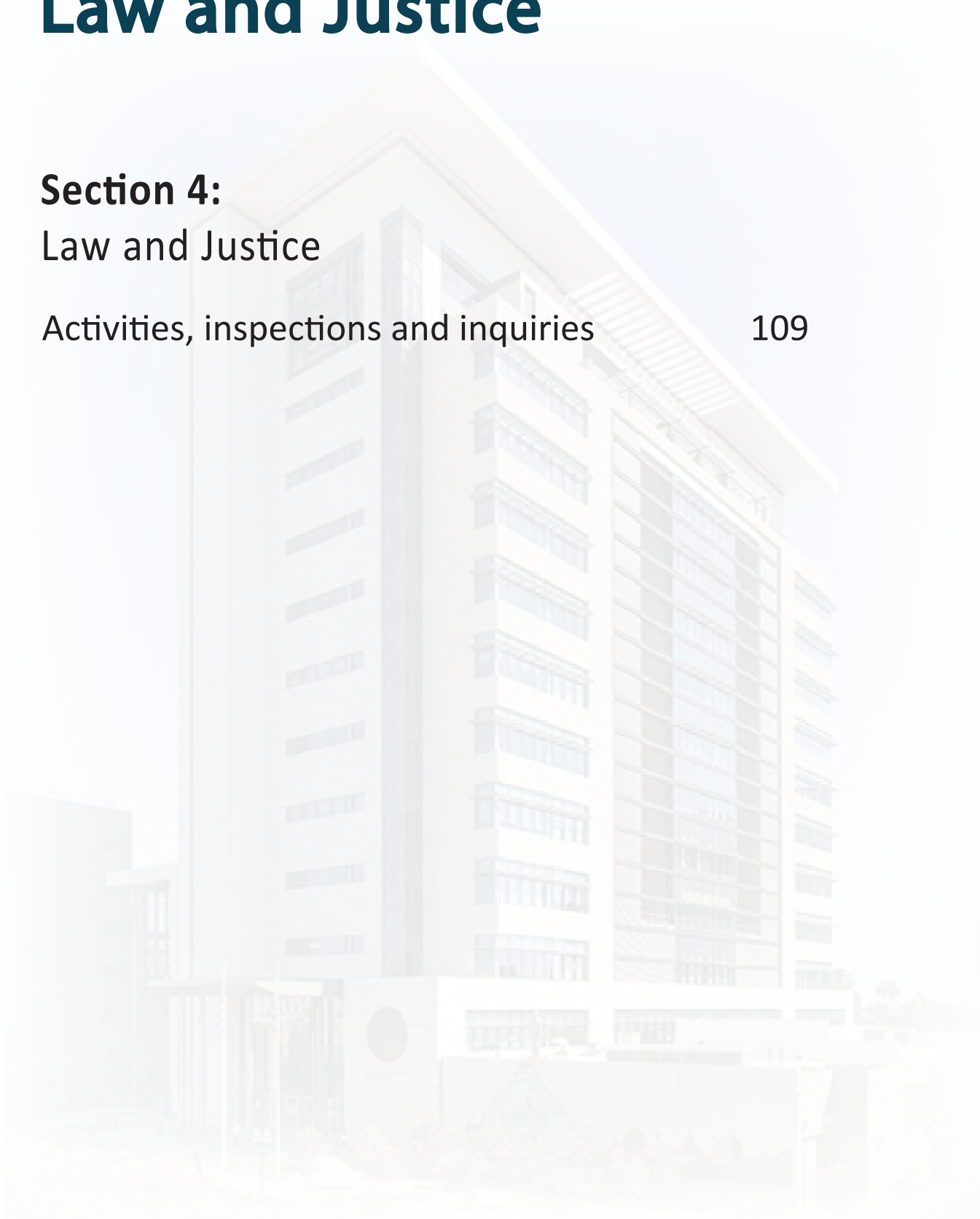
Law and Justice

Section 4:

Law and Justice

Activities, inspections and inquiries

109



2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury



Law and Justice

Activities, Inspections and Inquiries

Release Date: June, 2026



Statue of Lady Justice Holding Scales and Sword (Adobe Stock Photo)

SUMMARY:

Pursuant to California Penal Code §919(b), the Civil Grand Jury is required to inquire into the condition and management of all public prisons, jails, and detention facilities within the county. To fulfill this mandate, the 2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury conducted tours of all detention facilities operating in San Joaquin County. The 25-26 CGJ also received presentations from numerous law enforcement agencies and participated in ride-alongs with various departments throughout the county.

ACRONYMS

25-26 CGJ	2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury
Cal. Pen. Code	California Penal Code
RTCC	Real Time Crime Center
RTIC	Real Time Information Center
SWAT	Special Weapons and Tactics
SJCSO	San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office
BUI	Boating Under the Influence
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
EVOC	Emergency Vehicle Operator Course
SJCFJC	San Joaquin County Family Justice Center
ASALT	Anti-Sex and Labor Trafficking

PRESENTATIONS and SITE VISITS:

The 25-26 CGJ received presentations from, and toured the facilities of the following agencies:

Highlighted Tours:

- Tracy Police Department

- San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office
- Sheriff's Department Boating Safety Unit
- Lodi Police Department and Jail
- San Joaquin County Juvenile Detention Center
- Lathrop Police Department
- San Joaquin County Family Justice Center

Other Sites Toured:

- California Health Care Facility
- Mary Graham Children's Shelter
- Stockton Police Department
- Manteca Police Department

In-person presentations were also given by:

- San Joaquin County District Attorney's Office
- City of Stockton's Office of Violence Prevention

HIGHLIGHTS OF SITE VISITS:

A. Tracy Police Department

1. The Real Time Crime Center is up and running and gives the officers on the street a real-time advantage when a crime is reported. Using technology, the Real Time Crime Center assists investigators in solving crimes. A Real Time Crime Center (RTCC) in California is a centralized, technology-driven unit within a law enforcement agency that aggregates live data - such as surveillance video, license plate readers (ALPR), and 911 calls - to provide immediate, actionable intelligence to officers in the field. The system distributes the most useful information to officers to aid incident response and

by centralizing information sources, investigations for the protection of the citizens of Tracy.

2. Flock Safety cameras were installed at various locations and major intersections. Their primary use is to capture and analyze vehicle information such as license plates, make, model and color and they are used as a tool by law enforcement, businesses, and residential communities to deter and solve crimes.
3. Drone Unit: The drone program is designed to improve response times and provide situational awareness during incidents. Drones may be utilized for emergency response, missing person searches, search and rescue, and Special Weapon and Tactical (SWAT) operations.

In 2026, the Tracy Police Department plans on integrating drones directly with their Real-Time Information Center (RTIC), which will enable a more rapid deployment of drones.

B. San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office

1. The Real-Time Crime Center is up and running, including staffing which improved the capacity to respond to and prevent crime effectively.
2. The newly completed Dorothy J. Heisler Program and Detention Center was completed and is fully operational and compliant with California Code of Regulations Title 15, Division 3 regarding adult institutions, programs and parole regulations.
3. Mountain House is a new contract city for the Sherriff's Department with a staffing of ten deputies.
4. The San Joaquin County Jail has a maximum capacity of 1,585 beds occupancy; current occupancy is 1,250.
5. The San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office (SJCSO) received a new plane for their Metro Narcotics Unit.
6. The first in the state to obtain, authorize and deploy the Grapppler®. A Grapppler® unit is a tool mounted to the front of a law enforcement vehicle and is used by the San

Joaquin County Sheriff's Department to safely immobilize fleeing cars by launching a heavy-duty net to entangle the rear wheel.

7. The SJCSO parking lot utilizes solar panels to offset energy costs and to reduce their carbon footprint.

C. Sheriff's Department Boating Safety Unit

1. The San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office Boating Safety Unit operates year-round providing law enforcement services on the Delta's rivers and waterways. The unit patrols more than 700 miles of navigable waterways serving residents along the water, as well as fishermen and recreational boaters visiting the Delta, and enforces penal and boating safety laws, including Boating Under the Influence (BUI) enforcement.
2. In addition to providing boater safety and enforcement, the team is trained in water safety and water search and rescue operations. The Boating Safety Unit consists of a team of deputies and a sergeant and maintains a fleet of boats of varying sizes and capabilities for patrol and response on the water.
3. The unit has been known to ramp up patrols on the Delta waterways to ensure safety and prevent boating under the influence, particularly during high-use recreational seasons. The unit encourages safe and conscientious use of the scenic waterways when enjoying the natural beauty and resources of the Delta.
4. San Joaquin County, in conjunction with other Delta counties, is also involved with efforts to secure grant funding for cleaning up derelict and dangerous obstructions in and around the waterways. They are working to secure a \$2.6 million grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in conjunction with the California Department of Parks and Recreation, for a Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta clean-up project that will help remove larger marine debris and hazardous obstructions. These large debris items contain fuel, batteries and other hazardous materials that can leak into the water. Their presence also poses navigational and safety hazards to the public and California's economy. This project will result in long-term benefits for the ecosystem and the local communities on the Delta. Participating

sheriff departments include those from Solano, San Joaquin, Sacramento and Yolo counties. Photos below are examples of obstructions to be removed.



Abandoned Marina (Photo by: SJ Sheriff's Office)



Concrete Structure (Photo by: SJ Sheriff's Office)



Derelict Buoy (Photo by: SJ Sheriff's Office)

5. This sheriff's unit provides necessary and important services for the citizens and visitors of San Joaquin County and are to be commended for their service and dedication. They continue to promote boating safety and responsible recreational use throughout the waterways.

D. Lodi Police Department and Jail

1. The Lodi Police Department has broken ground on a new police department outdoor shooting range and an Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC).

2. The Police Citizens Academy, which educates the public on police operations, is now also available in Spanish to assist the diverse local community.
3. Additional Flock Safety cameras have been installed around Lodi.
4. The department has developed a Homeless Response Website.
<https://www.lodi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8088/Homelessness-in-Lodi>
5. Future projects will include a Real Time Information Center.
6. The full-time Crime Analysis unit is responsible for analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating criminal history records, criminal trends, patterns and suspect information.

E. San Joaquin County Juvenile Detention Center

1. Members of the Grand Jury toured and inspected the facility. There was a presentation by the staff and interaction with the detainees.
2. The San Joaquin County Probation Department's Juvenile Detention Center (Peterson Juvenile Hall and Camp Peterson) provides a structured environment with an emphasis on rehabilitation, education, personal growth and skill development for the youth in its care. The facility offers a wide range of programming designed to address behavioral issues while giving youth the tools necessary for successful reintegration back into the community.
3. A key component of the department's approach is its focus on mindset and behavior. Through counseling, mentoring, and structured daily routines, staff work with youth to promote accountability, improve decision-making, and encourage more positive patterns of thinking. This rehabilitative focus is reinforced through an incentive-based system that recognizes and rewards good behavior and program participation.
4. The Detention Center also gives youth access to regular academic instruction so they can continue their education while in custody. In addition, vocational training opportunities expose youth to practical skills and potential career pathways, helping to prepare them for employment upon release.

5. Notably, the facility's art therapy program has emerged as a meaningful and effective tool for engagement. Through creative expression, youth can process emotions, reduce stress, and develop constructive outlets for self-expression.
6. Overall, the Juvenile Detention Center demonstrates a commitment to rehabilitation through a combination of education, skill-building, behavioral incentives, and therapeutic programming. These efforts reflect a broader goal of supporting youth in making positive changes and reducing the likelihood of future involvement with the justice system.

F. Lathrop Police Department

1. The City of Lathrop is recognized as the fastest growing city in the state of California. It has a current population of approximately 40,000 and was incorporated on July 1, 1989. Until 2022, the City had contracted with the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Department for law enforcement. Rapid population growth led to the city establishing its own police department in June of that year.
2. Lathrop PD, drawing command and patrol staff from already existing law enforcement agencies from around the region, quickly established a viable force to provide policing services for the needs of the growing Lathrop community. The department currently has 48 sworn officers, along with support staff, who address these needs. While the department is relatively small in comparison to some surrounding communities, it fulfills most of the same functions and responsibilities as its larger neighboring departments. Officers from different divisions frequently collaborate and assist each other to ensure all assigned tasks are handled efficiently.
3. The investigative unit is comprised of a sergeant, two detectives and a crime analyst who collectively manage both felony and misdemeanor cases. Traffic safety, particularly issues involving vehicles, bicycles and e-bikes is a significant concern for both the community and the department. To address these challenges, Lathrop PD is developing a dedicated traffic unit. The department is also continuously expanding and refining its units and adding some specialized functions. SWAT operations are conducted in

coordination with Manteca and Ripon Police Departments. Issues related to the unhoused are managed in partnership with surrounding communities.

4. Lathrop PD operates out of a modern facility that previously housed the Sheriff's Office. With the rapidly growing population, more space will soon be necessary. The building was designed to support a second story, allowing for easy expansion. As the city continues its path of rapid growth, the department is adapting to ensure it meets the changing needs of its residents.
5. Lathrop PD emphasizes strong community engagement and modern policing techniques as the department works to maintain a safe and welcoming environment. The department's collective approach with neighboring agencies further enhances its ability to respond effectively to diverse challenges.
6. Lathrop PD is young, motivated and committed to its community. The future appears optimistic and promising for both the citizens and its police force.

G. San Joaquin County Family Justice Center

1. The San Joaquin County Family Justice Center (SJCFJC) brings together different agencies to help people affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, child abuse, elder abuse, and stalking. Working under the District Attorney and with local organizations, the Center offers a single, supportive place where survivors can get help without needing to file a police report.
2. The SJCFJC's mission is to offer a safe and welcoming place for individuals and families affected by domestic violence and human trafficking, helping survivors heal and rebuild their lives.

Key goals include:

- Delivering comprehensive, coordinated services tailored to each survivor
- Enhancing victim safety and stability
- Promoting long-term healing and independence

- Breaking cycles of inter-generational trauma and violence
 - Increasing community awareness and prevention efforts
3. The Center is also a place for outreach and education, working to inform people about abuse and the resources available in San Joaquin County.

The SJCFJC offers a wide range of services, such as:

- Crisis intervention and safety planning
 - Legal advocacy and restraining order assistance
 - Counseling and trauma-informed care
 - Housing, employment, and social service referrals
 - Court navigation and victim support
 - Community education and outreach programs
4. The Center also has special programs like support groups, art therapy, child-care, and life-skills classes that help people recover and build resilience over time.
5. A key part of the SJCFJC's work is fighting sexual assault and human trafficking through the Anti-Sex and Labor Trafficking (ASALT) Task Force.

The ASALT Task Force brings together investigators and officers from the San Joaquin County Sheriff's, Parole and Probation Offices and the Stockton Police Department and is dedicated to:

- Reducing the incidence of human trafficking in San Joaquin County
- Rescuing and supporting victims
- Investigating and prosecuting offenders
- Providing training and community awareness
- Building strong public-private partnerships

The task force uses coordinated law enforcement, proactive investigations, and services focused on victims to address both sex and labor trafficking. Survivors also get long-term support through the Family Justice Center, making sure they have help throughout their recovery.

