

**A Report of the 2005-2006 Civil Grand Jury  
For the City and County of San Francisco**

**San Francisco Jails:  
An Investigative Visit**

Release date: June 26, 2006

## Purpose of the Civil Grand Jury

The purpose of the Civil Grand Jury is to investigate the operations of the various departments, agencies, and officers of the government of the City and County of San Francisco to develop constructive recommendations for improving their operations, as required by law.

Each Civil Grand Jury has the opportunity and responsibility to determine which departments, agencies and officers it will investigate during its one-year term of office. To accomplish this task, the Civil Grand Jury divides into committees. Each committee conducts its research by visiting government facilities, meeting with public officials and reviewing appropriate documents.

The nineteen members of the Civil Grand Jury are selected at random from a pool of thirty prospective jurors. San Francisco residents are invited to apply. More information can be found at: [http://www.sfgov.org/site/courts\\_page.asp?id=3680](http://www.sfgov.org/site/courts_page.asp?id=3680), or by contacting Civil Grand Jury, 400 McAllister Street, Room 008, San Francisco, CA 94102; (415) 551-3605.

## State Law Requirement

Pursuant to state law, reports of the Civil Grand Jury do not identify the names or provide identifying information about individuals who spoke to the Civil Grand Jury.

Departments and agencies identified in the report must respond to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court within the number of days specified, with a copy sent to the Board of Supervisors. For each finding of the Civil Grand Jury, the response must either (1) agree with the finding, or (2) disagree with it, wholly or partially, and explain why. Further, as to each recommendation made by the Civil Grand Jury, the responding party must report either (1) that the recommendation has been implemented, with a summary explanation of how it was implemented; (2) the recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for the implementation; (3) the recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation of the scope of that analysis and a time frame for the officer or agency head to be prepared to discuss it (less than six months from the release of this report); or (4) that recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable, with an explanation of why that is. (California Penal Code, sections. 933, 933.05).

## Purpose of This Report

Section 919 (b) of the California Penal Code requires that each Civil Grand Jury inspect jails and prisons within the county during its term of office. While no formal report is required, the 2005-2006 Civil Grand Jury is issuing this report to call attention to some of the problems in the jails and accomplishments of the Sheriff's Department noted by the jurors during their visit to the jails in November 2005.

## **San Francisco Jails – An Investigative Visit**

He who opens a school door, closes a prison.  
- Victor Hugo

### **SUMMARY**

In November 2005, the San Francisco 2005-2006 Civil Grand Jury inspected the jail facilities of the City and County of San Francisco (the City). The jurors found a number of longstanding problems that still need to be addressed, including limited budgets, staffing shortages, antiquated facilities, jail overcrowding, and high recidivism rates.

Although no report is required by the California Penal Code, the 2005-2006 San Francisco Civil Grand Jury is submitting a written report based on information obtained during the one-day on-site visit to the jail facilities, from interviews and a review of materials provided by the San Francisco Sheriff's Department and obtained on the Internet.

The Civil Grand Jury recommends that the City promptly address the overcrowding and physical problems in the jail facilities at the Hall of Justice. It also recommends increased efforts to bring the Sheriff's Department staffing to authorized levels, and a coordinated approach to post-release prisoner services to reduce recidivism.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The California Penal Code requires that each Civil Grand Jury inspect jails and prisons within the county during its term of office.<sup>1</sup> On November 18, 2005, members of the 2005-2006 San Francisco Civil Grand Jury (the Civil Grand Jury or the jurors) inspected the majority of the jail facilities in San Francisco County.

The 2005-2006 San Francisco Civil Grand Jury is presenting this report of its findings and recommendations to the Court, the Mayor, the San Francisco Sheriff's

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<sup>1</sup> California Penal Code, §919(b)

Department (SFSD or the Department) and the Department of Public Works (DPW) for their information and review.

The San Francisco County jail facilities are short-term holding facilities that house three types of populations:

- Individuals who have been arrested and are awaiting arraignment.
- Criminally charged defendants awaiting trial and those who are being tried or are awaiting sentencing.
- Convicted offenders with short-term sentences of no more than 15 months and state prison prisoners who are brought into the county for trial and other court appearances.

State prisons, on the other hand, house prisoners who have been convicted of a felony and sentenced to a year or more, up to life or death. All jails and prisons in the state of California are regulated by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the Corrections Standards Authority (CSA), formerly called the California Board of Corrections (BOC).<sup>2</sup> No state prisons are located in the County of San Francisco.

