

This document is an extract of a larger publication.

civilgrandjury.org is a project of UnGovr.org, a US-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to government transparency and public accountability.





**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**  
Civil Grand Jury

701 Ocean Street, Room 318-I  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2099  
grandjury@scgrandjury.org

## **Envisioning the Future of our Jails**

### *We Continue to “Kick The Can”*

---

#### **Summary**

Every year, the Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury examines detention facilities within the County, including the Main Jail, the Blaine Street Women’s Jail, the Rountree Men’s Medium Security Facility, and Juvenile Hall. During the tours, which uncovered little information not reported by previous Grand Juries, it learned about the ongoing crisis in Correctional Officer staffing that has caused some detention facilities to be closed. While touring the aging, dismal Main Jail, the Grand Jury also learned about the need for a new jail. This became the subject of our report.

The Grand Jury recommends increasing funding for the Sheriff’s Office to combat the longstanding and serious staffing issue. It recommends increased funding for anti-recidivism programs run by the Public Defender’s Office, Behavioral Health and others to reduce the distressingly high number of inmates who commit further crimes and end up right back in jail. An approximately \$200 million new Main Jail should be considered only after anti recidivism programs have been funded adequately and for a sufficient period to evaluate the needs of a much reduced inmate population.

## Table of Contents

|                                                     |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Background</b>                                   | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Scope and Methodology</b>                        | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Investigation</b>                                | <b>5</b>  |
| Touring the Jails                                   | 5         |
| Life in Jail for Staff and Inmates                  | 5         |
| Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder of Inmates | 8         |
| Keeping People out of Jail                          | 8         |
| Combating Recidivism                                | 10        |
| The Case for a New Jail                             | 11        |
| Crime Rates in Santa Cruz County                    | 11        |
| Alternatives to a New Jail                          | 12        |
| <b>Conclusion</b>                                   | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Findings</b>                                     | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Recommendations</b>                              | <b>14</b> |
| <b>Commendations</b>                                | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Required Responses</b>                           | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Invited Responses</b>                            | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Definitions</b>                                  | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Sources</b>                                      | <b>16</b> |
| References                                          | 16        |
| Site Visits                                         | 21        |

---

## Background

Each year in accordance with California Penal Code Section 919(b), the Grand Jury examines the housing and general living conditions of the incarcerated population within our jails. Santa Cruz County has four jails; the maximum security adult Main Jail in Santa Cruz, the adult men’s medium security Rountree jail in Watsonville, the Blaine Street women’s minimum security jail next to the Main Jail, and Juvenile Hall in Felton.

The Main Jail, located at 259 Water Street in Santa Cruz, was constructed in 1981 to house 92 inmates. It was expanded in 1986 and again in 1999, bringing the total capacity to 319 inmates. It currently houses some women because the women’s jail is closed, and the requirement to keep women separated reduces the capacity slightly.

Rountree Detention Facility, located at 90 Rountree Lane, Watsonville, includes two medium security units and the minimum security Rehabilitation and Re-entry Facility. The Rountree medium security units have a capacity of 48 each, totalling 96. One of these units is currently closed due to lack of staffing. The R&R facility has a capacity of 64.

Blaine Street Women’s Facility, located at 141 Blaine Street, Santa Cruz, has a capacity of 32. It is currently closed due to lack of staffing, however, the expected reopening date will be mid May 2023.

Juvenile Hall, located at 2650 Graham Hill Road, Felton, was built in 1968 and can house up to 42 juveniles.

Table 1 shows the average population of each adult facility for the period March 2022 until February 2023.

**Table 1. Santa Cruz County Jails Average Occupancy  
March 2022 – February 2023**

| <b>Facility</b>            | <b>Capacity</b> | <b>Occupancy</b> | <b>Percent Occupied</b> |
|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Main Jail                  | 319             | 281              | 88%                     |
| Rountree                   | 96              | 27               | 28%                     |
| Reentry and Rehabilitation | 64              | 47               | 73%                     |
| Blaine Street              | 32              | 0                | 0%                      |

Source: Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office February 2023 Monthly Statistics.<sup>[1]</sup>

When the Grand Jury toured Juvenile Hall, the population was 13 boys and one girl, 33 percent of capacity. (There is not an average for the previous year.)

## Scope and Methodology

The Grand Jury toured and assessed the Main Jail, Rountree facility, and Juvenile Hall. As described later in this report, the jury’s inspections of the jail facilities did not result in new information beyond that included in the 2015-16 and 2018-19 Grand Jury jail inspections.<sup>[2] [3]</sup> During the tours, the Jury asked about the chronic and significant

staffing shortage among Correctional Officers, the main subject of this investigation proposal. The Jury was also told about the need for a new jail to replace the aging and obsolete Main Jail.

The Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury interviewed members of the Sheriff's Office, the Public Defender's Office, County Government, the jail's medical contractor, and private citizens having knowledge germane to the investigation. It reviewed numerous law enforcement, criminal justice and mental health websites, published articles on criminal justice and mental health, and local newspaper reports.

The Sheriff's Office was prompt and helpful with the many document and information requests, including but not limited to, county reports, research studies, interviews, annual reports, operations manual & public articles. In addition, the Jury reviewed the several reports of prior grand juries dealing with the jails in Santa Cruz County.

There is some overlap between this investigation and the investigation into Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health. Thus information gathered for this investigation has been shared with the Behavioral Health investigation, and vice versa.