6. Most of the SJCFJC's budget comes from the County, grants, and a smaller portion is an allocation from the District Attorney's Office.

Ongoing County funding is key to helping the SJCFJC succeed and grow. This public investment allows the Center to:

- Maintain critical victim services and staffing
- Support specialized programs like the ASALT Task Force
- Expand outreach to underserved communities
- Strengthen interagency collaboration and infrastructure

7. The San Joaquin County Family Justice Center represents a nationally recognized, evidence-based approach to addressing domestic violence. Through its integrated services, strong partnerships, and targeted initiatives like the ASALT Task Force, the Center plays a critical role in supporting survivors of sexual assault and human trafficking.

Civil Grand Jury Ride-a-Longs

- Stockton Police Department
- Tracy Police Department
- San Joaquin County Sheriff Department Boating Safety Unit (BSU)

San Joaquin County Juvenile Detention Facility

Therapeutic Art Program

Released : June 2026

SUMMARY

The 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury had the opportunity to tour the San Joaquin County Juvenile Detention Facility and learn about the programs and support systems available to the youth impacted by the justice system in the county.

During the visit, staff highlighted a range of resources to promote personal growth, accountability, and positive self-expression. One program that stood out was the Therapeutic Art program, where participants use creative outlets to process emotions and share their experiences. Members of the Civil Grand Jury observed several murals painted by youth detainees, each reflecting a story. This experience emphasized the importance of art in helping young people channel their emotions constructively while building confidence and a sense of identity.

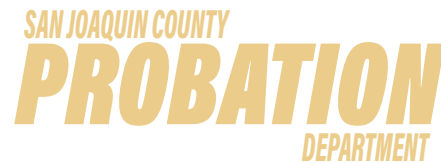
The Therapeutic Art program culminates into an art show, where the participants are given a theme to create their pieces. Featured on the following pages are works of art from the 2024 and 2025 Art Show Competitions from the San Joaquin County Juvenile Detention Facility.

Disclaimer: All artwork remains the exclusive property of the creator and is used here with permission. Reproduction or distribution of these images without express written consent of the artist is strictly prohibited.

Ms. Erin, SJCOE Instructor, states:

“Creativity has the power to transform how we see ourselves and the world around us. Inside the juvenile facility in San Joaquin County, youth have the opportunity to slow down, reflect and discover their voice through creative expression. Designed and guided by local visual artists and supported by San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) and San Joaquin County Probation Department, the therapeutic art program turns the classroom into a place of possibility where young people learn that their ideas, perspectives, and stories matter.”

“Through nature inspired lessons and hands on creative projects, students develop important life skills such as patience, focus, problem solving, and self-confidence. The calming, nature-based curriculum helps create a more therapeutic environment, allowing students to engage in learning in a new way. With weekly classes, student art shows, and collaborative murals that brighten the facility walls, the program empowers youth to take pride in their work, improve behavior and academic performance, and discover that their creativity can be a powerful force for growth and change.”



DEATH OF MY PAST SELF BY A.D. ART SHOW COMPETITION - FALL 2025

What surrounding myself with positive influences means to me is to surround myself with people that want to see you shine. If you surround yourself with a bunch of millionaires, you're going to have a millionaire mindset.

My painting represents the theme because I feel like I've started to surround myself with positive influences, and not acting like my old self. The "Dia De Los Muertos" skull represents my old self, dead.



BEST IN SHOW

The process of painting was stressful, having to add all the little details and figuring out all the placement of those details. Also, the day of the dead tends to celebrate the people who have died in a day in remembrance.

LESSONS, NOT LOSSES BY S.S.
ART SHOW COMPETITION - FALL 2025

Surrounding myself with positive influences means to have positive uplifting people around you instead of those who are pessimistic or negative. My painting represents the theme because the flowers in my hair are native to Cambodia and this signifies the positive influences due to my family being from there. My family instilled in me some core morals and values that I still abide by today.

The skull aspect represents life without positivity: life without the people who bring up and bring light into your life. There are only pieces of that aspect because the positivity is breaking through.



1st PLACE - GRADUATES

The painting process was enjoyable until it was close to deadline. I stressed if I would be good enough or done by the due date, but I was able to finish and I'm proud of my work.



2nd PLACE - GRADUATES

LONE WOLF BY D.H.
ART SHOW COMPETITION - FALL 2025

Surrounding myself with positive influences means to always surround yourself with people that want to see the good in you and themselves.

I chose to paint the wolf because being an alpha wolf in the pack is good and is a big responsibility. You have to be a positive influence for yourself and for those around you.

The painting process was a good experience, and when I'm painting I feel relieved with stress and problems I go through.

Thank you to Mrs. E and teachers for being so supportive of us and caring for us



THIRD PLACE

MENTALLY FREE BY T.M.
ART SHOW COMPETITION - FALL 2024

Even though I am locked up physically, I am still free mentally. Whenever I am feeling down, I just close my eyes and visualize, then realize that hard times don't last forever. Whenever I am stressed or depressed, I thank God every day that I am blessed. You can be anywhere or do anything as long as you put your mind to it.

My mind drew attention to flowers. Me and gardens have a great connection because it brings me peace.

PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS BY A.A.
ART SHOW COMPETITION - SPRING 2025

I chose to create my piece because I'm trying to make it back to my son and wife. I have to go through this hard, dark time to get to them, so that's why I added concrete and chains, trying to hold me back from my happiness: my son and wife.

I started by sketching out on a small piece of paper of my hands, then took that paper and used it to look at while I drew the hands on the canvas. I just free handed everything else and painted the background to create a mixed media piece.



1st PLACE & MOST CREATIVE

This page left intentionally blank.

2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury



Impact and Innovation

Positive Practices in Local Government

Release Date: June, 2026

Summary

Civil Grand Jury reports traditionally focus on the operations of local governments and their agencies, examining areas of potential negligence or needed improvement and issuing targeted recommendations for reform. In some cases, investigations also address the misconduct of elected officials or the alleged misuse of public dollars.

The 2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury believes this critical oversight role does not preclude recognition of excellence. Where departments and agencies demonstrate proactive leadership, innovation, and effective stewardship of public resources, we are equally committed to highlighting those successes. This section presents examples of such positive performance: Progress and impact made in how the County and surrounding cities are addressing homelessness and innovation and new strategies in how the County provides EMS 9-1-1 ambulance services to its residents.

Impact and Innovation

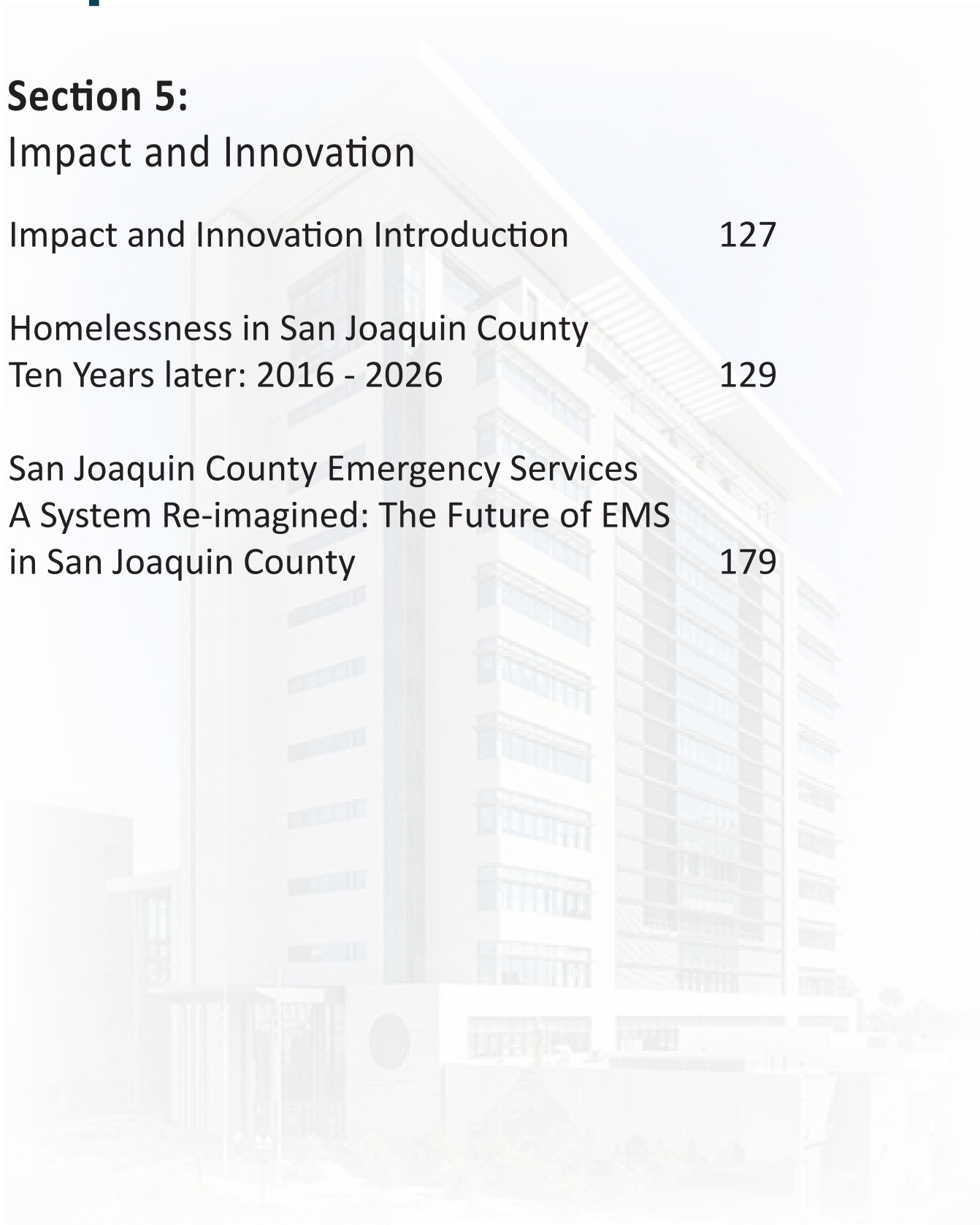
Section 5:

Impact and Innovation

Impact and Innovation Introduction 127

Homelessness in San Joaquin County
Ten Years later: 2016 - 2026 129

San Joaquin County Emergency Services
A System Re-imagined: The Future of EMS
in San Joaquin County 179



2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury



Homelessness in San Joaquin County

Ten Years Later: 2016 to 2026

Release Date: June, 2026



Tracy Shelter Sprung Structure adding 70 beds + congregate room (Photo by: Civil Grand Jury)

INTRODUCTION

The 2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury (25-26 CGJ) conducted a review of programs and services addressing the needs of the unhoused population in San Joaquin County.

The review provided jurors with insights into the evolution, current operations, challenges, and future development of homeless shelters, housing and support services programs operated by local government entities and community-based organizations in San Joaquin County. The report includes some findings but does not include recommendations. While the Civil Grand Jury (CGJ) traditionally focuses on areas needing improvement, this report highlights progress made in the County's Homelessness Continuum of Care.

The work to minimize homelessness is not complete, but there has been notable progress in developing capacity to provide basic emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing, as well as needed social, economic, and health support services.

SUMMARY

Homelessness has previously been a focus of the CGJ. Investigative reports on County-wide efforts to address the problem were published in the 15-16 and 19-20 CGJ Reports.

The findings and recommendations in the previous CGJ Reports emphasized the need for:

- Stronger leadership from County government
- Improved coordination of efforts between agencies and organizations
- Development of a strategic plan and evaluation component
- Increased resources to redirect the unhoused into appropriate treatment and care systems and,
- Improvements to communication of homeless program information to the public

The most recent Follow-up report by the 20-21 CGJ reported considerable progress by county government in implementing these recommendations.

The homeless population in San Joaquin County has grown from 1,522 persons in 2017 to 2,454 persons in 2023. The 2024 Point-In-Time (PIT) Count data indicated a dramatic increase in unhoused persons compared to the prior year. The results of the 2026 count are expected to be released at the end of May, and preliminary data suggests that this year’s count will be lower than the 2024 count. Nevertheless, the number of unhoused persons continues to exceed the number of emergency shelter and housing beds available.

During the past six years, SJ CoC and the City of Stockton have received \$82.7 million from the State through the Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program to support homeless shelter and housing projects, including construction and operating costs. HHAP funds received by the SJ CoC are made available to cities other than Stockton to develop and support local facilities and programs. The County and Cities also apply for and receive categorical federal and state grant funds that supplement and are used in conjunction with HHAP funds to support Homeless programs.

This report looks at new developments and progress made by county government and participating cities in San Joaquin County since the 20-21 CGJ Follow-up report, particularly with respect to progress made in building emergency shelter, transitional and permanent housing capacity, and providing needed supportive services to the unhoused.

Despite program challenges, County and City elected officials, dedicated staff, and volunteers at all levels of an evolving shelter and support system for the unhoused have enabled the progress made to date. We acknowledge and are grateful for their good works.

ACRONYMS

xx-yy CGJ Term Year (e.g., 2015-2016) of the San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury

25-26 CGJ 2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury

BHCIP Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program

Cal-ICH California Interagency Council on Homelessness

CARE Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment

CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CGJ	San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury
ERF	Encampment Resolution Funding
ESG	Emergency Solutions Grant
HCSA	San Joaquin County Health Care Services Agency
HHAP	California Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention
HMIS	Homeless Management Information System
HSA	San Joaquin County Human Services Agency
HUD	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
PIT	Point-in-Time (Count)
SJ CoC	San Joaquin Continuum of Care
SUD	Substance Use Disorder
USICH	United States Interagency Council on Homelessness

GLOSSARY OF TERMS*

Case Management: The Case Management Society of America defines case management as “a collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation, care coordination, evaluation, and advocacy for options and services” to meet individual needs. Case Management in the context of the Coordinated Entry System (CES) should be voluntary and client centered, with the goal of identifying strengths and client directed goals, while promoting “health, recognition, and well-being” (USICH, 2016). Case Managers in CES should ultimately focus on linking the client to a permanent housing resource and providing the necessary services needed to promote housing stability.

Continuum of Care (CoC): The Continuum of Care is a broad spectrum of stakeholders dedicated to ending and preventing homelessness. The key responsibilities of the CoC are ensuring community-wide implementation of efforts to end homelessness, as well as ensuring

programmatic and systemic effectiveness. The County Human Services Agency-Community Development Department is the administering agency for the San Joaquin County Continuum of Care (SJ CoC).

Emergency Shelters (ES): An emergency shelter is a place for homeless people to live temporarily. Most emergency shelters provide shelter for a specific time period after which the individual or family is expected to vacate the shelter.

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG): Formerly known as the Emergency Shelter Grant, the HUD Emergency Solutions Grant provides funding for homelessness prevention and re-housing as well as emergency shelter.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS): The HMIS is a secure online database that stores data on all homelessness services provided in San Joaquin County.

