

# **2024-2025 CONTINUITY REPORT**

The Continuity Report provides a summary and status of open recommendations from the 2023-2024 San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury as well as one open item from 2022-2023.

## **INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE**

The San Luis Obispo County Civil Grand Jury (SLOCGJ) is charged with oversight of local government functions on behalf of its citizens. Its mission is to examine all aspects of local government, ensuring that the county is being governed honestly and efficiently and that county monies are being handled judiciously. Its purpose is to shed light on issues within the county. While civil grand jury recommendations do not carry the force of law, their effectiveness depends on the willingness of responding agencies to address them and present their responses to the public transparently.

The Continuity Report reviews and presents the requested agency responses to the previously published Grand Jury reports and focuses on non-compliant responses or uncompleted implementation of prior recommendations in accordance with established timelines and other requirements. This is an informational report which includes agency responses to the findings and recommendations made by prior SLOCGJs.

## **AUTHORITY**

California Penal Code section 933.05 prescribes responses to Grand Jury findings and recommendations. Responding agencies are directed to report whether they agree or disagree (either partially or wholly) with a finding and whether a recommendation has been implemented, will be implemented, will not be implemented, or requires further analysis. An agency may reject a Grand Jury recommendation provided they include an explanation of why the recommendation is either unwarranted or unreasonable. If a recommendation requires further analysis, it must be conducted within six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.

All Grand Jury reports and each agency's responses are posted online each year at <https://www.slo.courts.ca.gov/gi/jury-grandjury.htm>

## **NARRATIVE**

The 2023-2024 SLOCGJ Jury conducted and completed three investigative reports, which required responses from relevant agencies, as well as an inspection report on county law enforcement and detention facilities. These reports are as follows:

*Report 1: Moving San Luis Obispo County from Homelessness to Hopefulness*

*Report 2: Growing Pains: The Cannabis Industry in San Luis Obispo County*

*Report 3: Annexation: A Taxing Dilemma*

*Report 4: Inspection Report for SLO County Law Enforcement and Detention Facilities*

Additionally, the SLOCGJ reviewed one report with open recommendations from the 2022-23 SLOCGJ: *Can One Wet Year Wash Away the Paso Robles Basin's Water Worries.*

The review process presented notable challenges, as the provided responses to two of the reports were deemed by the SLOCGJ as inadequate or incomplete. These insufficient replies necessitated additional inquiries and follow-up to ensure that prior SLOCGJs' concerns and recommendations were adequately addressed.

The remaining reports, as detailed in the Appendix, were met with timely and appropriate responses to the recommendations. The SLOCGJ commend these agencies for responding by the requested deadlines and for providing clear, thoughtful and insightful replies.

The 2024-2025 SLOCGJ reviewed all responses from the agencies noted in these reports to prepare this follow-up continuity report.

## UNSATISFACTORY REPORT RESPONSES:

### 2023-24 Report: *Moving San Luis Obispo County from Homelessness to Hopefulness:*

<i>Recommendation R1</i>	<i>Board Of Supervisors Response</i>
R1. The San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury recommends that the County revise its plan to include more specific and quantifiable timelines for implementing the “San Luis Obispo Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness 2022-2027” by December 31, 2024.	Recommendation R1 will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable. The current Countywide Plan already incorporates detailed timelines and measurable goals for each initiative outlined. The timelines are designed to track progress and ensure that milestones are achieved within specified timeframes. Additionally, the plan includes performance metrics to evaluate our success in reducing homelessness, increasing housing units and improving community engagement.

#### **SLOCGJ Recommendation 1 (R1) Inquiry Update**

The SLOCGJ would like to acknowledge the County's efforts in addressing homelessness through the "San Luis Obispo Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness 2022-2027" (Countywide Plan). However, the SLOCGJ finds the County's response to its 2023-24 recommendation R1 for more specific and quantifiable timelines disappointing, deeming it “not warranted or reasonable”. It is the SLOCGJ's opinion that the County failed to provide an adequate response as to “why” the recommendation would not be implemented.