**Figure 1.** The Main Jail (photo credit East Bay Times)

## Investigation

### *Touring the Jails*

The 2022-23 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury toured the Main Jail, the Rehabilitation and Reentry Facility at Rountree and Juvenile Hall in October and November 2022. Staff were helpful and forthcoming at each of the facilities. Some jurors were able to tour the women's facility, which is closed. The Jury found the adult jails to be as described in the 2015-16 and 2018-19 reports, but with a few more years of normal wear and tear.<sup>[2]</sup><sup>[4]</sup>

The Jury was impressed with Juvenile Hall. If kids need to be detained, this was a good place for the 13 boys and 1 girl to be. The building is old and in need of upgrade,<sup>[5]</sup> but staff have done what they can to make the environment friendly and appealing. The Jury learned about the school that provides high school classes up to graduation. The day some jurors attended, they observed "Unchained", a program that brings dogs in need of training to Juvenile Hall, where students are paired with a dog to promote a positive learning experience while working with their dog on the socialization skills they need before adoption. The Jury found this inspiring and effective for both kids and dogs.

### *Life in Jail for Staff and Inmates*

Being in jail is an entirely different experience depending on which jail, and which part of the jail the inmate is in. Some of the Grand Jury toured the Main Jail and the Rehabilitation and Re-entry facility at Rountree on the same day, making the huge contrast between the facilities even more striking. While the Main Jail is crowded, foreboding, and with little to distract the inmates from the boredom of incarceration, the Rehabilitation and Re-entry facility is spacious, light and with much programming which both serves to engage the inmates and to provide necessary skills for life on the outside. During the tours, the Jury was informed that Rountree/R&R provides food service and laundry for the Main Jail. Some staffing for these functions is provided by inmates, allowing them to gain useful work experience, as well as save the jail a little money.

Both jails suffer from a significant staffing shortage, described in the 2018-19 Grand Jury Jail inspection report<sup>[3]</sup> and again in the 2020-21 "Justice in the Jail" Investigation.<sup>[6]</sup> Both reports describe mandatory overtime, especially for newly-hired Correctional Officers. Mandatory overtime is often coupled with long commutes to where housing prices are slightly less unaffordable than Santa Cruz County. Being a Correctional Officer is stressful; mandatory overtime and a long commute make this much worse. Abuse of sick leave and other negative behavior has been reported, suggesting that there is dissatisfaction among the Correctional Officers. Turnover is high for new COs; some become Deputies, some go to another agency.<sup>[7]</sup> The Corrections Policy Manual<sup>[8]</sup> describes in detail how COs should treat inmates, and how their safety and welfare should be protected. But expecting an overworked CO to always follow policy is a recipe for failure.<sup>[9]</sup> The Sheriff's Office appears to be doing what they can to make the Correctional Officers' work experience more positive; among other improvements, their locker room is being fixed.<sup>[10]</sup>



The Main Jail is used to house inmates deemed a high security risk. Most are pretrial, even though they may have been incarcerated at the Main Jail many years.<sup>[11]</sup> The Grand Jury is concerned about the civil rights of those detained long-term without being convicted, but that question is beyond the scope of this investigation. However, living in this unending limbo must have a negative effect on the inmates. Those who have never been incarcerated cannot imagine what life is like behind bars, especially the dungeon-like Main Jail. Inmates may be locked in their cells for 23 hours a day and let out for an hour of exercise in a small area open to the sky, but still without a view of any green plant. The exercise hour might be in the middle of the night!<sup>[12]</sup> Exorbitant cost of the commissary and phone calls are also a common inmate complaint.<sup>[13][14]</sup>



**Figure 2.** Rountree Rehabilitation and Re-entry Facility (photo credit Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Correctional Officer Association)

Rountree is where lower level offenders are housed. Rountree includes two medium security units and the minimum security Rehabilitation and Re-entry facility. Unlike the Main Jail, Rountree is spacious, with outdoor exercise areas including basketball and handball. The Grand Jury watched inmates weeding their home-grown vegetable plots.



**Figure 3.** “Paths out of Jail” Class at Rehabilitation and Reentry facility (photo credit Santa Cruz Sentinel)

Inmates have access to a large variety of programming including educational, motivational and life skills classes described in the 2019-19 inspection report.<sup>[3]</sup> These are both aimed at keeping the inmates occupied and at providing necessary skills for life after incarceration. The Grand Jury understood that not all programming has been resumed post-Covid.<sup>[15]</sup> Inmates initially housed at the Main Jail may be transferred to Rountree once they have demonstrated sustained appropriate behavior.<sup>[16]</sup>

In recent years, there have been a number of lawsuits against the Main Jail when inmates suffered injuries or worse.<sup>[17][18]</sup> Some of these lawsuits have resulted in settlements in the millions of dollars, which our County pays. Additionally, there have been sexual assaults, violence, drugs, and serious equipment failures, all described in the 2020-21 investigation.<sup>[19]</sup> That report also shows in Appendix B that while Santa Cruz County has the eighth lowest death rate in California, the total number of incidents described in the report suggests that all is not well at the jail.