## **II. PROCEDURE OR METHODOLOGY**

Approximately three-fourths of the members of the 2005-2006 San Francisco Civil Grand Jury visited the following San Francisco County jails:

- County Jail #1 - Hall of Justice, 6th Floor, San Francisco (capacity 426 -- 320 men and 66 women)
- County Jail #2 - Hall of Justice, 7th Floor, San Francisco (capacity 388 – 330 men and 58 women)
- County Jail #3 - San Bruno (capacity 552 men)
- County Jail #7 - San Bruno (capacity 372 men)
- County Jail #8 - 425 7th Street, San Francisco, near the Hall of Justice (capacity 392: 248 men and 144 women)
- County Jail #9 - intake and release facility at 425 7<sup>th</sup> Street, San Francisco (no rated capacity. Can hold up to 301 prisoners)
- The newly built county jail in San Bruno, which is not yet operational. (projected capacity: 768 men)

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<sup>2</sup> Name change effective as of July 1, 2005

The jail tour began at approximately 8:30 a.m. when the jurors were taken by the Sheriff's Department to San Bruno and ended at approximately 4:00 p.m. at the Hall of Justice. The jurors did not inspect County Jail No. 5 at San Francisco General Hospital.

Prior to the on-site visit, at the request of the Civil Grand Jury, the Sheriff's Department submitted a packet of information, including a jail population report, staff training information, information on outside contracts and grants, a statistical breakdown of prisoner grievances filed during 2005, meal menus for the month of October, copies of 11 typical grievances filed during 2005, a prisoner orientation handbook, prisoner training curricula, and other statistical data. SFSD also submitted copies of its reports to the Board of Supervisors on the Inmate Welfare Fund for Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005.

In addition to interviews that took place during the on-site visit, the Civil Grand Jury interviewed representatives of some not-for-profit organizations that are providing programs for prisoners, ex-offenders, and their families and reviewed documents related to jail conditions and prisoner treatment.

In the morning portion of the visit, jurors were escorted through the three jail facilities located in San Bruno: County Jails #3 and #7, and the newly built jail in San Bruno located across the street from #7. At the time of the jurors' visit, the new 768-bed jail was unoccupied but was expected to be ready for occupancy during the first half of 2006.

Various staff members of the Sheriff's Department escorted the jurors through representative areas of each jail facility and answered questions. The Sheriff's Department representatives were knowledgeable and helpful. They fully answered all juror questions and provided statistical data to validate statements.

Volunteer prisoner workers served a typical prisoner lunch to the jurors. During lunch these prisoners and Sheriff's Department staff answered questions about the food, programs, and other conditions.

Following lunch at County Jail #7 in San Bruno, jurors were taken back to San Francisco where they did a walk-through of Jails #1 and #2 in the Hall of Justice and #8 and #9 adjoining the Hall of Justice at 425 7<sup>th</sup> Street (commonly referred to as "The Glamour-Slammer," in part because of its dramatic architecture).

At Jails #3 and #7 in San Bruno and at the "Glamour-Slammer" in San Francisco, jurors entered some of the common areas of the jails to inspect the facilities up close and interview prisoners and staff. Prisoners were informed that Civil Grand Jurors were visiting the facilities and several of the prisoners voluntarily spoke with one or more jurors about problems or complaints or to comment on facilities and programs. In addition, a few prisoners were randomly selected for interviews by some of the jurors.

### III. DISCUSSION

In addition to administering the jails, the Sheriff's Department is responsible for providing security for City Hall and the courts, administering the Central Warrants Bureau, and other services. Limited budgets and staffing shortages, jail overcrowding, costs of prisoner care, and recidivism are among the serious issues faced by the Sheriff's Department.

Some of these issues and the jurors' observations during the on-site visit are discussed below.

#### A. Prisoner Profile

The San Francisco County Jail system houses an average daily population of 2,200 prisoners in five jails, County Jails #1, 2, 3, 7, and 8. The system also includes an intake and release facility [County Jail #9], and a hospital ward at San Francisco General Hospital [County Jail #5]. Approximately 55,000 people are booked into the jails annually.<sup>3</sup>

On June 5, 2002, the Sheriff's Department took a "snapshot" of the incarcerated population, broken down by gender, race and ethnicity. On that date, 55 percent of the 1,995 prisoners were African American, 21 percent were Latino or Hispanic, 19 percent were Caucasian, 5 percent were Asian or Pacific Islander, and the remainder were of some other race. Eighty-seven percent of the prisoners were male and 13 percent were female.<sup>4</sup>

Approximately 75 percent of the daily prisoner population consists of individuals who have not yet been sentenced. These include people who have been arrested but not arraigned, arraigned and awaiting trial, or being tried but not yet sentenced. It should be noted that approximately half of those booked into the intake facility are released within 96 hours of their arrest, either on their own recognizance, on bail, or because the charges against them were dropped. The other half of the unsentenced prisoners consists of two groups of people:

- Serious and/or repeat offenders who were denied bail or who were not allowed to be released on their own recognizance
- Offenders who did not have the funds to make bail or the financial ability to be released on bond. These prisoners usually spend approximately four or five months in custody, as their cases move through the courts

The remaining 25 percent of the prison population consists of convicted offenders serving sentences of less than 15 months.