The SLOCGJ’s recommendation R1 resulted from a major challenge in assessing the County's progress due to insufficient details which made it difficult to determine whether they were on schedule or if there were deficiencies in execution as noted in last years SLOCGJ Homelessness report.

In response to the SLOCGJ's request for a more detailed explanation as to why the County would not implement the recommendation, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) failed to provide a response.

## **Grand Jury's Comment to County's Response for Additional Information**

While the County characterizes its current approach as already incorporating detailed goals and timelines, the SLOCGJ position remains that the Countywide Plan's lack of clearly defined actions, time-phased milestones, and detailed responsibilities undermines the ability to track progress effectively and hold stakeholders accountable. Without these essential elements, it is impossible to determine if the plan is on track or to address potential challenges in a timely and proactive manner.

Specific areas of Concern:

- **Lack of Defined Actions and Milestones:** The absence of time-phased goals with clear requirements makes it difficult to determine if the County is meeting its commitments, relying instead on a broad 5-year timeline.
- **Insufficient Accountability:** The plan does not specify what needs to be done, by whom, or when, which hinders accountability among stakeholders and limits Citizens' Homeless Accountability Commission's (CHAC's) ability to report meaningful progress.
- **Delayed Issue Identification:** Detailed actions and timelines would enable early detection of potential issues, facilitating proactive solutions. Flexible frameworks are no substitute for well-defined timelines that ensure projects stay on track despite changing circumstances.

On May 21, 2024, the County presented a status report on the Countywide Plan to the BOS. The SLOCGJ commends the County and its partnering non-profits for their progress. However, the presentation did not clarify whether the plan remains on schedule and noted that some initiatives face risks due to funding concerns.

During the status report, the BOS directed the County to provide a full status update on the Countywide Plan every two years, with brief updates in alternating years. This schedule allows for only one more comprehensive report in 2026 before the plan concludes in 2027. The SLOCGJ

believes that limited reporting, coupled with the absence of detailed actions and milestones, weakens oversight and transparency. Additionally, it fails to inform the public about potential delays or obstacles—such as reduced funding, inflationary pressures, community concerns, or logistical challenges—that could hinder the plan’s progress or completion.

**2023-24 Report: Moving San Luis Obispo County from Homelessness to Hopefulness:**

<i>Recommendation R3</i>	<i>Board Of Supervisors Response</i>
<p>R3. The San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury recommends that the County aggressively implement its plan for a comprehensive public awareness campaign to advise the community on homelessness issues. It is further recommended that the County and Cities work together to provide a cohesive voice. The San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury recommends completion by December 31, 2024.</p>	<p>Recommendation R3 will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable. The County through Line of Effort #6 of the San Luis Obispo Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness has actively pursued public engagement. This includes extensive community outreach, engagement through social media platforms, partnerships with local entities and participation in community forums and workshops. The County’s current efforts adequately address the need for a comprehensive public awareness campaign with existing resources and strategic frameworks.</p>

**SLOCGJ Recommendation 3 (R3) Inquiry Update:**

The 2023-2024 SLOCGJ’s recommendation (R3) was a result of the “The San Luis Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness 2022-2027” (Countywide Plan), Line of effort #6 which was to actively pursue public engagement through community outreach, engagement through social media platforms, partnerships with local entities and participation in community forums and workshops. It also called for the County and Cities to work together to provide a cohesive voice. The SLOCGJ recommended that the County aggressively implement its plan for a comprehensive public awareness campaign, which was noted during its investigation as being delayed due to staff turnover.

The BOS responded to this recommendation stating that it was “not warranted or reasonable”. The SLOCGJ found that the BOS failed to provide an adequate response as to “why” the recommendation would not be implemented as they simply restated the SLOCGJ’s

recommendation. As a result, the SLOCGJ requested a more detailed explanation from the County as to why the recommendation would not be implemented, and if it was their position that they are now on schedule with its plans, or rather that they will not be implementing the outlined objectives in their Countywide plan, in part or entirely.