Housing First: Housing First is an approach that offers permanent housing as quickly as possible for people experiencing homelessness, particularly for people with long histories of homelessness and co-occurring health challenges. The provider ensures that needed or wanted supportive services are offered, but are not required as a condition of housing, including links to mainstream programs or partner agencies (i.e., mental health services, substance abuse treatment, medical services, childcare, etc.). Sobriety and/or participation in treatment or other services are voluntary and are not required as a condition for housing. Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Rehousing programs are based on the Housing First Model.

Housing Inventory Count (HIC): The Housing Inventory Count provides information about the inventory of beds and units in a Continuum of Care homeless system.

Low-Barrier Shelter/Low-Barrier Navigation Center (LBNC): A shelter where a minimum number of expectations or requirements are placed on the people who wish to stay there. The philosophy behind low-barrier shelters centers on “harm reduction”: minimizing the risks and consequences of certain behaviors, rather than prohibiting the behavior itself. The focus is keeping people alive, especially in inclement weather and hazardous air conditions.

Navigation Center: temporary room and board with limited barriers to entry while case managers work to connect homeless individuals and families to income, public benefits, health services, permanent housing, or other shelter.

Permanent Housing (PH): Community-based housing without a designated length of stay, which includes both Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Rapid Rehousing (RRH). Examples of permanent housing include, but are not limited to, a house or apartment with a month-to-month or annual lease term or home ownership.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH): Permanent Supportive Housing provides permanent housing and supportive services to chronically homeless individuals and families. The target population for permanent supportive housing programs are chronically homeless individuals with a disability. The program focuses on the population that has complex health issues and therefore higher costs. The program provides rental subsidies, intensive case management and health care (including behavioral health) to the program participants. There is usually no time limit for the program. PSH has been seen to have a high impact on housing stability. Nationally, 84% of program participants have been observed to retain housing for at least a year.

Point-in-Time (PIT) Count: Point-in-Time Count refers to the Homeless Census and Survey that is undertaken every two years in the last ten days of January. It is mandatory for all jurisdictions receiving funding from HUD to undertake the Point-in-Time Count. The data gathered from the count helps the County and local homeless service providers to better understand the needs of the community, evaluate the current system of services, and apply for federal and local funding.

Rapid Rehousing (RRH): Rapid rehousing is an intervention that has been seen to be a successful model in addressing the issue of homelessness in different parts of the country. There are three core components of rapid rehousing: 1) Housing identification, 2) Move-in and rent assistance and 3) Rapid rehousing case management and services. The clients are provided with limited or declining rent subsidies, other temporary financial assistance and time-limited case management. It has been observed that rapid rehousing helps individuals and families to

quickly exit homelessness, return to housing in the community, and not become homeless again in the near future.

Sheltered and Unsheltered: Sheltered individuals live in temporary accommodations like emergency shelters, transitional housing or safe havens. Unsheltered individuals live in places not made for human habitation, such as streets, vehicles, parks, encampments or abandoned buildings.

Tiny Home Village: A form of transitional housing (defined below) in which several small (typically, 8'x8') "houses" are built on available land along with central communal facilities such as bathrooms, laundry, cooking and dining areas.

Transition Age Youth (TAY): Transition Age Youth are young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are in transition from state custody, probation or foster care and are at risk of becoming homeless. The TAY Program provides supplemental funding to eligible counties to secure and maintain housing and support services for these young adults.

Transitional Housing (TH): Transitional housing provides temporary housing with supportive services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness with the goal of interim stability and support to successfully move to and maintain permanent housing. Transitional housing is generally provided for a limited time period—from 2 weeks to 24 months.

Unhoused versus Homeless: While these terms are often used interchangeably to refer to an individual or family living unsheltered or in temporary accommodations, unhoused is emerging as the favored term. The term Homeless places a negative focus on the individual while the term unhoused draws more attention to the situation or circumstances of the individual. Homeless also implies that the individual does not identify with a home city.

Wraparound Services: Services designed to provide comprehensive, personalized support and resources so that individuals and families are able to address the complex issues and challenges that often accompany homelessness / houselessness and can interfere with obtaining long-term housing stability.

(*adopted from County of Santa Clara Office of Supportive Housing-Glossary of Terms)

<https://osh.santaclaracounty.gov/glossary-terms>

METHODOLOGY

Members of the 25-26 CGJ visited shelter facilities in Stockton, Lodi, Tracy, French Camp and Manteca. We also received presentations from Cities and County homeless program administrators, shelter managers, and the directors of the San Joaquin County Health Care Services Agency (HCSA), the Human Services Agency's (HSA), the San Joaquin County Continuum of Care (SJ CoC), and the manager of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Information and observations from those visits and presentations are included in this report.

The following is a list of documents, articles, videos and websites that were reviewed and referenced:

- 2015-2016 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury Report – Homelessness in San Joaquin County, Time for Collaboration, Commitment and Communication, Case No. 1507;
- 2016-2017 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury Report – Follow-Up Report on the 2015-2016 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury, Case 1507;
- 2019-2020 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury Report – Homelessness in San Joaquin County, Building on a Foundation: Collaboration and Communication, Case 0119;
- 2020-2021 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury Report – Follow-Up Report on the 2019-2020 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury, Case 0119;
- The San Joaquin Community Response to Homelessness: 2020 San Joaquin County Strategic Plan (San Joaquin Continuum of Care);
- San Joaquin County Point in Time Count Trends and Analysis — Homelessness and Disparity in San Joaquin County, Finalized Sept. 9, 2021, Updated June 9, 2022;
- San Joaquin Continuum of Care San Joaquin County Homelessness Point-In-Time Count and Report 2024, Prepared by Applied Survey Research;

- Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing
<https://osh.santaclaracounty.gov/glossary-terms>
- Homeless Hub website -[What Are the Causes of Homelessness?](#)
- California State Budget 2025-26: Housing and Homelessness pages 49-53;
- California Department of Health Care Services Proposition 1 Fact Sheet website:
dhcs.ca.gov/BHT/Pages/Fact-Sheet-Prop-1.aspx
- State of California Homeless Program Data - <https://www.accountability.ca.gov>
- San Joaquin County 2025-2026 Proposed Budget Highlights;
- Office of the Governor - Model Ordinance: Addressing Encampments with Urgency and Dignity;
- HUD 2024 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Housing Inventory Count Report (CoC Number: CA-511; CoC Name: Stockton/San Joaquin County CoC);
- Blog Post: <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/supreme-court-upholds-ordinances-regulating-public-homeless-encampments>;
- Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research - Homelessness in California: Recent challenges and new horizons, by Bethany Carter and Jialu L. Streeter, June 2025;
- Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research – Homelessness in California: Causes and Policy Considerations, by Jialu L. Streeter, May 2022
- Regional Homeless Action Plan - City of Stockton/San Joaquin County/San Joaquin Continuum of Care, March 2024, Annual Update August 2025
- System-Wide Performance Measures Progress Report — San Joaquin County An analysis of System-Wide Performance Measure data from Reporting Years 2019 to 2024 Updated November 2025;
- City of Stockton Economic Development Department - 2024-2025 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER);

- California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH): Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California 2025-2027;
- San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors Meeting video recording, December 9, 2025, Evaluation of Implementation and Outcomes for Emergency Shelter Services Supporting the Board of Supervisor’s Strategic Priority to Reduce Unsheltered Homelessness.

BACKGROUND

During the past six years, the County, SJ CoC and the City of Stockton have received a major influx of new Federal and State grant funds to increase shelter, transitional and permanent housing capacity to meet the needs of the unhoused. Progress in building shelter and housing facilities has been slow but steady.

Grant programs have been structured to ensure that counties and cities develop a range and mix of housing, case management and supportive services. Certain grant funds are earmarked or designated for unhoused special populations, including veterans, persons with physical and mental disabilities, youth, victims of domestic violence, farmworkers, young adults exiting the foster care system, and the elderly.

While the provision of basic shelter, food, personal hygiene and security remain as core service priorities, there is new emphasis on the provision of individual case management, mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, health and medical care, job training and life skills education for those unhoused individuals in need of such services.

A major challenge to the evolving Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention Program in San Joaquin County is the steady growth of the unhoused population in San Joaquin County during the past ten years. The unhoused population has grown from 1,522 persons in 2017 to 2,454 persons in 2023. The nation-wide Point-In-Time (PIT) Count, which is conducted in January of every other year, is the source of the unhoused population count data. The method of the PIT Count was changed by the federal government in 2024, and the resulting count for that year

was considerably higher than previous years. Consequently, the validity of the 2024 count remains under question.

On May 11, 2026, the SJ CoC released the preliminary results of the 2026 PIT Count. This year's PIT Count reported 1,468 sheltered individuals and 1,838 unsheltered individuals throughout San Joaquin County. Compared to the 2024 PIT Count, the number of sheltered individuals increased by 205 (16%) and the number of unsheltered individuals decreased by 1,631 (47%),

The SJ CoC attributes the increase in sheltered individuals to the increase in the number of emergency shelter and transitional housing beds available in the community. While the number of unsheltered individuals has reportedly decreased, the number of unsheltered is still greater than the number of sheltered individuals.

City specific and demographic data is anticipated to be released by the SJ CoC in June of 2026.

Some communities in San Joaquin County have observed fewer unhoused persons on their streets, and that may be partially attributable to an increase in shelter bed availability within the last two years. However, changes in public policy in 2025 that restrict encampments on public property and tougher drug laws may have also driven some unhoused individuals into more discreet encampment situations.

In April of 2025, the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors initiated a comprehensive independent evaluation of emergency shelter services across the County. The project consultant was to assess the effectiveness of local shelter programs in helping individuals exit homelessness and transition into permanent housing. The evaluation found that, for every seven individuals who enter temporary shelter, one successfully advances to permanent housing. Furthermore, 2 in 5 of those who enter permanent housing return to shelter within six months. The report recommended improved staffing ratios, service coordination, staff training, more complete data collection, and use of data to improve services and operations.

The 25-26 CGJ began its review of the county-wide homeless program by conducting site visits of several shelters in Stockton, Lodi, French Camp, Manteca and Tracy. These visits are

highlighted in Section A of this report. Please note that the CGJ did not attempt to visit all forty-six shelter, transitional, permanent housing and support service providers in San Joaquin County that are part of the Homeless service network. However, we do acknowledge their efforts and contributions to reducing homelessness and to serving the unhoused population.

This report is organized as follows:

- A. Homeless shelter and navigation center site visits
 - 1. Lodi Access Center
 - 2. Manteca Navigation Center and Emergency Shelter
 - 3. Haven of Peace Women & Children’s Shelter – French Camp
 - 4. Tracy Shelter
 - 5. St. Mary’s Community Services and Shelters - Stockton
- B. Growth in the unhoused population in San Joaquin County during the past ten years
- C. Causes of Homelessness
- D. Changing characteristics and needs of the unhoused
- E. Increases in emergency shelter, transitional and permanent housing capacity
- F. Implementation of program performance and evaluation measures using the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- G. Recent changes in law and public policy impacting homeless programs and the unhoused, including:
 - 1. Passage of Proposition 1
 - 2. Passage of Proposition 36
 - 3. Grants Pass, Oregon vs. Johnson
- H. Complexities of funding supporting services to the unhoused
- I. 2024 State Audit of Cal ICH: Auditor Findings, Recommendations and Responses

- J. Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding
- K. California Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) grant program funding
- L. California's Project Homekey in 2020 and Homekey+ in 2024

DISCUSSION OF FACTS

A. Shelter and Navigation Center Site Visits

Members of the 25-26 CGJ visited shelter facilities (city shelter sites) in Stockton, Lodi, Tracy, French Camp and Manteca. During these site visits, sites appeared to be close to capacity. All facilities visited were neat, clean, and well managed. CGJ members had brief conversations with some residents, and all were open, polite and courteous.

All city shelter sites were undergoing construction or building remodeling to accommodate additional shelter or transitional housing beds and support services. City shelter operations are contracted out to non-governmental organizations, many of whom have a long history of providing similar services.

1. Lodi Access Center and Emergency Shelter

In 2021, the Lodi City Council approved the purchase of a vacant industrial building to develop the Lodi Access Center and Emergency Shelter. The property is adjacent to the Salvation Army facility located at 620 N. Sacramento Street in Lodi.

Phase 1 of the project included assembly of a temporary facility on a vacant portion of the property, which opened in July of 2022. The temporary facility consists of a large climate-controlled tent and portable buildings to support the shelter operations. The tent is the principal structure that provides sleeping area and limited clothing/personal items storage.



Photo 1: Entrance to current Lodi Shelter (by: Civil Grand Jury)

The same area is used for meals and daytime activities. Restrooms and showers are located outside of the tent in portable buildings. Portable laundry facilities are provided by the Salvation Army and are also located next to the tent.

The City of Lodi currently contracts with Outreach Ministries International (OMI) to operate the temporary shelter. The current facility has the capacity to house up to 49 individuals and offers comprehensive wraparound services, including housing navigation, income advocacy, life coaching, mental health and substance use treatment, and job readiness training, in partnership with other public and private agencies and organizations. Transportation to and from provider offices and clinics is provided by the shelter operator.

Phase 2 will be the remodeling of the vacant industrial building to house the Access Center, which is scheduled to be open in July of 2026. The new facility will include a 15,000 square-foot multipurpose commissary space, administration offices, and up to 130 shelter beds. The grounds will include a veteran’s memorial, dog park, walkways, meditation gardens, and an integrated Workforce Education Center.

Since 2021, the City of Lodi has been awarded approximately \$21 million in various grant funds to construct the Lodi Access Center.



Image 1: Architectural rendering of new Lodi Access Center & Shelter (by: NJA Architecture)

2. Manteca Navigation Center and Emergency Shelter

The City of Manteca currently operates a 75-bed emergency shelter in portable dorms and support buildings. The shelter is in the parking lot of a vacant industrial building located at 555 E. Industrial Park Drive.



Photo 2: Entrance to current Manteca Shelter & Navigation Center (by: Civil Grand Jury)

The Manteca Shelter is a Low Barrier Navigation Center (LBNC), which is a housing-first, limited-stay program designed to provide wraparound supportive and case management services to its residents, as needed. Some residents stay for several months, depending on individual needs and progress made toward transitioning to more permanent housing. In many cases, the transition requires that partner agencies provide health, mental health, and substance abuse treatment, as well as social work and benefits assistance, job training and job placement services.

The current emergency shelter is operated by His Way Refuge Center, Inc., a faith-based 501(c)(3) charitable organization under contract with the City of Manteca. On-site services are provided by a combination of paid staff and volunteers. Staff from various partner agencies, including Community Medical Centers, San Joaquin County Behavioral Health Services, Adult Protective Services, and Veterans Administration provide support services to shelter residents. Transportation to and from provider offices and clinics is provided by the shelter operator.