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<sup>3</sup> From the Sheriff's Department website, April 2006, <http://www.sfsheriff.com/jails.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Van de Water, Adam, Office of the Legislative Analyst, San Francisco Board of Supervisors, "Criminal Justice Offender Profile (File # 021527)," April 2, 2003

In a 2002 Jail Population Analysis study of prisoners in San Francisco jails, the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice reported that of the 2,052 persons in jail on the morning of February 18, 2002, 47 percent had been arrested on drug-related charges, 35 percent had been arrested for crimes of violence, and 15 percent had been charged with crimes against property. The remaining 3 percent had been arrested for other crimes, such as vehicle code violations and quality of life offenses, (such as public inebriation or excessive noise).<sup>5</sup>

## **B. Facilities**

Jurors reported that the exterior condition of the jail facilities and grounds was satisfactory. No graffiti or peeling paint was noted on the exterior of any of the buildings. All interior portions of the jails viewed by the Civil Grand Jury were very clean on the day of the visit. Bedding, pillows, and clothing also appeared to be clean. No graffiti was noted.

County Jail #3 in San Bruno, built in the 1930s, is the oldest structure in the jail system. In an article about overcrowding in the jails, the *San Francisco Examiner* reported in 1999 that this antiquated facility “poses such earthquake and fire hazards to its 550 inmates that a federal judge has declared it unconstitutional.”<sup>6</sup> As a result of the court’s ruling, the County began construction of a new state-of-the art jail in San Bruno, directly across the street from County Jail #7. Departmental management stated that when the new San Bruno Jail is opened, County Jail #3 will be permanently closed and the prisoners will be transferred to the new jail.

The new jail was originally scheduled to be completed and ready for occupancy in early 2004, at which time the old Jail #3 and Jail #7, built in the 1960s, would have been closed. However, a series of construction and contractual problems have delayed the opening of the new facility.<sup>7</sup> Departmental officials assured jurors that these problems are being resolved. The most recent estimate, provided by a Department spokesperson on May 22, 2006, is that the Department expects the new jail to be ready for occupancy no later than July 1, 2006.

The Sheriff is quoted in the 1999 *Examiner* article, headlined “Inmates sleep on floors in overflowing cell blocks,” as saying “the outdated design [of Jails #1 and #2] presents even more immediate dangers to inmates.” Six years later, although we did not observe any prisoners sleeping on the floors, the 2005-06 Civil Grand Jury noted that the two jails in the Hall of Justice are the most stereotypical and the most unpleasant of all the jails visited, for both prisoners and the staff. The prisoners were in crowded

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<sup>5</sup> Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, San Francisco, CA: “Jail Population Analysis.” February 2002

<sup>6</sup> “Inmates sleep on floors in overflowing cell blocks,” *San Francisco Examiner*, July 25, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Matier, Phillip and Andrew Ross, 2005. “Glitches handcuff city’s move to open new jail,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 18, 2005.

conditions, the design is antiquated, the noise level was annoying, with the exception of the women's section of Jail #2, there are no windows or natural light. The monotonous drab-colored walls have an impersonal, institutional feeling and the uncovered hard surfaces intensify the noise problem.

In Jail #1, on the sixth floor of the Hall of Justice, the most crowded area was the women's section. The cells were small and four or more cots were crowded into one cell. The cots appeared to be only about 24" apart, giving the women prisoners very little personal space. In the men's facility, each cellblock had adjacent common space where the prisoners could sit, eat, read, or socialize. The women did not have any common areas. In some of the cells, women prisoners were observed eating dinner sitting on their cots.

Departmental staff said that once the changeover to the new San Bruno jail is completed, male prisoners will be moved out of Jail #8 at 425 7<sup>th</sup> Street and the entire facility will be used by women prisoners. This will alleviate the overcrowding in the women's portion of Jail #1.

Jurors found the indoor air quality and temperature of the Hall of Justice jails to be noticeably uncomfortable. The indoor air problems in the Hall of Justice have been in existence for the better part of a decade or more. The 1999-2000 Civil Grand Jury found that "County Jails #1 and #2 located at the Hall of Justice have noticeable problems with ventilation and air flow" and recommended that the "ventilation problem at County Jails #1 and #2 should be corrected or at least alleviated in some way... The Sheriff's Department should look into short-term and long-term solutions to improve the ventilation in these facilities."<sup>8</sup> Departmental staff said the Hall of Justice HVAC system replacement project was to be completed in four phases. To date, only three of these have been completed. The final phase of the project, replacement of the HVAC system for Jails #1 and #2, although also included in recent budgets, has been delayed several times.