## ***Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder of Inmates***

The Santa Cruz Main Jail has been described as the largest mental health holding facility in the County.<sup>[20] [21] [22] [23] [24]</sup> Approximately 40 percent of jail inmates have been diagnosed with mental illness.<sup>[25]</sup> Sixty-five percent have an active Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and an additional 20 percent were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the crime. Clearly, some inmates have both mental illness and SUD. Treatment for mental illness or SUD for incarcerated people is limited, most inmates do not get the care that is available for insured people on the outside, although treatment in jail may be the first and only treatment they receive. The National Alliance on Mental Illness estimates that between 25-40 percent of all mentally ill Americans will be jailed or incarcerated at some point in their lives. By contrast, about 6.6 percent of the general population will experience this. Rates of recidivism are between 50% and 230% higher for persons with mental health disorders regardless of diagnosis. Prison conditions such as crowded living quarters, lack of privacy, increased risk of victimization, and exposure to punitive segregation are strongly correlated with emerging and worsening psychiatric symptoms.<sup>[26] [27] [28]</sup>

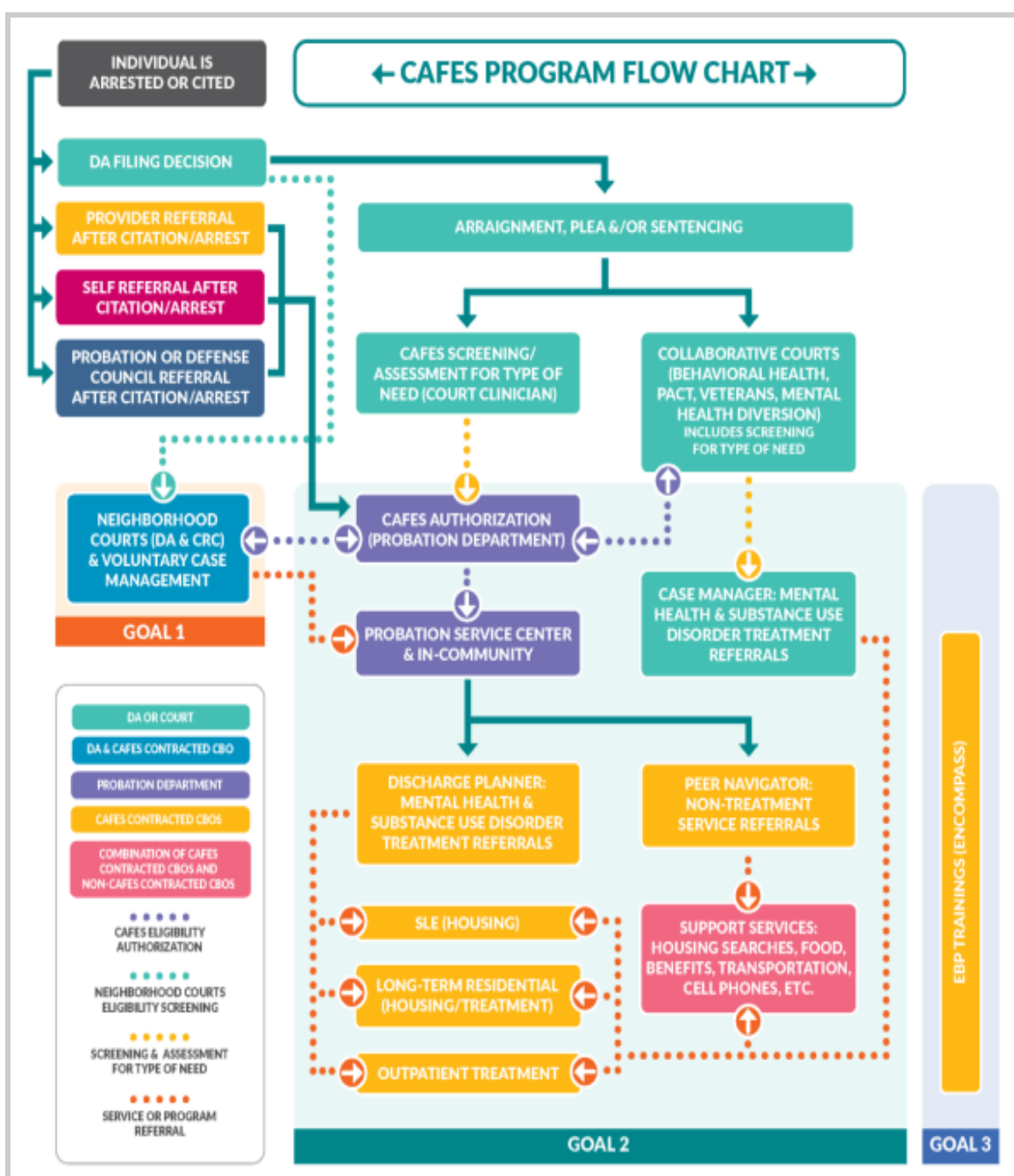
Treatment for inmates suffering from mental illness or SUD can be effective, but must be followed by significant continuing care after release. Without adequate follow up, a released inmate will find it easier and cheaper to score street drugs rather than follow the laborious process to get medical insurance coverage for methadone, or whatever medication assisted treatment they were on.

## ***Keeping People out of Jail***

Santa Cruz law enforcement has made several very successful efforts to keep low level offenders out of jail. The Pretrial Division of the Probation Office uses evidence-based tools to determine which defendants are at low risk of failing to appear for court dates, or committing another crime, and who may be released until trial. Moderate risk individuals may be allowed more supervised release. Higher risk individuals may be fitted with electronic monitoring and/or be subject to home detention. Only those for whom a significant public safety concern exists are detained. Since 2015, the population of pretrial released individuals has increased from 38 to 249 in 2022.<sup>[29]</sup> The Pretrial Division estimates that keeping offenders out of jail saved more than 91,000 jail bed days in 2022 resulting in a cost saving of over \$26M.<sup>[30]</sup> The District Attorney's Office administers several diversion programs allowing a person charged with a crime to avoid a conviction by engaging in treatment designed to tackle the root cause of their involvement in the criminal justice system.<sup>[31]</sup> The Sheriff's Custody Alternatives Program allows qualified, sentenced, low level offenders to serve their sentence while working, or performing supervised community service, with electronic monitoring and restricted movement.<sup>[32]</sup>