Basic Living Services provided at the site include:

- Shelter beds in separate dorms for men and women
- Three meals served daily
- Access to daily showers and restrooms
- Haircut station
- 24/7 on-site security
- Pet wash station and kennel services

A case manager and house navigator are assigned to each resident. The case manager develops an individualized case plan and arranges for any needed services, including on-site behavioral health support.



Photo 3: Future Site of Manteca Navigation Center (by: Civil Grand Jury)

Plans are in process to remodel the 56,000 square foot vacant building at the same location to house the new Manteca Navigation Center. Estimated cost of the project is \$18.5 to \$19 million, which is funded by a combination of Federal and State grants.

Site development plans include eight transitional housing units for residents who progress toward independent living. Initial plans indicated that the new facility would include up to 190 beds, however that number may be reduced, depending on cost and changing level of need.

The City of Manteca has also applied for a State Homekey+ grant in partnership with The Wellnest Company. The proposal is to develop 12 to 15 tiny modular homes for homeless veterans. The project site is located at a vacant parking lot of The Way Church, 715 E. North Street. Each tiny home would be approximately 200 sq. ft., ADA accessible, and with one to two bedrooms, a spacious bathroom and a living quarter.

Other emergency shelter providers in Manteca include Raymus House for women and children, and the HOPE Family Center for families with children.

3. Haven of Peace Women's Shelter – French Camp

Haven of Peace is a faith-based 501(c)(3) charitable organization that operates a 35-bed shelter for women and children ages 12 and under. The facility is located in French Camp. Residents may self-refer or be referred by agencies throughout the county. The organization's stated policy limits stays to two weeks, however, some residents are allowed to remain for several months while working toward self-sufficiency goals.

Services and education programs provided include case management, nutrition classes, drug and alcohol relapse prevention, financial literacy, life skills, parenting classes, resume writing, individual & group counseling, Bible study, and domestic & sexual abuse support referrals.



Photo 4: Haven of Peace Community Garden (by: Civil Grand Jury)

Haven of Peace receives funding from public and private sources, including individuals, businesses, churches, civic groups, City of Stockton, County of San Joaquin, HUD, and the United Way.

4. Tracy Shelter

The Tracy Shelter is located at 370 W. Arbor Avenue in Tracy. The shelter is owned by the city and has been operated by the Salvation Army of Stockton for several years. In February of 2026, the Tracy City Council awarded a contract to Restorative Practices, Inc. (aka: Ruby's Place) to assume the operation of the shelter as of May 1, 2026. Currently,

the Tracy Shelter has 88 beds available for men and women, including limited provision for couples.

The shelter has been open since November 2022 as an Emergency Low Barrier Shelter. In its first year of operation, a total of five modular structures were relocated to the site, four of which are 12-bed dormitories, for a total of 48 beds. There are separate dormitories for men and women. The dormitories are clean and well-kept, as well as the surrounding grounds. The fifth modular building is used as an administrative office for shelter support operations.

In December of 2023, eight custom container dormitories were added to the shelter site. Each of these container dormitories houses a maximum of five individual sleeping rooms, for a total of 40 additional beds.

The final construction phase of the shelter is scheduled for completion this year. The Site Improvements phase provides a Sprung Structure with a custom interior floor plan layout that allows for three separate congregate dormitories and a day room space. The dormitories can accommodate beds for up to 70 people. Also included as part of this project phase are restroom and shower facilities and a laundry room facility. These additional facilities will be located adjacent to the Sprung Structure as part of a modular restroom and shower complex. Finally, a modular commercial kitchen facility will allow for onsite preparation of meals to be served at the Sprung Structure's Day room. Upon completion, the Tracy Shelter will have a total capacity for 158 people.

Estimated cost of all development phases of the Tracy Shelter is \$20 million, which is funded by a combination of Federal and State grants.



Photo 5: Tracy Emergency Homeless Shelter (Photo By. Civil Grand Jury)

Supporting the shelter, Tracy implemented the Familiar Faces Program that works alongside Tracy Police Department to assist with people experiencing homelessness. This provides a sense of comfort for the unhoused by building relationships with people they feel they can trust to help them, while allowing police to focus on safety and crime patrol. Some issues reported were lack of funds and support to be able to assist the unhoused without having to think outside the box.

Key Shelter Services:

- Emergency Housing: Temporary shelter for individuals and couples, including low-barrier options.
- Case management: Personalized action plans to address needs such as employment, healthcare, and transitional or permanent housing placement.
- Basic Needs: Access to showers, restrooms, laundry, and daily meals.
- Supportive Services: Life skills lessons, counseling and substance abuse support.

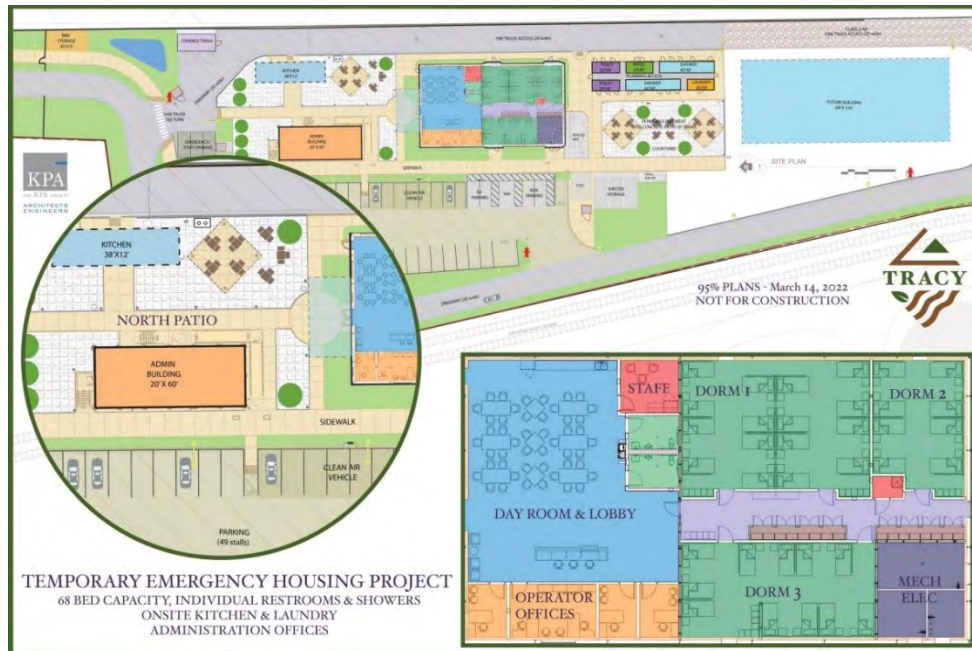


Image 2: Tracy Shelter Site Plan and Sprung Structure currently in development (by: City of Tracy)

5. St. Mary's Community Services and Shelter – Stockton

St. Mary's Community Services in Stockton is a long-standing 501(c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to serving the homeless and poor. The main facility is located at 545 W. Sonora Street in Stockton and includes the St. Mary's Dining Room. St. Mary's Community Services serves 3 meals a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and is open to all members of the community in need of nourishing meals.



Photo 6: St. Mary's Shelter Dorm (by: Civil Grand Jury)

In 2023, St. Mary's assumed responsibility for the operation of the Stockton Shelter for the Homeless. The shelter is located at 411 S. Harrison Street, one block from the St. Mary's Community Services campus which includes several buildings and other facilities, including a family shelter and new navigation center.



Photo 7: St. Mary's Pathways Modular Unit Community (by: Civil Grand Jury)

St. Mary's Pathways Modular Unit Community is located at S. Lincoln Way in Stockton between West Sonora and West Church Streets, and proximate to all other shelters operated by the St. Mary's Community Services organization. The facility is now operating 202 rooms, with 47 units dedicated to recuperative care and others specifically for couples.

The newest addition to the St. Mary's array of services is the Carol and Henry Zeiter Navigation Center, a nearly 12,000-square-foot facility providing a "low-barrier" environment, allowing residents to bring pets, partners, and personal belongings. The Navigation Center includes 17 family shelter units.



Photo 8: St. Mary's Navigation Center Entrance (by Civil Grand Jury)

Shelter facilities currently operated by St. Mary's Community Services include:

- 145-bed Men's Shelter
- 96-bed Family Shelter
- 50-bed Women's Shelter
- 202-unit Pathways Modular Unit Community
- Navigation Center with 17 family units

Services offered include:

- Dining room
- Shower and Clothing Center
- On-site Dental Clinic

- On-site Medical Clinic (named for its founder, Dr. Virgil Gianelli), with services provided by Community Medical Centers
- Resource Center: Assistance with benefits applications, mental health and substance abuse treatment appointments, medical and dental appointments, housing and employment searches and applications.
- Emergency Shelter
- Transitional Housing

St. Mary's Community Services is also the location for the Superior Court's CARE Court, which is held on the last Friday of each month at 3:00 p.m. on the campus. On-site court services allow individuals to clear up old traffic tickets, minor criminal charges and fines.

B. Growth of the Unhoused Population

According to a policy brief published by the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research in June of 2025, the number of people experiencing homelessness in California declined between 2007 and 2014 from 140,000 to 114,000. After 2014, homelessness began accelerating, even as billions of dollars in federal, state, and local spending poured in to address the problem. By 2024, the number of homeless in California increased to an estimated 187,000.

The method for counting unhoused persons is the Point-In-Time (PIT) Count. The PIT Count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. HUD requires that CoCs conduct an annual count of people experiencing homelessness who are housed in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and safe havens on a single night. CoCs must also conduct a count of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness every other year (odd numbered years). Each count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally.

PIT Counts prior to 2024 were conducted using sample survey methodology. In a sample survey, only a subset of the population is surveyed and that sample is used to represent the entire population under study. In the 2024 PIT Count, a full census was completed with a focus on

completing surveys with as many individuals as possible. In theory, the new methodology was to provide a more accurate count of unsheltered persons.

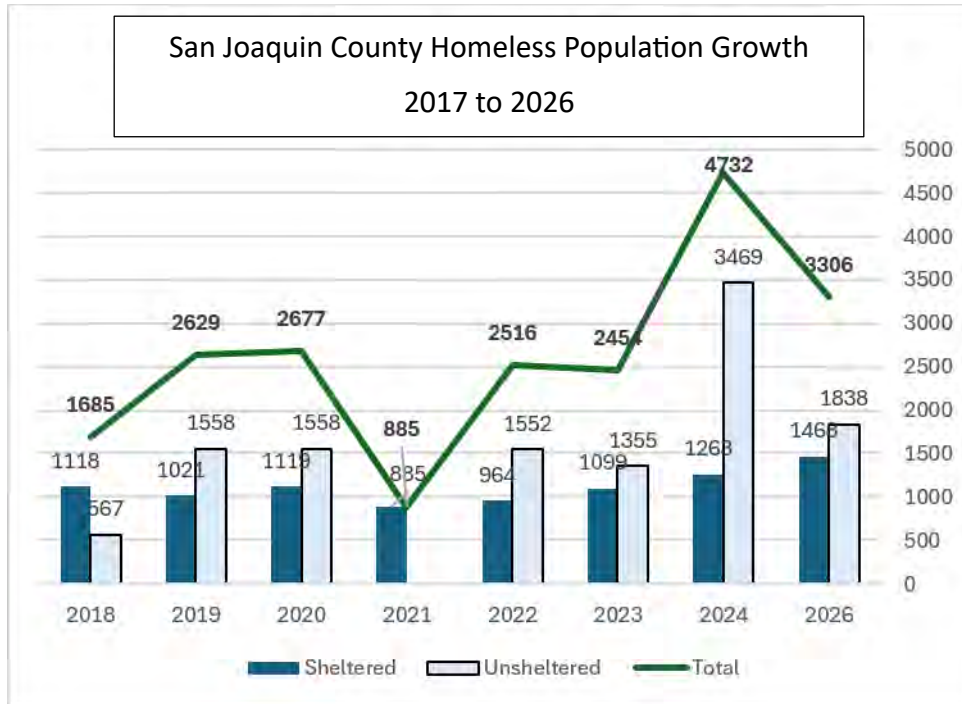


Chart 1 - Statistics of homeless persons in San Joaquin County from the Point-In-Time counts from 2017 to 2026

Chart 1 summarizes the growth in the number of sheltered and unsheltered persons in San Joaquin County from 2017 until 2026 based on Point-In-Time (PIT) Count data. Each vertical bar represents one year from 2017 to 2026. Reading the numbers shown on each bar from bottom to top: Number of sheltered persons; Number of unsheltered persons; and, Total number of homeless (sheltered and unsheltered) persons.

Annual PIT counts for the ten-year period reflect an uneven but upward trend of unhoused persons over the eight-year period. The PIT Count field survey was not conducted in the 2021 “COVID” year, which accounts for the radical drop shown on the chart.

A major contributing factor to the increase in unhoused persons, and particularly those with substance use problems, was the California voter’s passage of Proposition 47 in 2014. This new legislation aimed to decrease prison overcrowding by re-categorizing two major groups of non-violent offenses from felonies to misdemeanors: 1) burglary and theft under \$950, and 2)

possession of illicit drugs, including fentanyl, methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin. One of the unintended consequences of Proposition 47 was an increase in unhoused substance abusers.

More detailed 2026 PIT Count data is not available at this time. Data on the following Table 1 is based on 2024 PIT Count data. However, the City of Manteca published its unofficial results for their city, reporting the total number of homeless persons in Manteca was 171, compared to 305 persons in 2024. More detailed 2026 PIT Count data is expected to be published in June.

JURISDICTION	UNSHelterED	ShelterED	TOTAL
Stockton	2,451	545	2,996
Manteca	235	70	305
Tracy	102	98	200
Lodi	262	154	416
Lathrop	10	0	10
Ripon	21	0	21
Escalon	1	0	1
Total Incorporated Cities	3,082	867	3,949
Total Unincorporated	387	365	752
Scattered Sites	0	31	31
TOTAL	3,469	1,263	4,732

Table 1 - 2024 Homeless Population by Jurisdiction

(Source: San Joaquin County 2024 Homelessness Point-In-Time Count and Report, prepared by Applied Survey Research for San Joaquin Continuum of Care. Note: Official Point-in-Time Count data for 2026 was not available at the time of publishing this report.)

Table 1 presents the statistics on unsheltered and sheltered persons for 2024 by jurisdiction within San Joaquin County. The City of Stockton reported the largest number of unhoused

people, with 2,451 unsheltered and 545 sheltered, for a total of 2,996 persons. The totals for all of San Joaquin County were 3,469 unsheltered and 1,263 sheltered, for a total of 4,732 persons.

The 2024 data do not reflect the impact of changes that have occurred since the survey was conducted. Changes include the addition of shelter beds throughout the County during the past two years, as well as the implementation of new local restrictions on homeless encampments enabled by the Supreme Court decision in 2024. These points are discussed later in this report.