The 2005-2006 budget includes \$600,000 for completion of the Hall of Justice cooling system.<sup>9</sup> However, as of May 2006, the air quality problems in the Hall of Justice jails had not yet been addressed. Completion of the cooling system may be included in the \$2.7 million in capital improvements for the Hall of Justice in the Mayor's proposed 2006-2007 budget, which was released at the end of May.<sup>10</sup>

The Mayor's proposed 2006-2007 budget also includes \$800,000 for pre-planning for the replacement of the Hall of Justice. It is estimated, however, that it will be at least 10 to 15 years before a replacement Hall of Justice will be completed.

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<sup>8</sup> 1999-2000 Civil Grand Jury Reports – Sheriff's Department. [http://www.sfgov.org/site/courts\\_page.asp?id=3730](http://www.sfgov.org/site/courts_page.asp?id=3730) (April 2006)

<sup>9</sup> Mayor's Office of Budget Policy and Finance, "Budget Summary 2005-2006," San Francisco, June 6, 2005

<sup>10</sup> Mayor's Office of Communications. Press Release: "Mayor Newsom Announces Largest General Fund Capital Budget in City's History," May 24, 2006.

In contrast to the older jails, the new (but not yet operational) jail in San Bruno provides a much more pleasant physical environment for staff as well as prisoners. For example, there were a variety of design colors and ample natural light to offset the fluorescent lighting system. Artwork was on display in attractive common areas.

### **C. Staffing**

The jurors' overall impression of Departmental staff was very favorable. Without exception, staff interviewed appeared to be knowledgeable and well trained. They were forthcoming about their job duties and morale appeared to be good despite the Department's chronic staff shortages. The officers assigned to work in the jails are ethnically and gender diverse: approximately 75 percent of the deputies are ethnic minorities and about 25 percent are women. All officers observed looked sharp and clean; their uniforms were well pressed and conformed to Departmental requirements.

The Civil Grand Jury did not perceive any relationship problems or tensions between the prisoners and the staff. With only one exception, prisoners interviewed did not complain about their treatment. The Jury was impressed by the apparently cordial relationships among the prisoners and the staff.

At the time of the jail visit, Departmental management reported there were a sufficient number of **budgeted** positions to maintain current staffing objectives. However, there were not a sufficient number of **filled** positions. In FY 2005, there were 87 vacant positions due to turnover and retirements, with the result that an average of 50 involuntary overtime slots were needed to achieve the minimum levels of staffing required by the CSA. Moreover, due to cost-cutting measures, there were 11.5 fewer full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) in the FY 05-06 budget, than there were in the FY 04-05 budget.<sup>11</sup>

A recent two-year hiring freeze, instituted due to financial constraints, was lifted in 2005. Since then, however, new hires have just been replacing people who resigned or retired. Thirty-five new deputies were hired in 2006, of which 31 completed the required police academy training. However, during this period, the Department lost 27 officers due to retirement or other reasons. Therefore, in order to ensure that there are a sufficient number of deputies in the jails at all times, the Department must resort to overtime, either voluntary or mandatory. Mandatory overtime is instituted when there are an insufficient number of volunteers for a given shift.

There is an open job announcement for 8302 Deputy Sheriff 1, the entry-level deputy position. New hires attend an introductory seven-week Department orientation course, then a six-week jail training Officer program before they are ready to serve at the jails. Deputies also attend a 20-week California State certified course at the Police

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<sup>11</sup> Murray, Andrew: Legislative Analyst Memorandum, Re: Sheriff's Department April 21, 2005 Presentation to the Budget and Finance Committee, April 20, 2005

Academy during the first year of their employment. Upon graduation from the Academy, deputies are then fully accredited peace officers under California law.<sup>12</sup>

Understaffing, together with a high level of dependence upon mandatory overtime, is detrimental to the safety of both Departmental staff and prisoners in custody. According to an article in the *Contra Costa Times*, violence among prisoners in the Los Angeles County jails has nearly doubled in the past three years, largely due to a funding crisis and staffing shortages. L.A. County's inmate-to-deputy ratio is one of the highest in the country and, as a result, inmate-on-inmate assaults at one L.A. County facility rose from 351 in 2003 to 614 last year.<sup>13</sup>

Because the San Francisco Sheriff's Department proactively strives to keep such assaults at a minimum, the prisoner-on-prisoner assault rate is considerably less than in Los Angeles. Staff reported that the total number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in all seven San Francisco County jails was 247 in FY 2005. However, the trend of trimming the budget of the SFSD that began with the FY 03-04 and FY 04-05 budgets and continued in the FY 05-06 budget<sup>14</sup> is a major concern.