In 2019, the County received a \$6 million grant that was used to start the Neighborhood Courts, a successful diversion program designed to keep low level misdemeanor offenders from entering the criminal justice system.<sup>[33]</sup> In August 2022, the County received another \$6 million grant that will continue the Neighborhood Courts program,

and allow the County to expand its Coordinated Access for Empowering Success (CAFES) program, a collaboration of the Santa Cruz County Probation Department, the Public Defender's Office, the District Attorney's Office, Santa Cruz County Superior Court and County Behavioral Health. It aims to prevent unnecessary engagement in the justice system, and reduce recidivism for those already involved, while improving the health and well-being of adults who have committed low level crimes so they are less likely to reoffend.<sup>[34] [35] [36]</sup> The chart in Figure 4 below shows how CAFES works.



**Figure 4.** The Coordinated Access for Empowering Success (CAFES) program.<sup>[37]</sup>

CAFES focuses on first-time offenders who do not qualify for other programs. Its main goals are to Increase diversion opportunities (Goal 1), reduce recidivism (Goal 2), and improve existing support for those already incarcerated (Goal 3). The chart in Figure 4 shows the major steps in achieving each goal. CAFES is sufficiently new that little data on its effects are available, especially including the impact of Covid. However, the report notes that of 197 people authorized to CAFES, just 8, or 4 percent have recidivated.<sup>[38]</sup>

The Focused Intervention Team (FIT) is a collaboration between the Sheriff's Office and Santa Cruz Behavioral Health aimed at reducing recidivism among qualified, but more serious, repeat offenders who have demonstrated aggressive, threatening or assaultive behavior, and who are resistant to being helped. These offenders, mostly homeless people with substance use disorder, get intensive police supervision and support services. Offenders, both in jail and after release, get positive incentives, including employment training, housing assistance, and behavioral health treatment.<sup>[21] [39] [40] [41]</sup>

### ***Combating Recidivism***

The programs noted above are not an exhaustive list of all law enforcement is doing to keep people out of the criminal justice system; however it is clear that local law enforcement is putting significant effort and resources into reducing the number of offenders going into detention, and reducing the number who commit further crimes after being released. In spite of these laudable efforts, recidivism is still around 60 percent within 10 years<sup>[42] [43] [44]</sup>, and the Main Jail is sometimes overcrowded.<sup>[45]</sup> During Covid, the jail population was reduced by about a third to reduce spread of the disease. This made the jail more manageable with the staffing level at the time.<sup>[46]</sup> About 15 percent of those released were soon rearrested, but most apparently stayed out of trouble.<sup>[47]</sup> This suggests there is yet more that could be done to keep people out of jail.

In spite of all the efforts listed above to prevent recidivism, the lack of sufficient step-down programs, also described as continuing care for released inmates, was noted during several of our interviews.<sup>[48] [49] [50] [51]</sup> Many released former inmates are either unhoused or have insecure housing.<sup>[52] [53]</sup> Being homeless is a full time job; just getting food, shelter, bathroom access, medical and dental care, and access to whatever limited services local government or non-profit organizations provide is all consuming.<sup>[54] [55]</sup> More than 40 percent of released inmates have additionally been diagnosed with mental illness,<sup>[42] [56]</sup> making reestablishing life on the outside even more difficult for the unhoused. A person needs secure housing before they can be expected to take an active role in dealing with their mental health, or complying with probation or other restrictions imposed for their release from custody.<sup>[57]</sup>

This does not mean that the step-down programs that do exist are not working, but that they are inadequate. Santa Cruz County Probation enrolled 464 low-level, unduplicated participants in an anti-recidivism program. For those that completed the program, recidivism was calculated at nearly 12 percent, while those who had left early were calculated as repeat offenders more than 18 percent of the time. Program participants who received only one-time services had recorded recidivism rates of nearly 24 percent, twice that of those who completed the program.<sup>[34] [58]</sup>

The jail's healthcare contractor, Wellpath, does provide some assistance for inmates being released, including a "discharge planner", similar to a case manager, who helps the inmate get medical insurance restarted and other necessities of life on the outside.<sup>[59] [60] [61] [62]</sup> There is a 6-7 month wait for getting a bed at a state mental hospital, which is no help for an inmate needing inpatient care.<sup>[63]</sup> The Public Defender's Office also tries to help inmates being released by having a social worker do reentry planning.<sup>[64]</sup>

The Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Department provides mental health care for those without private insurance and is often the only source of mental health care for released inmates. Behavioral Health is also part of the CAFES program described above. Behavioral Health states that 43 percent of their client population has some involvement with the criminal justice system, mostly post-release supervision.<sup>[65]</sup> They further state that there is a lack of coordination with other county systems, such as law enforcement or the jail, and a lack of warm handoff to outpatient providers and ensuring a sufficient amount of medication until a pharmacy is open.<sup>[66]</sup> (A warm handoff means that jail staff actually introduces the inmate to the outpatient provider rather than just providing a referral.)

This year's Grand Jury is also investigating Behavioral Health, which we found to be overworked, understaffed and under-funded.<sup>[67] [68]</sup> Expecting Behavioral Health to improve step-down programs without a significant improvement in staffing and funding is unreasonable.