FINDINGS for Section B (Growth of the Unhoused Population)

- FB.1 There has been steady growth in the unhoused population in San Joaquin County over the past ten years, increasing the overall need for additional temporary shelter, transitional, and permanent housing capacity. While the County of San Joaquin, SJ CoC and Cities have made substantial progress in developing additional shelter and transitional beds during the past five years, more capacity will likely be needed.
- FB.2 The City of Stockton continues to have the largest number (2,996) and percentage (64%) of unhoused people in the County and face the greatest challenge of providing beds and support service capacity sufficient to meet unhoused population needs.
- FB.3 Emergency shelter staffing varies greatly throughout the County, both in terms of number of staff and level of expertise. Adequate staff is key to positive transitions and outcomes for shelter residents.

C. Causes of Homelessness

The California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH) Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California 2025 – 2027 describes the following key factors contributing to homelessness in California:

- **Housing Affordability Crisis:** California has some of the highest housing costs in the country, with the median home price exceeding \$700,000 and rents averaging over \$2,000 per month.

- Economic Inequality: Despite its wealth, the income inequality in California leaves many low-income households vulnerable to displacement.
- Systemic Barriers: Insufficient mental health services, substance use treatment, and support systems exacerbate homelessness.
- Natural Disasters and Climate Change: Events like wildfires and droughts have displaced thousands, pushing many into homelessness.

Other factors contributing to homelessness include personal circumstances and relational problems, such as:

- traumatic events (e.g., house fire or job loss),
- personal crisis (e.g., family break-up or domestic violence),
- mental health and addictions challenges, which can be both a cause and consequence of homelessness, and
- physical health problems or disabilities.

Domestic Violence and Abuse:

In San Joaquin County, there were a total of 4,071 domestic violence calls to law enforcement agencies during 2024. The available data does not indicate how many of those callers ended up homeless or in shelters. However, there is an undeniable connection between domestic violence and homelessness.

In a recent study by the Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative at University of California at San Francisco, researchers found that one in five women who become homeless in California have fled their homes to escape violence and escalating abuse by an intimate partner. Family violence can force individuals and families to leave home suddenly, without proper support in place. Women who experience violence or live in poverty are often forced to choose between abusive relationships and homelessness.

Young people who are victims of sexual, physical or psychological abuse often end up experiencing homelessness. Seniors who are experiencing abuse and neglect are increasingly at risk of homelessness.

D. Changing Characteristics and Needs of the Unhoused Population

Characteristics of the unhoused that are reported in the 2024 Regional Homeless Action Plan (updated in August 2025) for the City of Stockton/San Joaquin County/San Joaquin Continuum of Care are as follows:

- Persons experiencing homelessness are increasingly:
 - female (38%)
 - over 55 years of age (27%)
 - under 25 (13%)
- Homelessness affects persons of all races and ethnicities, however Black/African American community members remain disproportionately impacted, accounting for 19% of those identified through the 2024 Point-In-Time count
- Most unhoused people have experienced more than one episode of homelessness (56%), and when they are unhoused, continue in that state for one year or more
- Over one-third (38%) of homeless individuals surveyed reported having at least one of the following disabling conditions:
 - Drug or alcohol abuse (40%)
 - Psychiatric or Emotional (36%)
 - Physical Disability (28%)
 - Chronic Health Condition (27%)

FINDINGS for Section D (Changing Characteristics and Needs of the Unhoused Population)

- FD.1 The increasing percentage of unhoused persons who are female may require additional accommodation in shelters and housing.
- FD.2 Racial disparities in the unhoused population should be considered in any prevention elements of homeless programs.
- FD.3 The recognition that over a third of the unhoused population have substance abuse and mental health disorders requires additional County Behavioral Services resources be directed to the unhoused population.

E. Increases in Homeless Shelter and Housing Bed Capacity

While moderate progress has been made in constructing emergency shelter, transitional and permanent housing from 2018 to 2024, the increase in the number of unhoused individuals continues to outpace the number of available beds, particularly in larger cities such as Stockton.

The Housing Inventory Count (HIC) is a point-in-time inventory of provider programs within a CoC that provide beds and units dedicated to serving people experiencing homelessness categorized by five Program Types: Emergency Shelter; Transitional Housing; Rapid Re-housing; Safe Haven; and Permanent Supportive Housing. HUD data also reports on the available beds for families, adults-only, and children-only, as well as beds dedicated to serving chronically homeless people, homeless veterans, and homeless youth age twenty-four and younger. Table 2 below shows the increase in the number of beds for the unhoused population by housing program type in San Joaquin County from 2018 to 2024.

Program Type	2018 Family Beds	2018 Adult Beds	2018 Total Beds	2024 Family Beds	2024 Adult Beds	2024 Total Beds	Increase in Total Beds
Emergency and Transitional Housing	667	540	1,217	686	1,078	1,772	+555
Emergency Shelter	528	366	904	523	881	1,412	+508
Transitional Housing	139	174	313	163	197	360	+47
Permanent Housing	606	470	1,076	986	765	1,751	+675
Permanent Supportive Housing	280	438	718	288	519	807	+89
Rapid Re-Housing	326	32	358	339	73	412	+54
Other Permanent Housing	0	0	0	359	173	532	+532
Grand Total	1,273	1,010	2,293	1,672	1,843	3,523	1,230

Table 2: Increase in Homeless Housing Inventory of Beds from 2018 to 2024
 (Source: HUD Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Program Housing Inventory Count Reports)

Table 2 data shows that the total number of available Emergency, Transitional, and Permanent housing beds in San Joaquin County has increased from 2,293 beds in 2018 to 3,523 beds in 2024, a total increase of 1,230 beds over six years. Within this total, emergency shelter beds increased from 904 to 1,412, and permanent housing beds increased from 1,076 to 1,751.

The SJ CoC projects that the total number of emergency shelter beds will reach 1,934 by the end of 2026, based on number of shelter construction projects that are currently in process.

FINDING for Section E (Increases in emergency shelter, transitional and permanent housing capacity)

FE.1 Homeless Program construction and development projects are not keeping up with the growing demand for emergency shelter, transitional and permanent housing.

F. Implementation of program performance and evaluation measures using the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

The Central Valley Low Income Housing Corporation (CVLIHC) is the designated HMIS local agency responsible for collecting, analyzing and reporting data for the SJ CoC programs and services in San Joaquin County. In addition, CVLIHC is responsible for monitoring the performance of the County's homeless service system against performance measures that are established by HUD.

The 25-26 CGJ reviewed the report produced by CVLIHC entitled "System-Wide Performance Measures Progress Report – San Joaquin County – An analysis of System-Wide Performance Measures data from Reporting Years 2019 to 2023."

The report was updated in September 2025 to include data through September 2024. In summary, the report concludes that *"... interventions supported by the SJ CoC (and other entitlement entities such as San Joaquin County and the City of Stockton) are successful and are having a true positive impact, but they are not happening at a scale large enough to fully address the scope of the homeless crisis in our community... Meanwhile, the number of people who are homeless continues to increase, especially the number of people who are living on the streets."*

G. Recent Changes in Law Impacting Homeless Programs and the Unhoused

G.1 Passage of Proposition 1 - March 2024

Proposition 1, passed by California voters in March of 2024, was intended to strengthen California's behavioral health system by funding mental health treatment, substance use disorder (SUD) services, and supportive housing for veterans and individuals facing homelessness. Proposition 1 was a two-part measure consisting of the Behavioral Health Services Act (formerly the Mental Health Services Act) and the Behavioral Health Bond. The Behavioral Health Bond included \$6.4 billion to build additional housing and infrastructure to provide treatment and rehabilitation services. Within this construction bond, the two major Housing funding components are the Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program

(BHCIP) Bond and the Homekey+ program, providing funding for local communities to create more supportive housing.

Priority Populations:

Behavioral Health Services Act funding and programs will target people with a range of behavioral health needs, including substance abuse disorders. The new policy direction recognizes that SUDs, mental health conditions, and homelessness are intertwined and must be addressed together to achieve the best outcomes.

The Behavioral Health Services Act's priority populations are:

Eligible children and youth who are:

- Chronically homeless, experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness
- In, or at risk of being in, the juvenile justice system
- Reentering the community from a youth correctional facility
- In the child welfare system pursuant to Proposition 1
- At risk of institutionalization

Eligible adults who are:

- Chronically homeless, experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness
- In, or at risk of being in, the justice system
- Reentering the community from prison or jail
- At risk of conservatorship pursuant to Proposition 1
- At risk of institutionalization

San Joaquin County has been awarded Proposition 1 funds for Phase 1 construction costs of the SJ BeWell Campus, a new county behavioral health complex being developed near the San Joaquin General Hospital in French Camp. The total approved cost of Phase 1 of the project is

\$261 million, of which \$137.5 million is Proposition 1 funding. The remaining \$124.3 million is secured from various grants, Opioid Settlement funds and donations.

Services to be provided through Phase 1 facilities are:

- Community and Outpatient Services – including a medical urgent care, public health support, adolescent and youth services, and outpatient behavioral health services
- Urgent Care Services – including a 16-bed crisis stabilization unit, sobering center, a 16-bed psychiatric health facility, and a behavioral health walk-in urgent care center
- 40-bed substance use treatment facility, a 12-bed Adolescent substance use facility, and a 64-bed mental health recovery center.

Once completed, these services will provide additional treatment resources for unhoused persons who have mental health or substance use disorders.

On April 15, 2026, the Board of Supervisors approved \$126.3 million for Phase 2 of the BeWell Campus. Phase 2 services include transitional housing for persons requiring longer term recovery.

FINDING for Section G.1 (Passage of Proposition 1 - March 2024)

FG.1.1 Proposition 1 significantly increases resources available to house and treat unhoused persons with mental health and substance use disorders.

G.2 Passage of Proposition 36 - November 2024

California voters in November 2024 approved Proposition 36, known as the Homelessness, Drug Addiction and Theft Reduction Act. Proposition 36 reversed key provisions of 2014's Proposition 47, which had re-categorized two major groups of non-violent offenses from felonies to misdemeanors: 1) burglary and theft under \$950, and 2) possession of illicit drugs, including fentanyl, methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin.

Proposition 36 reversed certain provisions of Proposition 47 by increasing penalties for certain drug offenses (especially fentanyl) and repeat retail theft offenses. Key changes made by Proposition 36 include:

- **Felony Theft Charges:** Allows felony charges for theft offenses under \$950 if the individual has two or more prior convictions for theft-related offenses.
- **Drug Charges:** Enables felony charges for possessing certain illegal drugs (including fentanyl) after two prior convictions.
- **Treatment Options:** Permits courts to mandate drug treatment for offenders, with a possibility of prison time if they fail to complete treatment.
- **Drug Dealer Liability:** Creates new potential felony charges for individuals who sell hard drugs, such as fentanyl, resulting in death or injury.

FINDING for Section G.2 (Passage of Proposition 36 - November 2024)

FG.2.1 Substance Use Disorder is a major problem for many unhoused persons. Availability of treatment and rehabilitation programs will be a key factor to making the provisions of Proposition 36 most effective. Fortunately, Proposition 1 has provided funding to build and staff additional treatment and rehabilitation facilities.

G.3 New Public Policy Prohibiting Homeless Encampments in Public Places – June 2024.

In [*City of Grants Pass v. Johnson*](#) , 603 U.S. 520 (2024), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that cities can enforce ordinances banning homeless individuals from camping on public property. The decision overturned lower court rulings that “... *the Eighth Amendment prohibits the imposition of criminal penalties for sitting, sleeping, or lying outside on public property for homeless individuals who cannot obtain shelter.*” The decision allows cities to cite, fine, or arrest people sleeping outside, even when shelter is unavailable.

In June of 2025, California’s Governor issued a letter to all California Counties and Cities transmitting a Model Ordinance Addressing Encampments for their consideration. The

Governor’s letter summarized his Executive Order N-1-24 to state agencies to develop policies to prioritize addressing encampments on state property while providing advance notice and partnering with shelter and service providers. The Executive Order also encouraged local governments to adopt similar policies, and to “... use all available resources and infrastructure, including the historic resources provided by the State, to take urgent action to humanely remove encampments from public spaces.”

The 2024 Supreme Court decision that allowed cities to enforce ordinances that ban homeless individuals from camping on public property was controversial, with some advocates fearing a move toward criminalizing homelessness. Local government agencies within San Joaquin County have adopted and enforced ordinances which prioritize shelter and services and ensure that people experiencing homelessness and their belongings are treated with respect, in accordance with state recommendations.

H. The Complexities of Funding Supporting Services to the Unhoused

The complexity of homeless program funding and expenditures is quite challenging for the lay person to follow and understand. Much of the funding for homeless programs in San Joaquin County comes from the Federal and State governments in the form of categorical grants. Tracking and accounting for the appropriate use of these funds is a major challenge and an on-going issue for funding agencies.

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH) are the primary sources of grant funding for homeless programs in San Joaquin County. However, each of these agencies administers grants through a multitude of programs. There are more than twenty-five separate grant programs that provide housing and homeless services funding to counties and cities. Each grant program has its own eligible uses of funds, reporting requirements, and targeted sub-populations (e.g., unhoused youth, elderly, veterans).

In San Joaquin County, the Neighborhood Preservation Division of the County Human Services Agency is the Administrative Entity (AE) for the HHAP grant program, as well as the Continuum

of Care (CoC), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) State and Federal, California Emergency Solutions and Housing (CESH) and Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP). Funds for these programs are received through HUD's Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Grant application, the Annual Action Plan application, and the State application processes. These programs are a yearly competitive grant application process coordinated by the Neighborhood Preservation Division and the San Joaquin Continuum of Care.

County and city governments also have on-going financial contributions to services for unhoused persons residing in their jurisdictions. Typically, local contributions are in the form of expenses related to the provision of health and social services, law and code enforcement services, emergency services, and public works/community services.

Many community and faith-based nonprofit organizations, supported by donations and grants, provide shelter and necessities of living for unhoused persons, and have done so for many years. Some of these organizations sub-contract with cities and the county to provide homeless program service components.

The San Joaquin County Superior Court also receives state funding to operate a CARE Court. This civil court program allows certain people called “petitioners” to request civil court-ordered treatment, services, support and a housing plan for eligible people, 18 years of age or older, who have untreated severe mental illness and who meet specific health and safety criteria. CARE Court provides a new pathway for the courts to coordinate mental health and substance use treatment, medications and housing placements for people in the grip of psychosis, including those sleeping outside on the street. The CARE Court system requires collaboration between the Superior Court, District Attorney’s Office, Public Defender’s Office, Behavioral Health Services, local law enforcement agencies, service providers, and family members.

I. 2024 State Audit of Cal ICH: Auditor Findings, Recommendations and Responses

In response to continued growth in California’s homeless population, despite approximately \$24 billion in state spending between 2018 and 2023, the California State Auditor conducted a review of the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH). The audit found that

while significant funding has been deployed, the State has lacked consistent data, clear outcome tracking, and sufficient transparency to fully evaluate program effectiveness. Although some programs demonstrated cost-effectiveness, overall accountability and performance measurement systems required substantial improvement. Since the audit, Cal ICH and the State have made measurable progress in addressing these deficiencies, though challenges remain.