#### **D. Nutrition**

Civil Grand Jurors were served a prisoner lunch consisting of four slices of whole wheat bread, four slices of lunch meat, corn chips, an apple, ½ pint of milk, and condiments (mustard and mayonnaise). Prisoners interviewed said that the food served to the Grand Jurors was a standard prisoner lunch. The lunch served to prisoners who do not have special dietary requirements consists of either lunchmeat or peanut butter sandwiches. No lettuce or other sandwich fillings are offered.

Breakfasts and dinners are more varied and are served warm. Vegetables and dessert are served with the evening meal. The menus are fixed and do not allow for individual choices. All prisoners on a particular diet receive the same food on a given day. The Department submitted a sampling of menus that indicate prisoners are provided

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<sup>12</sup> California Penal Code §13510.1, Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) training program certification

<sup>13</sup> "Los Angeles jail riots underscore rising violence among prisoners," *Contra Costa Times*, February 6, 2005

<sup>14</sup> Murray, Andrew: Legislative Analyst Memorandum, Re: Sheriff's Department April 21, 2005 Presentation to the Budget and Finance Committee, April 20, 2005. The following is an excerpt from page 4 of the report:

The department's FY 05-06 proposed budget totals \$144.5M, a reduction of \$2.0M over its original FY 04-05 budget and \$1.3M less than its projected FY 04-05 year-end actual. Notably, the department is budgeting \$1.5M less for programs, \$856,787 less for facilities, and \$382,942 less for recruitment and training than it did in its original FY 04-05 budget. It is also budgeting for 11.5 fewer FTE in FY 05-06 than it did in FY 04-05.

Significant cuts (savings) that were implemented in FY 03-04 and FY 04-05 include:

- Closing three dormitories at County Jail No. 7 (\$1.5M);
- Eliminating porter services at County Jail No. 7 (\$280,000);
- Eliminating post-custody drug rehabilitation beds (\$1.7M);
- Eliminating Station Transfer Unit services (\$2.0M);
- Reducing hours and staffing at City Hall (\$200,000);
- Freezing hiring of new 8302 Deputy Sheriffs for last two fiscal years (\$1.5M per year); and
- Laying off 26 8300 cadets (\$700,000)

balanced 3000-calorie meals. The food, while somewhat monotonous, meets basic dietary needs.

In addition to the standard food offerings certain dietary needs are accommodated if requested by the prisoner or medical staff: Special menus include kosher/halal (offered to both Jews and Muslims), vegan, low salt, or diabetic. Many jurors said it is commendable that the Department both meets the nutritional needs of prisoners and provides special menus to meet dietary preferences or needs.

#### **E. Medical services**

Prisoners are given a medical screening and evaluation during their initial processing. They are provided with basic medical care and receive prescribed medications during "pill call." Medical, dental, mental health and social work services are provided upon request. Mental health services include crisis intervention and individual therapy.

#### **F. Inmate Welfare Fund**

Each county in the State of California is required by state law to maintain an Inmate Welfare Fund and the State Penal Code grants the Sheriff the authority to establish, maintain and operate a store in connection with the county jail. Profits from the commissary sales and pay phones used by prisoners must be deposited into the Inmate Welfare Fund, together with 10 percent of all sale proceeds from inmate hobby crafts.

Penal Code Section 4025 (e) states that all profits placed into the Inmate Welfare Fund shall be expended "primarily for the benefit, education and welfare of the inmates confined within the jail. Any funds that are not needed for the welfare of the inmates may be expended for the maintenance of county jail facilities. Maintenance of county jail facilities may include, but is not limited to, the salary and benefits of personnel used in the programs to benefit the inmates, including, but not limited to, education, drug and alcohol treatment, welfare, library, accounting, and other programs deemed appropriate by the Sheriff. An annual report of these expenditures shall be submitted annually to the Board of Supervisors."

The Civil Grand Jury reviewed the two most recent Inmate Welfare Fund reports to the Board of Supervisors. Total fund revenues in FY 2004 were \$1,316,861, of which \$91,617 (7 percent) was carried over to FY 2005. Expenditures totaled \$1,225,245. Approximately 60-65 percent of the expenditures were for pre-release prisoner programs and other direct benefits. The remaining 35-40 percent was spent on staff salaries, benefits and overhead.

In FY 2005, total revenues were \$1,210,613, of which \$333,903 (27 percent) was carried over to FY 2006. Expenditures totaled \$876,710. Approximately 50 percent of

the expenditures were used for pre-release prisoner programs and other direct prisoner benefits. The other 50 percent were spent on staff salaries, benefits and overhead.

The Civil Grand Jury's brief examination of the Inmate Welfare Fund revealed no problems or irregularities.