**County’s Response to Request for Additional Information:**

In response to the SLOCGJ's request for a more detailed explanation as to why the County would not implement the recommendation, the BOS failed to provide a response.

**Grand Jury’s Comment to County’s Response for Additional Information:**

It remains unclear how the SLOCGJ recommendation was deemed unwarranted or unreasonable when the recommendation was to simply implement their own stated goal, which was noted as being behind schedule by county staff.

**2023-24 Report: Annexation: A Taxing Dilemma**

<i>Recommendation R1</i>	<i>Board Of Supervisors Response</i>
R1. The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors of San Luis Obispo County complete an updated Master Tax Exchange Agreement with the Cities by December 1, 2024.	The Recommendation R1 has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. Due to staffing resources shortages this effort was paused in the fall of 2023 but County plans to finalize this project in 2024.

**SLOCGJ Recommendation 1 (R1) Inquiry Update:**

The 2023-24 SLOCGJ report included recommendation R1 that the “Board of Supervisors (BOS) of San Luis Obispo County complete an updated Master Tax Exchange Agreement (MTEA) with the Cities by December 1, 2024”. The County responded by advising that the recommendation would be implemented, stating “Due to the staffing resource shortages this effort was paused in the fall of 2023 but was County planned to finalize this project in 2024.”

In December 2024, the SLOCGJ made an inquiry as to the status of this project. On January 8, 2025, SLOCGJ learned that the BOS had still not adopted a new agreement. When SLOCGJ followed up with one city related to recommendation R1, SLOCGJ learned negotiations have not commenced. In response to the SLOCGJ's request for a revised implementation date, the BOS failed to provide a response.

**SLOCGJ’s Comments Related to Recommendation R1:**

Although the BOS initially stated it planned to finalize the project in 2024, it failed to meet that deadline. The absence of a follow-up response from the BOS raises concerns that unresolved issues may be contributing to ongoing delays in reaching an agreement on the updated version. Updating the MTEA is a complex task requiring economic modeling by an outside consultant, negotiations with at least four incorporated cities, documenting changes to the agreement, and approvals by the individual city councils and ultimately the BOS.

The MTEA adopted by the BOS twenty-nine (29) years ago, on April 24, 1996, was to be re-examined every 5 years to assure that the policies remain appropriate and current for all parties. The County and the cities contracted with a consulting firm in 2019 to perform a financial analysis to inform a revised tax agreement. Six years later, after spending a significant amount of tax dollars, it has not been completed and is long overdue.

**FINDINGS**

- F1. The BOS failed to provide a response to the SLOCGJ’s follow-up inquiry to the San Luis Obispo Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness 2022-2027 recommendations R1 and R3, seeking further information as to why more specific and quantifiable timelines would not be provided. The BOS response that existing goals effectively address the concern is inadequate. The SLOCGJ recommendation clearly indicates a belief that the current framework will not allow the County or its citizens to evaluate progress.

F2. The BOS failed to meet its stated completion date of December 2024 for the recommended action R1 in the 2023-2024 SLOGJ Report: “Annexation: A Taxing Dilemma”, to update the Master Tax Exchange Agreement.

F3. Despite seeking additional clarification on when the updated Master Tax Exchange Agreement would be completed, County Staff was unable to provide SLOGJ with any specific timeframe.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

R1. The SLOGJ recommends that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) respond to the request from the SLOGJ dated November 12, 2024. They should provide a clear explanation as to why recommendations R1 and R3, outlined in the San Luis Obispo Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness for 2022-2027, will not be implemented.

R2. The SLOGJ recommends that the BOS provide the required update as to the status and anticipated completion date of a revised Master Tax Exchange Agreement.

### **REQUIRED RESPONSES**

The San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors is required to respond to Recommendations R1 and R2. All responses shall be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Luis Obispo County Superior Court within 90 days of submission of the report. A paper and electronic version of all responses shall be provided to the Grand Jury.

#### **933.05. Findings and Recommendations**

- (a) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury finding, the responding person or entity 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, therefore.