Key Takeaways from the Audit

- **Limited Outcome Tracking:** The State lacked reliable data to evaluate the effectiveness of several major homelessness programs, despite significant financial investment.
- **Mixed Program Effectiveness:** Of five programs reviewed, only two (Homekey and CalWORKs Housing Support) were determined likely to be cost-effective.
- **Need for Greater Transparency:** The audit emphasized the need for clear reporting of program costs, outcomes, and performance to support decision-making.
- **Improved Strategic Alignment:** Cal ICH has updated its Action Plan to better align program objectives with statutory goals.
- **Development of Public Accountability Tools:** The State launched public dashboards (e.g., accountability.ca.gov) to provide data on housing, homelessness, and mental health metrics by county.
- **Data Standardization Efforts:** Expansion of the Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS) is improving statewide data collection, consistency, and reporting.
- **Ongoing Data Quality Improvements:** Additional resources and verification processes are being implemented to enhance accuracy and reliability of reported data.
- **Resource and Capacity Constraints:** Cal ICH identified limitations in staffing and funding as barriers to fully implementing audit recommendations.
- **Local and State Coordination:** Continued collaboration between state agencies and local Continuums of Care is essential to improving data and program outcomes.

- **Need for Financial Oversight:** Additional auditing of contractors and grant recipients at the local level remains an area for further improvement.

The 2024 State Audit highlighted significant gaps in accountability and performance measurement within California’s homelessness programs. While the State has taken meaningful steps to improve transparency, data systems, and strategic alignment, continued efforts are necessary to ensure that substantial public investments translate into measurable reductions in homelessness and improved outcomes for those served.

J. Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding

HUD is the oldest federal funding source for services to the unhoused, with homelessness grant programs dating back to 1987. There are three direct recipient agencies of HUD grants in San Joaquin County: The County of San Joaquin and the Cities of Stockton and Lodi. HUD funds awarded to the County of San Joaquin are intended for use in the unincorporated areas, as well as in the cities of Escalon, Ripon, Manteca, Tracy, Mountain House, and Lathrop.

By far, the largest grant program administered by HUD is the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. These funds can be used for a wide range of community projects, and some communities elect to use a small portion of CDBG funds for projects related to serving unhoused persons. Please note that CDBG fund allocations and projects are not included in this report, given their breadth and scope of use. In addition to CDBG grants, HUD offers a multitude of grant programs related to affordable housing, home repair/upgrading, and emergency housing that are not discussed in this report.

The Cities of Stockton and Lodi receive separate HUD fund allocations for projects within their own jurisdictions. HUD also administers several other grant programs, including the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program. The County of San Joaquin and the City of Stockton are recipients of annual ESG funds. The purpose of the ESG Program is to assist people to quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis and/or homelessness.

ESG grant allocations to San Joaquin County and to the City of Stockton for the last five years are shown in Table 3 below:

Program Year	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
San Joaquin County	\$237,378	\$235,522	\$240,090	\$246,142	\$251,421	\$262,234
City of Stockton	\$292,582	\$292,379	\$284,870	\$275,046	\$283,046	\$284,821
Total	\$529,960	\$527,901	\$524,960	\$521,188	\$534,467	\$547,055

Table 3 - HUD Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Allocations to San Joaquin County and to the City of Stockton
 (Source: HUD Exchange website, Awards and Allocations.
<https://www.hudexchange.info/GRANTEES/ALLOCATIONS-AWARDS/?na=1840&start=93>)

Table 3 presents annual HUD ESG grant amounts to San Joaquin County and to the City of Stockton for the six (6) year period beginning in 2020 and ending in 2025. Total combined ESG funds awarded per year range from \$521,188 to \$547,055.

The City of Stockton receives its own allocation of ESG funds, given its population size. The City of Lodi does not receive a specific allocation of ESG funds but may choose to utilize a portion of its CDBG funds for Homeless Programs through its local project prioritization process.

The ESG program assists emergency shelters for the unhoused by providing funds that may be used for the following activities:

- Renovation or rehabilitation of buildings used as emergency shelters
- Provision of essential services to the homeless including street outreach
- Payment of maintenance and operational expenses for emergency shelters
- Developing and implementing homeless prevention and rapid re-housing activities
- Maintaining a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

K. California Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) grant program funding

The State of California implemented the Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) grant program in 2019. Since 2019, all jurisdictions in San Joaquin County have received a total of \$82.7 million in state and federal funding through this program.

Recipient agencies are allowed multiple years to obligate and expend annual grant funds. This approach is helpful in managing and financing longer-term acquisition and construction projects.

HHAP grant funds can be used to implement and support the following services and support activities:

Permanent Housing:

- Rental Assistance and Rapid Rehousing
- Operating Subsidies/Supportive Services
- Capital Costs
- Landlord Incentives

Prevention and Diversion:

- Prevention and Diversion (other than Rental Assistance and Rapid Rehousing)

Interim Housing:

- Operating Costs/Supportive Services
- Motel/Hotel Vouchers
- New Navigation Centers and Emergency Shelters
- Shelter Improvements

Non-housing:

- Street Outreach
- Services and Services Coordination

Administrative Costs:

- Systems Support
- Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Development

- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

The HHAP Program also requires that grant recipients reserve ten (10) percent of the funds awarded for services to youth (Youth Set Aside). HHAP funds have made it possible for the County and the cities to employ personnel, lease or buy temporary buildings, and to contract with community-based organizations to operate shelters with supportive services.

Table 4 below presents financial data on combined HHAP Grant Awards Rounds 1 through 6 to San Joaquin County and the City of Stockton for the past six fiscal years.

HHAP Round	Awarded	Unobligated	Obligated	Expended	Exp. Deadline
HHAP 1-FY20-21	\$12,430,906	\$ 0	\$12,430,906	\$12,142,758	June 30, 2025
HHAP 2-FY21-22	\$ 5,833,034	\$ 0	\$ 5,833,034	\$ 5,802,070	June 30, 2026
HHAP 3-FY22-23	\$15,506,341	\$ 281,994	\$15,224,347	\$ 7,448,562	June 30, 2026
HHAP 4-FY23-24	\$12,171,279	\$ 184,500	\$11,986,779	\$ 4,476,493	June 30, 2027
HHAP 5-FY24-25	\$14,067,605	\$12,380,476	\$ 1,687,129	\$ 0	June 30, 2028
HHAP 6-FY 25-26	\$22,698,332	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	June 30, 2029
Total	\$82,707,497	\$12,846,970	\$47,162,195	\$30,141,883	

Table 4 – Funding-to-Date for San Joaquin County/Stockton/SJ CoC Combined Reporting of Activity through December 31, 2025 Aggregate HHAP Funding across Rounds 1 through 6

Table 4 includes HHAP funding data for the annual grants awarded to all agencies in San Joaquin County for the six-year period beginning in FY 20-21 through FY 25-26. A total of \$82.7 million has been awarded during that period, of which \$30.1 million has been expended and \$47.2 million has been obligated.

The California Department of Housing and Community Development monitors financial records for all HHAP Grantees. Each jurisdiction must submit monthly reports that require them to self-report total obligations and expenditures against their HHAP grant awards. These reports are

cumulative and represent all fiscal activity within each round of HHAP funding. Grant recipients have three (3) years to expend funds for approved projects after receiving each annual grant.

Table 5 below presents cumulative fiscal data on Round 1 through 5 HHAP fund obligations and expenditures for all recipient agencies in San Joaquin County.

Eligible Use	Obligated	Expended
Permanent Housing & Innovative Solutions	\$15,420,559	\$ 7,899,396
Operating Subsidies	\$10,317,796	\$ 7,426,675
New Navigation Centers & Emergency Shelters	\$ 7,323,079	\$ 7,323,079
Rental Assistance & Rapid Rehousing	\$ 2,303,291	\$ 2,285,142
Administrative Costs	\$ 3,716,630	\$ 1,819,932
Systems Support	\$ 2,832,097	\$ 1,493,079
Services Coordination	\$ 1,677,923	\$ 682,585
Landlord Incentives	\$ 426,660	\$ 426,660
Total	\$47,162,195	\$30,141,883

Table 5-Eligible Use Breakdown of Funding for HHAP (Rounds 1-5)-Obligations and Expenditures

Data Source for Tables 4 and 5: California Department of Housing and Community Development-HHAP Fiscal Data Dashboard and Downloads. (<https://www.hcd.ca.gov/housing-open-data-tools/hhap-dashboard>)

Table 5 includes cumulative HHAP funding obligated and expended during the five-year period beginning in FY 20-21 through FY 24-25. Obligated and expended funds are categorized by eligible uses, including permanent housing, emergency shelters, rental assistance, navigation centers, administrative and support costs. FY 25-26 HHAP funds have not yet been obligated or expended.

The combined HHAP grant application for San Joaquin County, the SJ CoC and the City of Stockton in the amount of \$22,698,332 for FY 25-26 has been approved by the State and is summarized in Table 6 below.

Proposed Eligible Uses	Proposed County/SJ CoC Allocations	Proposed City of Stockton Allocations
Permanent Housing (18%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid Rehousing • Services and Coordination 	\$ 2,009,978.18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1,004,989.09 • \$1,004,989.09 	\$ 2,075,721.62 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1,037,860.81 • \$1,037,860.81
Homeless Prevention (18%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversion Programs • Prevention Programs 	\$ 2,009,978.18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1,004,989.09 • \$1,004,989.09 	\$ 2,075,721.62 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1,037,860.81 • \$1,037,860.81
Youth Set Aside (10%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless Prevention • Interim Housing 	\$ 1,116,654.55 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$279,163.64 • \$837,490.91 	\$ 1,153,178.68 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$288,294.67 • \$864,884.01
Interim Housing (46%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating Costs • Enhanced Services 	\$ 5,136,610.88 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2,568,305.44 • \$2,568,305.44 	\$ 5,304,621.92 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2,652,310.96 • \$2,652,310.96
Administration (8%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management (7%) • HMIS (1%) 	\$ 893,323.63 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$781,658.18 • \$111,665.45 	\$ 922,542.95 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$807,225.08 • \$115,317.87
Total	\$11,166,545.42	\$ 11,531,786.79

Table 6 - FY 25-26 approved HHAP Round 6 spending plan.

Source: Regional Homeless Action Plan March 2024 (Annual Update August 2025) County of San Joaquin, the City of Stockton, and the San Joaquin County Continuum of Care (SJ CoC). Table 6 indicates that \$11.5 million of the approved 25-26 HHAP grant proposal is allocated to the City of Stockton, and \$11.2 million is allocated to the County of San Joaquin. The County/SJ CoC

allocation provides funding for homeless programs in all other cities of the county and the unincorporated areas.

Federal funding, which partially supports the HHAP grant program, has undergone policy changes reducing the availability of funding for permanent housing projects. Beginning this year, grant expenditures for permanent housing projects is limited to twenty percent (20%) of the total grant. This has negatively impact several other HHAP grantees throughout the state that have directed greater proportions of HHAP funding to permanent housing projects.

The Director of the SJ CoC has indicated that this limitation is not expected to pose a problem to the County's HHAP Program, as Round 6 HHAP spending for permanent housing is within the 20% limitation.

This report is not intended to evaluate the cost efficiency of HHAP grant spending in San Joaquin County. Financial information of that type would require a more professional and in-depth evaluation of the data, which is beyond the capability of the CGJ.

L. California's Project Homekey in 2020 and Homekey+ in 2024

Homekey is a California program that was implemented in FY 20-21. The program supported the acquisition and occupancy of hotels, motels, and other properties to house people experiencing homelessness throughout California during the COVID-19 pandemic. The target population for the Homekey program included *"... individuals and families experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness and who are inherently impacted by or at increased risk for medical diseases or conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic or other communicable diseases."*

The Homekey program encouraged partnerships with other public agencies and private organizations and requires applicants to secure multiple sources of funding for projects, including other federal and state grants, local general funds, and private donations.

The long-term intention of the program was that the majority of the properties would become permanent housing. Across three rounds of the original program, HCD awarded more than \$3.6 billion to fund 261 projects with 15,962 homes expected to house more than 175,000

Californians over the projects' lifetime. More than half of the program cost was supported by federal Coronavirus Aid Relief Funds during the first two years of the program. The Homekey program has continued beyond 2023 under the name Homekey+ and has been fully integrated into the HHAP Program.

In 2022, San Joaquin County was awarded \$3.6 million of Homekey funds for Relax Inn/Town Center Studios motel conversion project in the City of Stockton. This project provided 40 housing units for chronically homeless individuals. Funding was increased to \$5.0 million by the State of California to complete the project.

The City of Stockton has also successfully applied for Homekey+ funds to increase transitional and permanent supportive housing units as part of its homeless program. Homekey+ (launched 2024-2025) is the successor to California's original Homekey program, utilizing Proposition 1 funding to focus specifically on permanent supportive housing for veterans and individuals with behavioral health challenges experiencing homelessness.

Several projects involve partnerships with various organizations including the Central Valley Low Income Housing Corporation (CVLIHC), Visionary Home Builders of California, Inc. (VHB), and the Housing Authority of San Joaquin County. Projects have been financed by multiple sources of funding, including Homekey and Homekey+ funds, in keeping with the direction from grant funding sources.

Those projects included:

- Park Center Apartments: A 50-unit project for the homeless and mentally ill located at 700 N. Center Street, managed by the Housing Authority of the County of San Joaquin.
- Calaveras Quarters: Conversion of a 121-room hotel located at 2654 W. March Lane into 68 one-bedroom units of affordable, permanent, and supportive housing for families and transition-age youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- Villa d'Flore: A Project Homekey development at 324 E. Jackson Street in Stockton, California, managed by Visionary Home Builders, Inc.

On March 6, 2026, The California Department of Housing and Community Development announced a total of \$131.8 million in new Homekey+ grants throughout the state. The City of Stockton, in partnership with Service First of Northern California, will receive nearly \$35.6 million for the Hunter House, a 120-unit permanent supportive housing community located at 1240 N Hunter Street. The award will support 77 Homekey+ units at the project site, with 32 of those units reserved for veterans experiencing homelessness and 10 units for youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness with a behavioral health challenge, as well as one manager unit. HCD previously awarded the project more than \$2.5 million from the Infill Infrastructure Grant (IIG) program, as well as \$17.2 million from the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities program jointly administered by HCD and the California Strategic Growth Council. Local funding of approximately \$4.8 million has been committed to the project.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that San Joaquin County and its cities have made good progress in developing services for unhoused and chronically homeless persons during the past ten years. Emergency, Transitional, and Permanent housing beds in San Joaquin County were increased by 1,230 beds during the six-year period from 2018 to 2024. Approximately 200 beds were added in 2025 and an additional 339 beds are scheduled to be completed in 2026, for a new total of 1,869 beds.

Unfortunately, the number of unsheltered persons has continued to increase during that same period. Point-In-Time Count data indicates that in January of 2020, 1,548 of 2,667 unhoused persons were unsheltered compared to 3,369 of 4,732 in January of 2024. Several hundred shelter beds are planned to be completed by the end of 2026, which will provide shelter for around ten percent of the unsheltered population. The gap between shelter beds available and unsheltered persons varies from city to city, with the City of Stockton having the greatest need for additional beds.