## **G. Pre-Release Rehabilitation Programs**

In a study of correctional programs released in January 2006, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that adult education programs, vocational programs and drug treatment programs for prisoners in jail reduce recidivism rates between 5 and 12 percent. The authors of the study noted that even relatively small reductions in recidivism rates can be quite cost-beneficial. For example, a 5 percent reduction in the reconviction rates of high-risk offenders can generate significant benefits for taxpayers and crime victims.<sup>15</sup>

Under the guidance of Sheriff Hennessey, several nontraditional programs for prisoners in the San Francisco jail system have been instituted, including acupuncture, high school classes, organic gardening therapy, yoga, and Tree Corps, a project that offers former prisoners employment planting and tending trees in and around the City.

- **Education**

Prisoners without a high school diploma may attend the on-site Charter High School operated by the San Francisco School District, which has established the curriculum and the eligibility criteria. Prisoners who participate in the program receive high school credits for each course satisfactorily completed.

The Five Keys Charter School continues to be a trendsetter in terms of providing high school classes to the incarcerated. Because a major barrier to completion of the coursework is the length of time a prisoner is incarcerated, after their release, students are encouraged to continue their classes at the school's campus at 70 Oak Grove, San Francisco. Departmental staff reported that approximately 35-40 former prisoners are currently enrolled there.

Although not directly funded by the City and County of San Francisco, the Northern California Service League, a not-for-profit agency, operates various pre- and post-release programs for prisoners and their families.<sup>16</sup> One of the League's programs is the San Francisco Jail Tutoring Project that was created in the fall of 2003 to assist prisoners in Jails #1, #2, and #8 in their preparation for the GED examination. The League staffs this program with volunteers and interns. The League recruits at UC Berkeley and has a recruiting agreement with the Associated Students of the University of California,

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<sup>15</sup> Washington State Institute for Public Policy, " Programs: What works and what does not," January 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Northern California Service League web page at <http://www.norcal-service-league.org/> (April 2006)

Berkeley (ASUC), which has recognized the San Francisco Jail Tutoring Project as a second-year funded Student-Initiated Service Group.<sup>17</sup> While this program has achieved results, its success is dependent on the recruitment of volunteers, who are frequently reluctant to work with people incarcerated in jail. Therefore, the League's services in the jails are intermittent. The program is limited to the San Francisco jail sites.

One interviewed prisoner in County Jail #7 said that he tried to enroll in the Charter High School classes but was unable to because he had a GED and asked jurors if they could help. This request was brought to the attention of Departmental management, who said they would look into it, although they noted it is the charter school that establishes the eligibility criteria. The request highlights the loss of adult education opportunities.

- **Vocational training**

Because of funding and other constraints, the only vocational programs currently being offered are culinary and arts programs. Vocational training in the jails had in the past also included the Garden Project/ horticulture, print shop, landscaping, arts instruction and job readiness.

- **Substance abuse recovery programs**

- "Roads to Recovery." This is a substance abuse program for men designed to develop strengths and acquire skills for a productive, positive lifestyle free from substance abuse. In addition to 12-step programs, the program offers anger management, family issues, life skills, academic classes, and community planning/recovery process groups. Because of funding limitations, there is a waiting list for this program. Before the 2003 budget cuts there were three dormitories in Jail #7 for men enrolled in this program.<sup>18</sup> Now, although demand is still high, there is only one.
- "Sisters in Sober Treatment Empowered in Recovery" (SISTER). In collaboration with Walden House, the SISTER project provides substance abuse treatment for women prisoners in Jail #8. The project also coordinates post-release services for women in recovery.

- **Violence prevention program**

"Resolve to Stop the Violence" (RSVP). This violence prevention program is designed to reduce recidivism and coordinate the re-entry of ex-offenders as productive members of their respective communities. It is a 16-hour-a-

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<sup>17</sup> The Associated Students of the University of California, Berkeley (ASUC), [www.asuc.org/documentation/](http://www.asuc.org/documentation/)

<sup>18</sup> Murray, Andrew: Legislative Analyst Memorandum, Re: Sheriff's Department April 21, 2005 Presentation to the Budget and Finance Committee, April 20, 2005, which included the "Closing of three dormitories at County Jail No. 7."

day program staffed by deputy sheriffs, community violence counselors, and staffs from organizations representing victims and survivors of violent crimes. There is a waiting list for this program.

- **Alternative program**

The “Sheriff’s Work Alternative Program” (SWAP). This is an alternative to general incarceration. Prisoners selected to participate in the program are assessed according to educational and substance abuse counseling needs and then assigned to a work detail. Participants receive a combination of counseling and classes during the last 60 days of their sentence.