### ***The Case for a New Jail***

Local law enforcement really wants a new jail! After touring the grim, gloomy, cramped Main Jail, which lacks natural light or even a view of the trees around the building, the Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury was inclined to agree. The jail was intended for inmates being held for less than a year, but many have been held pretrial for several years.<sup>[69] [70]</sup> The current jail does not meet the needs of inmates or modern requirements for incarceration.<sup>[71]</sup> The Sheriff's Office has also suggested that a new jail is needed because the current jail is near the end of its useful life.<sup>[72]</sup> A new jail would be expected to cost around \$200 million for a 500 bed facility, and it would take 5-8 years to build.<sup>[73] [74]</sup> Put another way, a new jail would cost \$400,000 per inmate bed. The Santa Cruz Sentinel published an editorial in 2021 entitled "Santa Cruz County must start planning for a new jail."<sup>[75]</sup>

### ***Crime Rates in Santa Cruz County***

The table in Figure 5 below from Open Justice shows the trend in the number of arrests over the period 2012-2021. Although the numbers for the last three years may have been affected by Covid, the overall decline in arrests for felonies and drug offenses is clear. The decline in drug arrests is likely due at least in part to changing criteria for making an arrest, plus successful efforts to divert low level drug offenders away from the criminal justice system. The decline in arrests for property crimes is likely due to the same causes. The increase in arrests for violent offenses is small compared to the decline in arrests for felonies.

The chart in Figure 5 is for arrests, not those who are actually booked into jail, but arrests for felonies are those most likely to require incarceration in a maximum security jail. However, the number has declined by a third over ten years, and likely explains why the jail is not as overcrowded now as it was a few years ago. It would be wonderful if this trend continues, but there is no guarantee of this. The declining number of felony arrests suggests a declining need for a new jail.

| ARRESTS                                                        |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Counties: Santa Cruz County.                                   |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Years: 2012 - 2021.                                            |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Offenses: Felony. Ages: Adults. Gender: All. Ethnicities: All. |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| SV PDF                                                         |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Search within results:                                         |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|                                                                | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  | 2015  | 2016  | 2017  | 2018  | 2019  | 2020  | 2021  |
| <b>FELONY</b>                                                  | 2,812 | 2,814 | 2,753 | 2,133 | 2,086 | 2,179 | 2,162 | 2,039 | 1,782 | 1,924 |
| Violent Offenses                                               | 548   | 610   | 653   | 739   | 619   | 702   | 724   | 719   | 630   | 682   |
| Property Offenses                                              | 598   | 570   | 497   | 402   | 490   | 497   | 517   | 427   | 372   | 359   |
| Drug Offenses                                                  | 1,110 | 965   | 940   | 378   | 260   | 244   | 169   | 172   | 155   | 179   |
| Sex Offenses                                                   | 44    | 56    | 48    | 39    | 38    | 36    | 34    | 34    | 27    | 33    |
| Other Offenses                                                 | 512   | 613   | 615   | 575   | 679   | 700   | 718   | 687   | 598   | 671   |

**Figure 5.** Record of arrests in Santa Cruz County for the ten years 2012 - 2021. <sup>[76]</sup>

### ***Alternatives to a New Jail***

Building a new jail will not solve the chronic Correctional Officer staffing problem, although a more pleasant working environment might help with CO retention. The Blaine Street women's jail and one unit of Rountree are currently closed for lack of staffing. During the tours, the Grand Jury was told that reopening Blaine Street was a priority, and with sufficient staffing, will happen mid May 2023. Over the last few years, turning Blaine Street into a men's facility, using part of Rountree for women and expanding Rountree have all been suggested to maximize the utility of our local jail system. <sup>[77] [78] [79]</sup>

The primary mission of our criminal justice system is public safety. Could more inmates be moved from the Main Jail to Rountree while meeting that mission? The Grand Jury is not equipped to answer this question. Over the last year, the occupancy rates stated in the Background section of this report indicate Rountree is only about 23 percent full; Re-entry and Rehabilitation is more fully utilized at 78 percent. There is room for about



60 more inmates at Rountree if both units were open. If these people could be moved from the Main Jail, that would relieve pressure on the at-capacity facility. Re-opening Blaine Street would also make more room in the Main Jail. Rountree might also be expanded at far less cost than the expected \$200 Million for a new jail. Given the security needs of the inmate population, what is the optimum use for the Main Jail, Rountree/R&R and Blaine Street? Could moderate expansion of Rountree plus some renovation of the Main Jail suffice to keep us all safe? The Grand Jury believes there is good reason to study this before a complete new Main Jail is proposed.

Reducing recidivism is the main alternative to building a whole new 500 bed jail. <sup>[80]</sup> <sup>[81]</sup> <sup>[82]</sup> As noted previously in this report, recidivism remains stubbornly high at around 60 percent. Once a person goes to jail, there is a 60 percent chance they will go back to jail some time in the future, hugely contributing to the need for a new jail. Step-down or continuing care for released inmates is inadequate, contributing to recidivism. Better funding for step-down programs, such as those described above and run by the Public Defender's Office and Behavioral Health is desperately needed. This could produce positive results much quicker, and at far less cost, than the estimated 5-8 years to build a new jail.

## Conclusion

In a perfect world, the Sheriff's Office would have sufficient funding to raise Correctional Officers' pay sufficient to hire all the officers they need, and build the new jail they want. But in that perfect world, there would also be sufficient resources to give all inmates the mental health care they need and to provide adequate continuing care after they are released, including supportive housing as appropriate. This report asks the question "In the real world, with the funding constraints in this County, what is the best solution to both the aging Main Jail and to the distressingly high recidivism rate?"

The Santa Cruz County Grand Jury believes that funding for the Sheriff's Office to hire and retain more Correctional Officers should be increased. Funding for the Public Defender's Office and County Behavioral Health should also be increased so their anti recidivism efforts can reduce the current horrifying 60 percent recidivism rate.