- (b) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:
- (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, therefore.

Presiding Judge	Grand Jury
Presiding Judge Rita Federman Superior Court of California 1035 Palm Street Room 355 San Luis Obispo, CA 93408	San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury P.O. Box 4910 San Luis Obispo, CA 93403

## APPENDIX

SATISFACTORY REPORT RESPONSES		
Report Title	Recommendations	Summarized Agency Response
Growing Pains: The Cannabis Industry in San Luis Obispo County	R1. The Board of Supervisors should conduct a review of staffing levels in the SOCCU relative to the number of licensed businesses and new applicants by December 31, 2024.	Recommendations numbered R1, R2 will not be implemented because they are not warranted or reasonable. The county maintains that the process it is using to determine fees, budget, and staffing are appropriate as presently performed by the county.
	R2. The Board of Supervisors should conduct an analysis of the current fee structure with the goal of becoming more competitive with neighboring jurisdictions by December 31, 2024.	
	R3. The Sheriff's Office should conduct an analysis of its background-check process to identify areas where cost savings could be realized to reduce the background-check fee and be in alignment with other counties by December 31, 2024.	Recommendation R3 was advised as requiring a further analysis. The Sheriffs Department followed up, noting that the review was completed by the Sheriffs Office Team, submitted to the County Administrative Office, and was included as part of the Fee Schedule B Changes submitted to the Board of Supervisors by the County Office Administrative Office and presented on November 12, 2024, during the Fee Hearing for Calendar year 2025 and Fiscal Year 2025-26.
Moving San Luis Obispo from Homelessness to Hopefulness	R2. The San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury recommends that the County implement effective knowledge transfer management and succession planning practices to minimize the impact of staff turnover on completing the required tasks to ensure performance to the "San Luis Obispo Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness 2022-2027" by December 31, 2024.	Recommendation R2 will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable. The County already has an existing framework and resources in place to manage knowledge transfer within the operational departments, which they maintain is sufficient.
Law Enforcement and Detention Facilities 2023-2024	R1 The San Luis Obispo County Sheriff should continue to work with the Homeless Services Division regarding closing the Oklahoma Safe Parking site in 2024.	Recommendation R1 has been implemented. The Oklahoma Safe Parking site was officially closed May 6, 2024.
	R2 The San Luis Obispo County Sheriff should complete property room climate control enhancements in 2024.	Recommendation R2 has not yet, but will be implemented. A follow up from the Sherrif's Office noted that the budget has been approved and the project will start in early March 2025.
	R3 The San Luis Obispo County Sheriff should develop a plan by January 1, 2025, to deal with evidence storage reaching maximum capacity levels.	Recommendation R3 has not yet, but will be implemented. A follow up from the Sheriff's Office noted that they are currently in negotiations to finalize and then implement the plan to expand the storage capacity.
	R4 The San Luis Obispo County Behavioral Health Department should forward all performance and assessment reports (outlined in the operating agreement) regarding Psychiatric Health Facilities management by Crestwood Behavioral Health to the 2024-25 San Luis Obispo Grand Jury by Nov 1, 2024	Recommendation R4 was noted and not yet complete, but will be implemented. On January 21, 2025 the San Luis Obispo County Behavioral Health Department forwarded the required performance and assessment reports as outlined in the operating agreement. This recommendation has been completed.
Can One Wet Year Wash Away the Paso Robles Basin's Water Worries?	R3. Implementation of the proposed MILR Program, to establish voluntary land fallowing, needs to be initiated by the 2025 GSP update. If voluntary measures are ineffective, the PBCC will need to implement a mandatory program.	Recommendations R3 and R9 were noted that they would be implemented prior to the January 25, 2025 deadline. The Paso Basin Groundwater Sustainability 5 Year Evaluation was submitted to the California Department of Water Resources in late January 2025. This recommendation has been completed.
	R9. For the 2025 GSP annual update, the Cooperative Committee should update the GSP timeline to show a realistic and deliverable set of management actions.	