## **H. Post-Release Programs**

According to staff interviewed, the recidivism rate among prisoners is a major problem. They estimate that more than 40 percent of the prisoners are repeat offenders. Yet, because of budgetary restraints, the Sheriff’s Department has only a limited number of post-release programs, some of which have been augmented by a small number of federal grants. Although prisoners in alternative programs or on parole are required to participate in certain of the post-release programs, Departmental staff said the Department has limited jurisdiction over prisoners who have completed their sentences. Thus, for this latter group, participation would, for the most part, be voluntary.

SFSD staff said that when the Department is given sufficient advance notice of a prisoner’s release the prisoner is provided with information about available post-release programs and services. RSVP, SISTER, the Garden Project, Project Rebound at San Francisco State University, the State of California Department of Rehabilitation, Friends Outside, the Delancey Street Foundation, Asian Neighborhood Design, the Central City Hospitality House and the Northern California Service League are among the agencies that provide services to former jail prisoners.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy study of corrections programs found that post-release cognitive behavioral treatment programs can be expected to reduce recidivism rates by 8.2 percent.<sup>19</sup> Sheriff’s Department management indicated that an effective coordinated post-release program could be run with a full-time staff of three to five people, at the cost about \$300,000 in salaries and benefits per year.

Staff estimated that each prisoner costs the county about \$100 per day and the average prisoner stays in jail about four months. Thus, the cost to San Francisco taxpayers averages about \$12,000 per year for each person incarcerated. According to the Sheriff’s website, approximately 55,000 people are booked into the jails each year.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Washington State Institute for Public Policy, “ Programs: What works and what does not,” January 2006.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.sfsheriff.com/jails.htm> (May 2006)

If the recidivism rate were reduced by a small amount -- only 0.5 percent-- the net savings could amount to as much as \$3 million. Even a one-tenth of 1 percent reduction in recidivism (only 55 persons) would result in a significant net savings to the taxpayers of about \$660,000. Every additional person who is helped by a program to stay out of jail would save the city an additional \$12,000. There would be related savings in reduced police, medical, and court costs.

The indirect savings to the taxpayers from this program would be even greater. Fewer people would be victims of crime. Families of both the ex-offenders and their potential victims would be immeasurably better off. Productive ex-offenders who stay in the city could become employed taxpayers.

## IV. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Facilities

#### *Finding:*

- 1.1 At the time of the on-site visit, the women's sections of the jails in the Hall of Justice were unacceptably crowded. However, the Department is currently planning to rectify this situation by moving most of the women to Jail #8 at 425 7<sup>th</sup> Street.

#### *Recommendation:*

- 1.1 **Ensure that funds for the transfer of women from Jails #1 and #2 are included in the 2006-2007 budget in order that the planned move can be expeditiously carried out.**

<b>Required Responses:</b>
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Mayor's Office – 60 days SFSD – 60 days
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***Finding:***

1.2a There is a pressing need to rectify the ventilation problems in Jails #1 and #2 in the Hall of Justice. Problems with air quality in the Hall of Justice jails have been in existence for at least five years, if not longer. The 1999-2000 Civil Grand Jury made the following finding:

County Jails #1 and #2 located at the Hall of Justice have noticeable problems with ventilation and air flow, which cause great discomfort to staff and inmates, especially in hot weather.

1.2b The 1999-2000 Civil Grand Jury recommended that the “Sheriff’s Department should look into short-term and long-term solutions to improve the ventilation in these facilities.” However, during the on-site visit in 2005, Civil Grand Jurors found similar ventilation and air quality problems; thus, whatever solutions were devised as a response to the 1999-2000 CGJ findings, if any, have not rectified the problem.

1.2c In recent years, funds were budgeted for the replacement of the Hall of Justice cooling system. This project was to be done in four phases and three phases have been completed. The final phase, replacement of the cooling system for Jails #1 and #2, although included in the 2005-2006, has not been completed.

1.2d Various interviewees indicated that the reason the cooling system for the Jails #1 and #2 has not been replaced is because the City is going to construct a new Hall of Justice. Although a replacement for the Hall of Justice is in the planning stage, it will be at least 10-15 years before a new facility is completed and ready for occupancy.

***Recommendation:***

**1.2 The cooling system replacement for Jails #1 and #2 in the Hall of Justice should not be delayed any longer. The cooling system should be replaced prior to the end of 2006.**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Required Responses:</b></p> <p>Mayor’s Office – 60 days DPW – 60 days SFSD – 60 days</p>
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***Finding:***

- 1.3 The physical environment of Jails #1 and #2 in the Hall of Justice has not been updated to conform to newer jail design aesthetics. Drab unadorned walls and noisy acoustics contribute to the unpleasant atmosphere for both prisoners and staff.