Overall, the Homeless service system has improved in terms of meeting the needs of adults, families, youth, people fleeing domestic violence, veterans, and individuals with mental health

and substance use treatment needs. However, availability of specialized support services and supplies varies from shelter to shelter across the County.

Thirty-five to forty percent of emergency shelter clients surveyed in 2024 reported mental health and substance use disorders. The increased availability of mental health and substance use treatment services for chronically homeless persons is critical to establish behavioral stability before securing and maintaining a stable living situation. Many chronically homeless individuals refuse to utilize emergency shelters in order to continue substance use, or to avoid requirements to comply with basic facility rules. Individuals in this group require extraordinary outreach and supportive services, even before staying in a shelter.

Given current economic conditions, it is likely that the number of persons at risk of becoming unhoused or experiencing homelessness will continue to grow. Those same economic conditions may also reduce the level of federal and state funding made available to local CoC programs. Increased needs and fewer resources will require that the local government entities plan more strategically and direct service providers to become more creative.

The finances for the Homeless Programs are complex and difficult to follow. Current financial reports available to the public are limited in their scope and level of detail. Fiscal transparency is a necessary element to sustaining on-going public support.

Effective homeless programs are not just a matter of building shelters and affordable housing; in many cases, it is a matter of repairing or rebuilding lives. Providing a room with a bed, three meals a day, shower and bathroom facilities is the starting point, but certainly not the end point for many unhoused persons. In order to produce successful outcomes, there must be a wide range of resources available to meet varying situations.

NOTES

Present and past San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury Final Reports and Responses can be accessed on the San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury website at:

<https://www.sjcourts.org/divisions/civil-grand-jury>

RESPONSES REQUIRED FOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

California Penal Code §933(c) and §§933.05(a) and (b) require that specific responses to all Findings and Recommendations contained in this report be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin County Superior Court within 90 days of receipt of the report unless the responder is an elected County officer or agency head where such responses are required within 60 days.

For Findings: Pursuant to California Penal Code §933.05(a) the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following for each Finding:

1. *The respondent agrees with the Finding.*
2. *The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the Finding; in which case the response shall specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reason(s) therefore.*

For Recommendations: Pursuant to California Penal Code §933.05(b) the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following for each Recommendation:

1. *The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.*
2. *The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.*
3. *The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed,*

including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.

4. *The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation of the reason(s) therefore.*

RESPONSE DEADLINES

Response from the San Joaquin Continuum of Care is invited within 90 days from receipt of this report.

Mail or hand deliver response to:

The Honorable Lance G. Jacot, Presiding Judge
San Joaquin County Superior Court
180 E Weber Ave, Suite 1306J
Stockton, California 95202

Email response to:

Ms. Krystal Gonzalez
Staff Secretary to the Civil Grand Jury
San Joaquin County Superior Court
civilgrandjury@sjcourts.org

DISCLAIMER

Civil Grand Jury reports are based on documentary evidence and the testimony of sworn or admonished witnesses, not on conjecture or opinion. However, the Civil Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing such evidence except upon the specific approval of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court or another judge appointed by the Presiding Judge (Cal. Pen. Code §§911, 924.1 (a) and 929). Similarly, the Civil Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing the identity of witnesses except upon an order of the court for narrowly defined purposes (Cal. Pen. Code §§924.2 and 929).

2025-2026 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury



San Joaquin County EMS

A System Re-imagined: The Future of EMS in San Joaquin County

Release Date: June 2026



Photo of CENCAL Fire and EMS emergency vehicles. (By: CENCAL Fire and EMS)

SUMMARY

On February 10, 2026, the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors approved a new agreement for 911 ambulance services with the CENCAL Fire and EMS Authority (CENCAL). This decision represents a significant change in how emergency medical services (EMS) will be delivered throughout much of the County, including Stockton, Lodi, Tracy, and surrounding communities. The new system is scheduled to begin on May 1, 2026.

For many years, ambulance transport services in San Joaquin County have been provided by AMR operating under an exclusive agreement since 2006. The current exclusive agreement with AMR to provide ambulance services in the county is due to expire in May 2026. While this model has delivered essential services, it has also required coordination between separate entities—fire agencies providing first response and a private provider responsible for ambulance transport. This separation has at times created challenges with response times, communication, and system efficiency.

The newly approved model transitions ambulance services to a regional, fire-based system led by CENCAL, aiming to serve the community better and improve patient care. This agreement specifically applies to Ambulance Zones X and Y. Zones D, E, and F will continue to operate under their own separate agreements with the County, though CENCAL may provide support to those areas through mutual aid agreements when needed.

ACRONYMS and DEFINITIONS

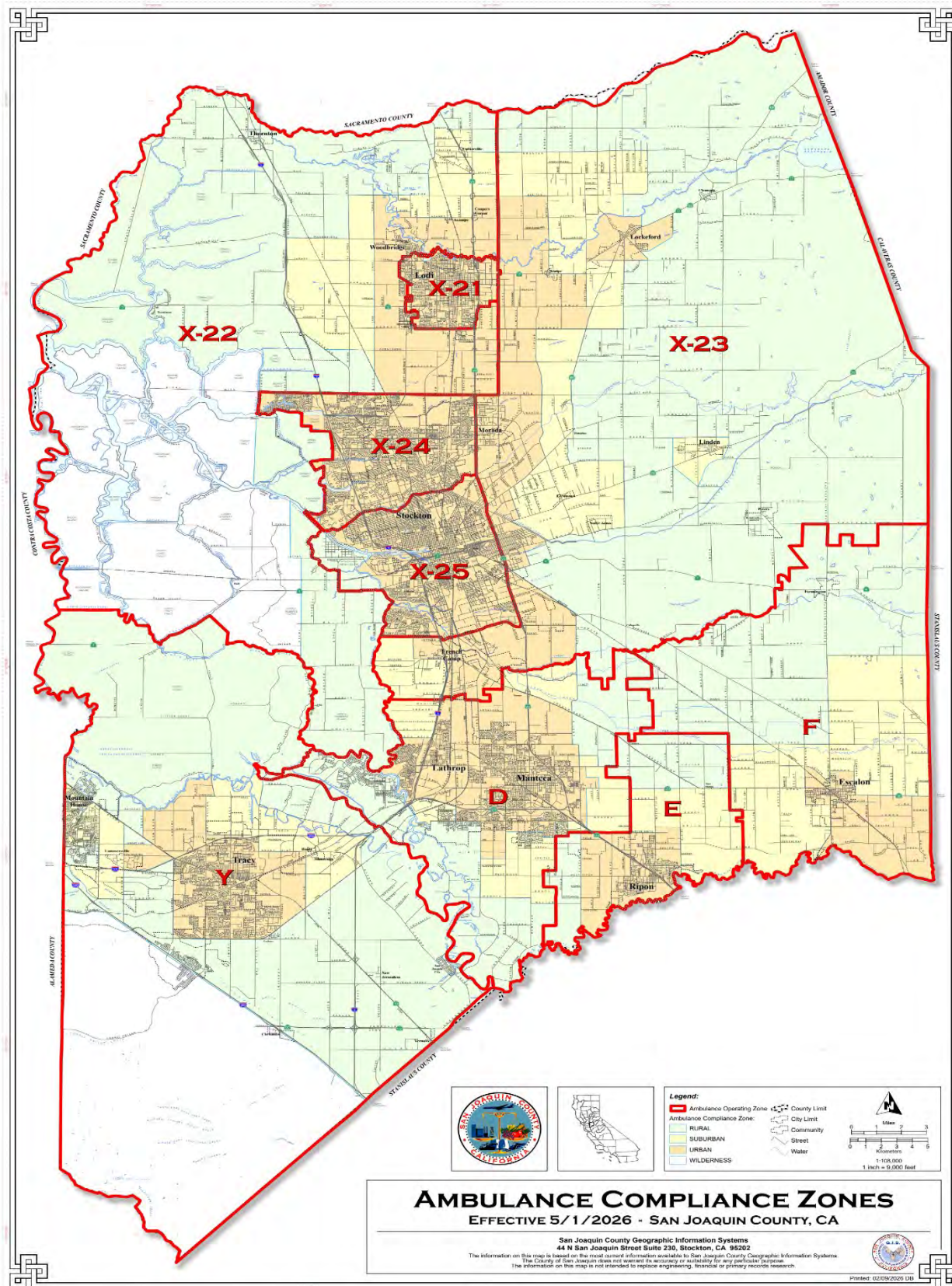
ALS	Advanced Life Support, a level of emergency care
AMR	American Medical Response, a private ambulance service provider
BLS	Basic Life Support, a level of emergency care
CENCAL	CENCAL Fire and EMS Authority is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) formed by the fire departments of Stockton, Lodi, and the South San Joaquin County Fire Authority (Tracy) to manage 911 ambulance transport services in San Joaquin County.

CQI	Continuous quality improvements
EMS	Emergency medical services
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
EOA	Exclusive Operating Area
SJCEMSA	San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services Agency, a division within the San Joaquin County Health Care Services Agency.
STEMI	ST-elevation myocardial infarction, the most severe type of heart attack

SOURCES

- Presentation from SJCEMSA and CENCAL
- Reviewed County EMS agreement with CENCAL, press releases and other documents and websites of both CENCAL and SJCEMSA
- <https://www.sjgov.org/department/ems/home>
- <https://www.cencalfire.org/about>
- https://www.lodinews.com/news/article_93e7a4ae-5720-4d63-91bf-1c79a7a03dcd.html
- <https://www.yahoo.com/news/articles/san-joaquin-county-fire-agencies-205600204.html>
- https://www.lodinews.com/news/article_f4b85559-2f99-4880-baff-b742a1e1e1a4.html
- <https://www.recordnet.com/story/news/politics/county/2014/12/10/sj-county-amr-agree-to/35771750007/>
- https://www.townmedia.com/tracy_press/south-san-joaquin-county-fire-authority/article_f0d6528d-bd6c-4bd9-a920-70626524cb26.html
- <https://youtu.be/X1D6ITvz888?si=oToNTq6OU1URrKc9>

The following map outlines the Ambulance Compliance Zones in San Joaquin County.



BACKGROUND

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY

Established by the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors in 1982, the San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services Agency (SJCEMSA) is responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating the county-wide emergency medical services system. SJCEMSA oversees ALS/BLS ambulance services, trauma care, and specialty care centers, ensuring compliance with 25+ contracts to maintain high-quality prehospital care and emergency readiness throughout the county.

SJCEMSA does not directly provide ambulance transport services; instead, it contracts with service providers and ensures accountability through performance measures and compliance requirements.

SJCEMSA key responsibilities include:

- System planning and evaluation – Developing and implementing EMS system plans to meet California Health and Safety Code requirements.
- Contract and compliance monitoring – Enforcing contracts with ambulance providers and monitoring performance, clinical care and response times.
- Specialty Care coordination – Oversight of trauma services (at San Joaquin General Hospital), ST-elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) centers and stroke centers.
- Training and Accreditation – Accrediting paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and authorizing training programs.
- Quality Improvement – Running a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program to audit compliance and treatment protocols and improve patient care.

The following list summarizes the San Joaquin County EMS system:

- 4 EOA emergency ambulance providers
- 2 EMS dispatch centers

- 2 EMS emergency air ambulance services
- 7 acute care ambulance receiving hospitals
- 2 designated ST-elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) receiving centers
- 7 designated stroke receiving centers
- 1 designated Level II Trauma Center
- 20 Fire Departments

The following table shows the specialty care designations of the 7 receiving hospitals in San Joaquin County and identifies those equipped with a Helipad.

Hospital	Trauma	Base	STEMI	Stroke	Rec'v	Heli
Adventist Health Lodi				X	X	X
Dameron			X	X	X	
Doctor's Hospital Manteca				X	X	
Kaiser Permanente Manteca				X	X	
San Joaquin General Hospital	LEVEL II	X		X	X	X
St. Joseph's Medical Center			X	X	X	X
Tracy Sutter Community				X	X	

Table 1: List of the 7 receiving hospitals in the County and their specialty care designations and which have a helipad.

Under the existing system, ambulance transport services are provided by AMR under an exclusive 10-year agreement with the County excluding ambulance zones D, E and F (see map above). This provider has been responsible for responding to 911 medical calls, transporting patients to hospitals, and meeting established response time requirements.

While the current provider has delivered necessary services, the model relies on coordination between independent agencies—fire departments and ambulance services—which can lead to inefficiencies. Fire personnel are often first on scene but must wait for ambulance transport units to arrive, which can delay patient transport and extend on-scene times.

DISCUSSION

CENCAL FIRE and EMS AUTHORITY

CENCAL Fire and EMS Authority (CENCAL) is a regional public agency formed through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) among the Stockton, Lodi, and South San Joaquin County Fire Authorities. CENCAL serves a regional population of approximately 660,000 residents. Its mission is to strengthen local control of EMS delivery by providing ambulance transport services within a fully integrated, fire-based emergency medical services (EMS) system and improving system coordination across jurisdictions. To enhance its operational capabilities, CENCAL has partnered with AMR, an established and experienced provider of ambulance services.



Image: The re-branded AMR ambulances represent a move away from traditional AMR markings, toward a coordinated look with CENCAL branding to signify a regional approach to emergency services.

The transition to a fire-based EMS model signifies a move toward greater system integration, encouraging collaboration among responders for more effective emergency response. Key anticipated improvements include:

IMPROVED RESPONSE TIMES

Fire agencies are already distributed throughout the community and are frequently the first to arrive on scene. Integrating ambulance services within this system is expected to reduce delays between initial response and patient transport.

ENHANCED COORDINATION

Unifying and centralizing emergency ambulance and fire dispatch will result in better communication and coordination among initial responders.

ENHANCED MEDI-CAL REIMBURSEMENTS

As a public entity, CENCAL qualifies for enhanced Medi-Cal reimbursement, funds unavailable to private systems. These additional resources are required to be reinvested directly into service improvements, including bolstering staffing, increasing the ambulance fleet, advancing training initiatives, and improving patient care quality.

INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY

With EMS oversight and a regional provider structure, performance standards will be consistently monitored and enforced, fostering transparency and public trust.

BETTER USE OF RESOURCES

The regional model allows for more flexible deployment of personnel and equipment, helping ensure that resources are available where they are most needed, particularly during peak demand periods.

IMPROVED PATIENT OUTCOMES

Faster response and transport times, combined with coordinated care, can improve outcomes for patients experiencing medical emergencies.

CONCLUSION

The move to a fire-based EMS system under CENCAL marks an important shift in how emergency medical services are delivered in San Joaquin County. By bringing ambulance transport and fire response together, the County is working toward a system that is more connected, more efficient, and better equipped to care for patients when every minute matters.

Of course, the real impact will depend on how well the system is put into practice and managed over time. But this change shows a clear effort to improve and modernize emergency services with the goal of better serving the people of San Joaquin County.