## Findings

- F1.** Permanent mandatory overtime for Corrections Officers has a negative effect on them that leads to high turnover, and the need to hire more COs and train them, which is inefficient and demoralizing for the Sheriff's Office.
- F2.** Overcrowding at the Main Jail would be alleviated if the Blaine Street Women's Jail and the second unit at Rountree could be reopened.
- F3.** Keeping women who do not need to be in a high security facility in the Main Jail is clearly detrimental to their mental health, and to their chances of staying out of jail once released.

- F4.** Reopening Blaine Street and the second unit at Rountree would give the Sheriff's Office much more scope to balance the jail population between the three facilities, and would allow some inmates from the Main Jail to move to Rountree and take advantage of the programming available there.
- F5.** Lack of programming at the Main Jail is bad for inmate welfare, both their mental health while on the inside, and their ability to stay out of the criminal justice system once released.
- F6.** Programs such as those run by the Public Defender's Office and CAFES that reduce recidivism are effective because they give former inmates the mental health and/or substance abuse treatments they need, as well as case management and supportive housing.
- F7.** Lack of continuing care for released inmates, most especially those with mental illness, SUD and/or who will be homeless after release, significantly contributes to recidivism, which then contributes to the need for a new jail.
- F8.** Some continuing care does exist, but is massively underfunded, especially for former inmates who need supportive housing.
- F9.** The Main Jail is old, has been overcrowded, and does not meet current requirements for incarceration.
- F10.** The Main Jail might be adequate for incarcerating inmates who need to be in a high security facility, providing it can be renovated to meet current incarceration requirements for a much reduced population.

## Recommendations

- R1.** In the next budget cycle the Board of Supervisors should allocate more funding to the Sheriff's Office to be used to increase Correctional Officer pay, and/or give out increased hiring or retention bonuses as the Sheriff's Office determines. (F1)
- R2.** The Blaine Street Women's Jail should be reopened as soon as practical, but definitely before the end of 2023. (The reopening is imminent and will occur mid May 2023) (F2 – F4)
- R3.** After Blaine Street, the second unit at Rountree should be reopened as soon as sufficient staffing is available, and preferably by the end of 2023. (F2, F4, F5)
- R4.** Programming at the Main Jail, both that intended to stimulate and entertain inmates, and that intended to provide them with skills for life on the outside, should be restarted as soon as practical and as Covid restrictions allow. (F6)
- R5.** The Public Defender's Office should receive funding in the next budget cycle to provide adequate anti recidivism programs. (F7 – F9)
- R6.** In the next budget cycle, County Behavioral Health should be funded to adequately treat released inmates with mental illness, including supportive housing where necessary. (F6 – F9)

- R7.** The Sheriff’s Office should commission a study to determine the most effective use of the three jails and any modifications to existing facilities needed to house the expected jail population into the future. This study should be completed by the end of 2024. (F4, F9, F10)

## Commendations

- C1.** The Probation Office and the Public Defender’s Office are doing an excellent job of diverting low level offenders away from the criminal justice system.
- C2.** The Probation Office is providing their Juvenile Hall youngsters a more physically and emotionally healthy environment that most of them ever had at home.

## Required Responses

| <i><b>Respondent</b></i>               | <i><b>Findings</b></i> | <i><b>Recommendations</b></i> | <i><b>Respond Within/<br/>Respond By</b></i> |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors | F1 – F10               | R1, R5 – R7                   | 90 Days<br>August 23, 2023                   |
| Santa Cruz County Sheriff              | F1 – F10               | R1 – R4, R7                   | 60 Days<br>July 24, 2023                     |

## Invited Responses

| <i><b>Respondent</b></i>                 | <i><b>Findings</b></i> | <i><b>Recommendations</b></i> | <i><b>Respond Within/<br/>Respond By</b></i> |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Santa Cruz County Public Defender        | F6 – F8                | R5                            | 90 Days<br>August 23, 2023                   |
| Santa Cruz County Administrative Officer | F1 – F10               | R1, R5 – R7                   | 90 Days<br>August 23, 2023                   |

## Definitions

**Adult:** Any person 18 years of age or older.

**CAFES:** Coordinated Access for Empowering Success (Prop 47)

**Correctional Officer:** All persons, regardless of rank, who are employees and who are selected and trained in accordance with state law as a corrections officer of the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office.

**FIT:** Focused Intervention Team, a collaboration between the Sheriff’s Office and Santa Cruz Behavioral Health aimed at reducing recidivism among qualified, but more serious, repeat offenders who have demonstrated aggressive, threatening or assaultive behavior, and who are resistant to being helped.

**Juvenile:** Any person under the age of 18.

**Pretrial:** Is a hearing prior to trial, in which all parties involved in the trial attempt to determine the issues, laws, or facts matter, before the court trial.