***Recommendations:***

- 1.3 Evaluate the physical environment of Jails #1 and #2 in the Hall of Justice and, if practical, apply some of the environmental design concepts incorporated into the new San Bruno Jail, including a variety of colors, noise reduction techniques, and art. We urge the City to include funds for these recommended design improvements to the existing Jails #1 and #2 in the 2006-07 budget.**

- **Acoustics. With the help of an acoustical expert, develop a design for reducing the noise level with the objective of producing a quieter and therefore more calming environment in Jails #1 and #2.**  
Investigate introducing sound-deadening textures or devices on walls and ceilings to help reduce the noise level.
- **Colors. When repainting or replacing items, utilize colors from the overall color master plan of the new San Bruno Jail to replace the beige/gray blandness in Jails #1 and #2.**
- **Art: Consider enhancing the prison environment by displaying prisoners' art on some of the walls.**

**Required Responses:**

Mayor's Office – 60 days  
DPW – 60 days  
SFSD – 60 days

**Staffing**

***Finding:***

- 2.1 Unfilled SFSD staff positions adversely affect the running of San Francisco jails.
- 2.2 Although Departmental representatives state the Sheriff's Department recruits at job fairs and at the Department's internet site, the Department does not have a comprehensive recruitment plan. A recruitment plan is a marketing plan for open

positions. Such a plan will coordinate recruitment efforts and maximize the utilization of time and resources spent on recruitment.

- 2.3 A Google search in early June for “sheriff recruitment” and “sheriff job openings” did not result in any links to the San Francisco Sheriff’s Department recruitment website, although there were links to the sheriff’s departments of many other California counties.

***Recommendation***

- 2.1 **The continued recruitment and hiring of new deputies should be given top priority. The Department should develop a coordinated recruitment outreach plan so that information about the current deputy recruitment program is disseminated widely to community groups, peace officer associations, and web sites.**

For example, the Department could list Deputy Sheriff positions on Internet sites such as:

- Women Peace Officers Association of California at [http://www.wpoaca.com/Job%20Flyers/Cal/cal\\_jobs.html](http://www.wpoaca.com/Job%20Flyers/Cal/cal_jobs.html),
- Police Officers Research Association of California at <http://www.porac.org/employment.html>,
- Golden State Police Officers Association at <http://www.gspoa.com> [Note: The SF Police Department has jobs advertised on this site.],
- Other Internet job sites such as [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com), [www.usajobs.com](http://www.usajobs.com), <http://www.deputy.sheriff.jobs.com>

- 2.2 **The SFSD should consult with the Department of Telecommunications and Information Services (DTIS) to determine how to maximize the effectiveness of the SFSD website and how to ensure that the Department’s recruitment efforts get maximum exposure on Google and other search engine web sites.**

<p><b>Required Responses:</b> Mayor’s Office – 60 days SFSD – 60 days</p>
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## Post-release programs

### *Finding:*

- 3.1 Post-release programs can contribute to reducing the recidivism rate. Programs exist in San Francisco, but the funds and organization to help released prisoners find and connect to them do not exist.

### *Recommendation:*

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Office of the Mayor provide leadership by issuing a statement supporting an integrated, multi-agency approach to programs for prisoners released from custody.** This global approach could stretch limited funding by coordinating existing governmental resources with community agencies mentioned in the discussion section of the report, as well as such additional agencies as Walden House, the Northern California Service League and established drug rehabilitation programs.

**It is also recommended that the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor follow up the above statement by funding a pilot project to reduce recidivism.** Such a program, funded at \$300,000 a year for five years, could consist of a few staff either within or in close connection with the SFSD. The program would coordinate SFSD members or others who would counsel prisoners about available services prior to release and coordinate access to those services post-release. The object would be to encourage and facilitate released prisoners to avail themselves of those existing opportunities.

After four years of operation, the City would be in a position to evaluate such a program. If it is found that recidivism has been reduced by even one per cent, enough money will have been saved to cover the cost of the program and the program should be continued. If the program reduces recidivism by a larger percentage, it would be a net savings to the City. If it fails to reduce recidivism, the City should consider what other means to reduce recidivism might be appropriate.

<b>Required Responses:</b>
Mayor's Office – 60 days
SFSD – 60 days
Board of Supervisors – 60 days

## **GLOSSARY**

CSA	Corrections Standards Authority (CSA), formerly named the California Board of Corrections (BOC).
DCR	Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR). The state of California agency that regulates jails and prisons throughout the state.
Prisoner:	Although the public commonly refers to incarcerated individuals as “inmates,” representatives of the Sheriff’s Department informed jurors that the correct term to use when referring to individuals incarcerated in a San Francisco county jail facility is “prisoner.” Therefore, the term prisoner is used throughout this report.
POST	Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certification. The training standard for correctional officers established by the DCR.
SFSD	San Francisco Sheriff’s Department.

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