AFTERWORD

It is the opinion of this Civil Grand Jury that CENCAL and SJCEMSA agencies should be recognized for the work they've put into building this new countywide system. For the past three years, well before the current ambulance contract expired on May 1, 2026, they've been actively planning and working together to get it right. That kind of early, coordinated effort shows a real commitment to keeping services running smoothly, improving how the system operates, and focusing on what the community needs. Their work has helped set things up for a more seamless transition and a stronger EMS system going forward.

NOTES

Present and past San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury Final Reports and Responses can be accessed on the San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury website at:

<https://www.sjcourts.org/divisions/civil-grand-jury>

RESPONSES REQUIRED FOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

California Penal Code §933(c) and §§933.05(a) and (b) require that specific responses to all Findings and Recommendations contained in this report be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin County Superior Court within 90 days of receipt of the report unless the responder is an elected County officer or agency head where such responses are required within 60 days.

For Findings: Pursuant to California Penal Code §933.05(a) the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following for each Finding:

1. *The respondent agrees with the Finding.*
2. *The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the Finding; in which case the response shall specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reason(s) therefore.*

For Recommendations: Pursuant to California Penal Code §933.05(b) the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following for each Recommendation:

1. *The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.*
2. *The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.*
3. *The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for*

discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.

4. *The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation of the reason(s) therefore.*

RESPONSE DEADLINES

Response from San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services and CENCAL Fire and EMS Authority is invited within 90 days from receipt of this report.

Mail or hand deliver response to:

The Honorable Lance G. Jacot, Presiding Judge
San Joaquin County Superior Court
180 E Weber Ave, Suite 1306J
Stockton, California 95202

Email response to:

Ms. Krystal Gonzalez
Staff Secretary to the Civil Grand Jury
San Joaquin County Superior Court
civilgrandjury@sjcourts.org

DISCLAIMER

Civil Grand Jury reports are based on documentary evidence and the testimony of sworn or admonished witnesses, not on conjecture or opinion. However, the Civil Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing such evidence except upon the specific approval of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court or another judge appointed by the Presiding Judge (Penal Code Section 911. 924.1 (a))

and 929). Similarly, the Civil Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing the identity of witnesses except upon an order of the court for narrowly defined purposes (Penal Code Sections 924.2 and 929).

About the Civil Grand Jury

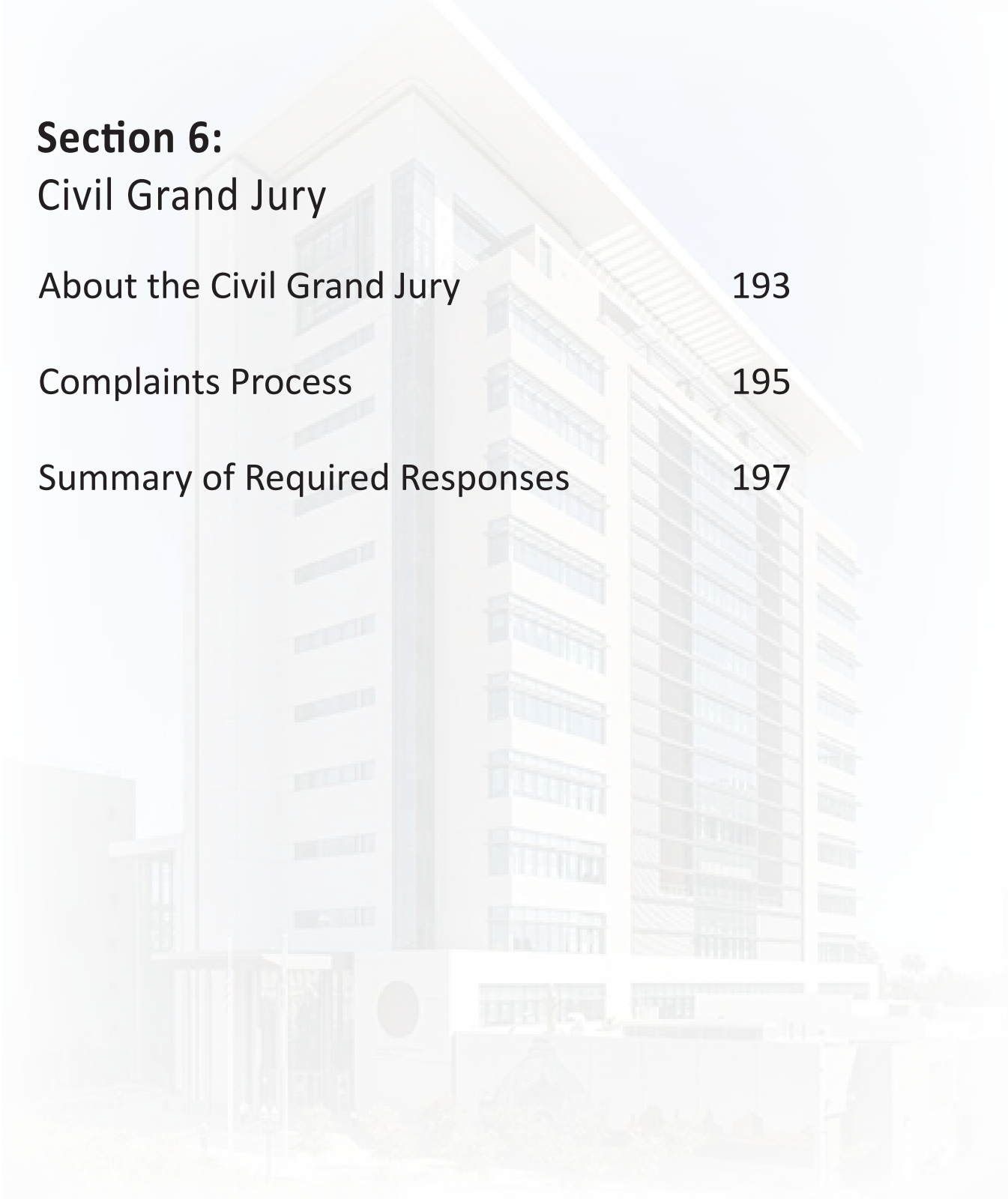
Section 6:

Civil Grand Jury

About the Civil Grand Jury 193

Complaints Process 195

Summary of Required Responses 197



ABOUT THE CIVIL GRAND JURY

THE CIVIL GRAND JURY AND ITS CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE

The San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury's duty is to address concerns regarding the operation of local government entities. Both California Penal Code Section 905 and the California State Constitution, Article 1, Section 23, mandate that all 58 counties impanel a Civil Grand Jury to serve during each year. The Civil Grand Jury differs from a criminal grand jury in that the Civil Grand Jury focuses on public agency oversight and accountability, not criminal cases.

California Penal Code Sections 925 through 933.6 outline the scope and responsibilities of the Civil Grand Jury as follows:

- Investigate and report on the operations, accounts and records of local public agencies
- Inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county
- Investigate allegations of willful or corrupt misconduct by public officials
- Investigate the activities of school and special assessment districts within the county
- Submit a final report with findings and recommendations to the Superior Court Presiding Judge at the end of its term

The Presiding Judge of the Superior Court impanels 19 grand jurors to serve for one year and appoints a foreperson who presides over the grand jury. The grand jury elects other officers and organizes itself. The jurors meet in a weekly general session, and smaller investigative committees meet throughout the week. Each grand jury is separate and independent from all previous juries.

To accomplish their duties the grand jurors meet with county and city officials, visit county detention facilities and conduct independent reviews on matters of interest or concern. The aim is to ensure that county and city governments operate lawfully and efficiently, and that public funds are appropriately managed. After determining areas of concern for inquiry and investigation, working committees are formed to conduct the required investigations. Each

working committee reports to the full grand jury. Conclusions are reached after study and thorough discussion and may appear in the grand jury's final report.

To serve on the Civil Grand Jury you must fulfill the following requirements:

- Be a United States citizen
- Be 18 years of age or older
- Be a resident of San Joaquin County for at least one year immediately prior to the beginning of your service
- Possess intelligence, sound judgment, and good character
- Have sufficient knowledge of the English language to communicate both orally and in writing

Applications to serve on the Grand Jury can be obtained by visiting the following website:

<https://www.sjcourts.org/civil-grand-jury> or by writing to this address:

Submit completed applications to:

San Joaquin County Superior Court
Attention: Judicial Secretary
180 E. Weber Ave., Suite 1306J
Stockton, CA 95202

An excellent description and discussion of the role of the Civil Grand Jury, written by a local lawyer and veteran of multiple grand juries, can be found in the San Joaquin Bar Association's publication *Across the Bar* – The Secret Court Investigative Branch; San Joaquin County's Civil Grand Jury available [online](#).

CITIZEN COMPLAINTS

A crucial function of the civil grand jury is to receive and review citizen complaints about local government officials and agencies. They may include, but are not limited to, allegations of misconduct by public officials or employees, failure to perform duties in compliance with laws, regulations and established procedures, and inefficiency in local government. Through reviews of documents and interviews of witnesses, the grand jury process points a strong light on local agencies to determine whether there are any violations, inefficiencies, mismanagement or possible corruption.

Because the civil grand jury is vested with certain powers to gather information, the members can thoroughly review and investigate reported issues. Complaints are treated as strictly confidential. This allows a complainant to come forward without fear of intimidation or reprisal. The civil grand jury provides the complainant with written acknowledgment of receipt of a complaint. However, not all complaints are investigated. With the many issues brought before it, the civil grand jury must make difficult decisions about what investigations to undertake during its term. If the issue identified in a complaint falls within the civil grand jury's jurisdiction, the complaint is assigned to a committee for review to determine whether the complaint has merit. After the initial review, the committee presents its recommendations to the entire civil grand jury. The civil grand jury may decide to initiate an inquiry. The results of the inquiry may lead to an investigation. After a thorough investigation, a final report will be released, which will include findings and recommendations.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Any civil grand jury action requires a supermajority of 12 votes;
- A complaint should be submitted to the civil grand jury only after all other means to correct the issue have been explored and attempted;
- Complaints must be submitted in writing; complaints are not accepted by phone;
- The civil grand jury carefully considers all complaints received;

- The civil grand jury does not investigate all complaints received; Investigations are at the discretion of the jury;
- Investigation into a complaint cannot be confirmed; ***all investigations remain confidential*** until the civil grand jury decides whether to include the findings in its final report;
- The civil grand jury may or may not contact a complainant for further information;
- Submitted complaints may not be responded to if the civil grand jury is unable to contact the submitter for additional information related to the complaint;
- The civil grand jury cannot investigate activities outside its authority or that involve criminal activity. All criminal complaints will be referred to the San Joaquin County District Attorney;
- The civil grand jury cannot investigate disputes between private parties.

For more information about the San Joaquin Civil Grand Jury, visit: <https://sjcourts.org/civil-grand-jury>

The Civil Grand Jury Complaint Form and instructions on how to properly complete it can be found at: [SJC CGJ Complaint Form](#). Completed forms may be submitted:

Via E-Mail to: civilgrandjury@sjcourts.org, or

By mailing to the:

San Joaquin County Grand Jury
180 E. Weber Avenue, Suite 1114
Stockton, CA 95202

Below is a summary of all Findings and Recommendations contained in the 2025 – 2026 SJCCGJ Final Report that require a response along with the responding agency and response due date.

Report	Respondent	Findings and Recommendations	Response Due Date
City of Stockton: Governance in Turmoil	SCC	Findings F1 - F9; Recommendations R1 - R8	By September 23, 2026
SJ LAFCO: Coordinating and Planning Growth	SJLAFCO	Findings F1 - F8; Recommendations R1 - R10	By September 23, 2026
Response Compliance: Old System New Costs	BOS	R1	By September 23, 2026
2nd Follow-up: City of Stockton: Crisis in Government	SCC	Findings F1.1 - F1.3 and F3.1; Recommendations R1.1 - R1.3, and R3.1	By September 23, 2026
Impact and Innovation: Homelessness in San Joaquin County: Ten years later: 2016-2026	Invited Responses only	Findings FB.1- FB.3, FD.1-FD.3, FE.1, FG1.1, FG2.1	By September 23, 2026

SCC=Stockton City Council BOS=San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors SJLAFCO= San Joaquin Local Agency Formation Commission

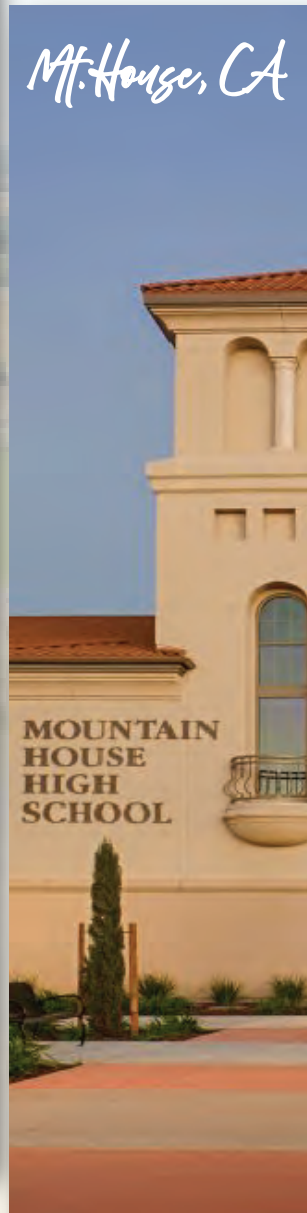
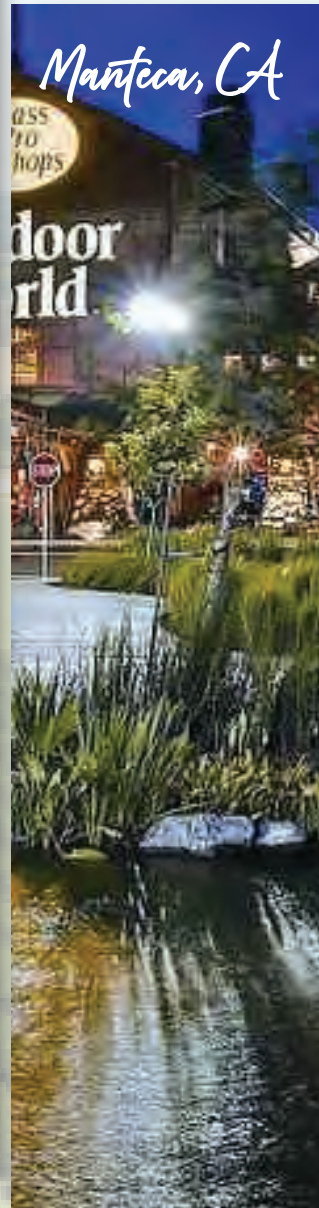
REQUIRED RESPONSES

Cal. Pen. Code §§ 933, 933.05 require specific responses to all findings and recommendations contained in this report be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin County Superior Court within 90 days of the release of this report.

Note: If the responder is an elected official, the response must be sent within 60 days of release.

This page left intentionally blank.

San Joaquin County



Greatness Grows Here