**R&R:** Rehabilitation and Re-entry

**SUD:** Substance use disorder.

## Sources

## References

1. Joshua Pastor. March 15, 2023. "Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office February 2023 Monthly Statistics." *Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office*. Accessed March 30, 2023.  
[https://scsheriff.com/Portals/1/County/sheriff/pdf/SCSO%20Bureau%20Stats\\_FE\\_B2023.pdf#page=20](https://scsheriff.com/Portals/1/County/sheriff/pdf/SCSO%20Bureau%20Stats_FE_B2023.pdf#page=20)
2. Grand Jury. June 16, 2016. *2015-16 Grand Jury Report, Jails in Transition*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
[https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2016\\_final/JailsInTransition.pdf](https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2016_final/JailsInTransition.pdf)
3. Grand Jury. June 19, 2019. *2018–2019 Detention Facilities Inspection Report*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
[https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2019\\_final/DetentionFacilitiesInspectionReport.pdf](https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2019_final/DetentionFacilitiesInspectionReport.pdf)
4. Grand Jury. June 19, 2019. *2018–2019 Grand Jury Report, Detention Facilities Inspection Report*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
[https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2019\\_final/DetentionFacilitiesInspectionReport.pdf](https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2019_final/DetentionFacilitiesInspectionReport.pdf)
5. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
6. Grand Jury. June 17, 2021. *2020-21 Grand Jury Report, Justice in the Jail - staffing shortage*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
[https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2021\\_final/3\\_JailJustice\\_Report.pdf](https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2021_final/3_JailJustice_Report.pdf)
7. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
8. Sheriff's Office. January 2022. "Policy Manual." *Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office*. Accessed March 28, 2023.  
<https://scsheriff.com/Portals/1/County/sheriff/CorrectionsPolicyManual.pdf>
9. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
10. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
11. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
12. Confidential Grand Jury interview.

13. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
14. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
15. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
16. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
17. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
18. Ed Lyon. May 1, 2022. "\$5.5 Million Settlement to California Prisoner Left Incapacitated After Suicide Attempt at Santa Cruz County Jail." *Prison Legal News*. Accessed March 28, 2023.  
<https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2022/may/1/55-million-settlement-california-prisoner-left-incapacitated-after-suicide-attempt-santa-cruz-county-jail/#:~:text=On%20December%2016%2C%202021%2C%20a,there%20left%20him%20an%20invalid.>
19. Grand Jury. June 17, 2021. *Grand Jury Report Justice In The Jail*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
[https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2021\\_final/3\\_Jail\\_Justice\\_Report.pdf](https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2021_final/3_Jail_Justice_Report.pdf)
20. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
21. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
22. Grand Jury. June 27, 2017. *2016-17 Grand Jury Report, Jails in Santa Cruz County*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
[https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2017\\_final/JailsInSantaCruzCounty.pdf](https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2017_final/JailsInSantaCruzCounty.pdf)
23. Grand Jury. June 17, 2021. *2020-21 Grand Jury Report, Justice in the Jail - staffing shortage*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
[https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2021\\_final/3\\_Jail\\_Justice\\_Report.pdf](https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2021_final/3_Jail_Justice_Report.pdf)
24. Heather Stringer. March 2019. "Improving mental health for inmates." APA. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/03/mental-health-inmates>
25. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
26. Megan J. Wolff. May 30, 2017. "Fact Sheet: Incarceration and Mental Health." *Weill Cornell Medicine*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
<https://psychiatry.weill.cornell.edu/research-institutes/dewitt-wallace-institute-psychiatry/issues-mental-health-policy/fact-sheet-0#:~:text=The%20rate%20of%20severe%20mental%20illness%20in%20jails,inmates%20in%20jails%20and%20prisons%20in%202000.%207>



27. National Institute on Drug Abuse. June 2020. "Criminal Justice DrugFacts." *National Institute on Drug Abuse*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
<https://nida.nih.gov/download/23025/criminal-justice-drugfacts.pdf?v=25dde14276b2fa252318f2c573407966>
28. CALIFORNIA Health Care Almanac. July 2022. "CALIFORNIA Health Care Almanac." *California Health Care Foundation*. Accessed March 28, 2023.  
<https://www.chcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/MentalHealthAlmanac2022.pdf>
29. Yolanda James Sevilla. January 2022. "Pretrial Division Annual Report." *Santa Cruz County Website*. Accessed April 5, 2023.  
<https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/prb/pdfs/Annual%20Reports/Pretrial%20Division%20Annual%20Report%202022-Final.pdf>
30. January 2022. "Annual Report." *Santa Cruz County Website*. Accessed April 5, 2023.  
<https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/prb/pdfs/Annual%20Reports/Pretrial%20Division%20AT%20A%20GLANCE%202022%20Final.pdf>
31. April 2023. "Diversion." *Office of Public Defender*. Accessed April 5, 2023.  
<https://www.santacruzdefenders.us/AboutUs/WhatWeDo/Diversion.aspx#:~:text=Generally%2C%20to%20be%20eligible%20for%20diversion%2C%20a%20participant,and%20waive%20their%20right%20to%20a%20speedy%20trial.>
32. April 2023. "Work Release/Custody Alternative Program." *Sheriff's Office Website*. Accessed April 5, 2023.  
<https://scsheriff.com/Home/InmateVisitingInformation/WorkRelease.aspx>
33. April 2023. "WHAT IS THE NEIGHBORHOOD COURTS PROGRAM?." *Santa Cruz District Attorney's Office*. Accessed April 5, 2023.  
<https://santacruzdistrictattorney.us/Home/neighborhoodcourts.aspx>
34. Jessica A. York. August 2, 2022. "Santa Cruz County Probation awarded \$6M for anti-recidivism programs." *Sentinel*. Accessed March 28, 2023.  
<https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2022/08/02/santa-cruz-county-probation-awarded-6m-for-anti-recidivism-programs/>
35. Todd Guild. August 9, 2022. "County Hopes to Curb Recidivism Rate with Grant." *Goodtimes*. Accessed March 28, 2023.  
<https://www.goodtimes.sc/county-hopes-to-curb-recidivism-rate-with-grant/>
36. December 2019. "Local Evaluation Plan." *BSCC Website*. Accessed April 5, 2023.  
<https://bscc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/Santa-Cruz-County-Cohort-2-Local-Evaluation-Plan.pdf>
37. Probation Department. August 2021. "Proposition 47 - CAFES Program." *BSCC Website*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
<https://www.bscc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/Santa-Cruz-County-PER.pdf>

38. Probation Department. August 2021. "Proposition 47 - CAFES Program." *BSCC Website*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
<https://www.bscc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/Santa-Cruz-County-PER.pdf>
39. Sheriff's Office. June 2021. *Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office*. Accessed March 28, 2023.  
<https://www.santacruzcounty.us/FIT.aspx>
40. Sheriff's Office. April 18, 2021. "Focused Intervention Team." *Santa Cruz County Health Website*. Accessed March 28, 2023.  
<https://www.santacruzhealth.org/Portals/7/Pdfs/Local%20Mental%20Health%20Board/FIT%20Presentation%20-%20April%202019.pdf>
41. Todd Guild. March 13, 2020. "County increases mental health services with FIT program." *Pajaronian*. Accessed March 28, 2023.  
<https://pajaronian.com/county-increases-mental-health-services-with-fit-program/>
42. Heather Rogers. March 16, 2023. "Happy Supreme Court Anniversary, Mr. Gideon! Now let's address the causes of mass incarceration." *Lookout*. Accessed March 28, 2023.  
<https://lookout.co/santacruz/community-voices/opinion-from-community-voices/story/2023-03-16/public-defender-heather-rogers-gideon-v-wainwright-right-to-fair-trial-supreme-court-anniversary-address-causes-of-mass-incarceration>
43. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
44. Department of Corrections. January 2019. "California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation." *California State Auditor Website*. Accessed April 28, 2023.  
<https://www.bsa.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2018-113.pdf>
45. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
46. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
47. Todd Guild. May 19, 2020. "Santa Cruz County jail system still free of Covid-19." <https://pajaronian.com/>. Accessed April 5, 2023.  
<https://pajaronian.com/santa-cruz-county-jail-system-still-free-of-covid-19/>
48. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
49. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
50. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
51. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
52. Applied Survey Research. January 2022. "2022 COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ." *Housing for Health Partnership Website*. Accessed March 28, 2023.  
<https://www.housingforhealthpartnership.org/Portals/29/HAP/Providers/Data/2022PITFullReport.pdf>
53. Confidential Grand Jury interview.

54. Stefan Gutwinski. August 23, 2021. "The prevalence of mental disorders among homeless people in high-income countries: An updated systematic review and meta-regression analysis." *National Center for Biotechnology Information*. Accessed April 13, 2023.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8423293/>
55. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. March 2, 2017. "Homelessness as a Public Health Law Issue: Selected Resources." *Center for Disease Control and Prevention*. Accessed April 13, 2023.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/phlp/publications/topic/resources/resources-homelessness.html>
56. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
57. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
58. Probation Department. September 30, 2022. "Recidivism Rates." *Santa Cruz County Probation Department Website*. Accessed April 3, 2023.  
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=c63b42eca6cf4326acb3cd85781adc63>
59. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
60. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
61. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
62. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
63. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
64. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
65. December 8, 2021. "Santa Cruz Final Report." *Santa Cruz County Health Website*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
[https://www.santacruzhealth.org/Portals/7/Pdfs/QI/SANTA%20CRUZ\\_DMC-ODS%20EQR%20Final%20Report%20FY%202021-22.pdf](https://www.santacruzhealth.org/Portals/7/Pdfs/QI/SANTA%20CRUZ_DMC-ODS%20EQR%20Final%20Report%20FY%202021-22.pdf)
66. March 20, 2023. "County of Santa Cruz Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)." *Santa Cruz County Health Website*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
[https://www.santacruzhealth.org/Portals/7/Pdfs/MHSA/23-24/SCBHS\\_MHSA%20FY2023-2026%20Three-Year%20Plan\\_Draft\\_20230317\\_STC.pdf](https://www.santacruzhealth.org/Portals/7/Pdfs/MHSA/23-24/SCBHS_MHSA%20FY2023-2026%20Three-Year%20Plan_Draft_20230317_STC.pdf)
67. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
68. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
69. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
70. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
71. Confidential Grand Jury interview.

72. Grand Jury. June 17, 2021. *2020-21 Grand Jury Report, Justice in the Jail - staffing shortage*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
[https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2021\\_final/3\\_Jail\\_Justice\\_Report.pdf](https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2021_final/3_Jail_Justice_Report.pdf)
73. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
74. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
75. Editorial Board. February 14, 2021. “Editorial | Santa Cruz County must start planning for a new jail.” *Sentinel*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
<https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2021/02/14/editorial-santa-cruz-county-must-start-planning-for-a-new-jail/?clearUserState=true>
76. April 2023. “Arrest.” *Open Justice Website*. Accessed April 21, 2023.  
<https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/exploration/crime-statistics/arrests>
77. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
78. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
79. Grand Jury. June 27, 2017. *2016-17 Grand Jury Report, Jails in Santa Cruz County*. Accessed April 11, 2023.  
[https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2017\\_final/JailsInSantaCruzCounty.pdf](https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/County/GrandJury/GJ2017_final/JailsInSantaCruzCounty.pdf)
80. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
81. Confidential Grand Jury interview.
82. Confidential Grand Jury interview.

## Site Visits

Main Jail, County of Santa Cruz

Rountree Medium Facility, County of Santa Cruz

Juvenile Hall, County of Santa Cruz

Sheriff's Office, County of Santa Cruz

[This page intentionally left blank.]