

A Report of the 2002-2003 Civil Grand Jury
For the City and County of San Francisco

Continuity Report

Released June 2003

Each year the Civil Grand Jury selects the aspects of city and county government that it will investigate. Similarly, the Grand Jury determines whether to pursue issues raised and recommendations made in the reports of prior Grand Juries. As stated in the 2001-2002 Civil Grand Jury report, “This freedom to choose, and thereby to ignore the work of its predecessors, may result in a failure to assure that a previous Civil Grand Jury’s work is complete. For the institution of the Civil Grand Jury to engender faith among the recipients of its recommendations—and to generate interest in and respect of its annual reports—there must be the assurance that the Civil Grand Jury recognizes the worth of the efforts of previous juries.”

The 2002-2003 Grand Jury agreed that it should ensure that recommendations made by the 2001-2002 Civil Grand Jury in its reports by their named respondents were addressed. To accomplish this, the Grand Jury reviewed all responses to the 2001-2002 reports, contacted several agencies/departments/offices and conducted additional interviews and research in instances where it determined that responses were either inadequate or incomplete. The Grand Jury also inquired about responses to selected reports of earlier Civil Grand Juries.

This “Continuity Report” first summarizes the status of each of the Reports released by the 2001-2002 Civil Grand Jury:

San Francisco General Hospital: The San Francisco General Hospital (SFGH) report addressed the necessity that San Francisco General Hospital meets certain California seismic code requirements and the consequences of failure to do so by 2008.

All required responses were submitted and the Board of Supervisors held a hearing on the report. While it is reported that substantial progress has been made in developing a plan for seismic upgrade or construction of a new San Francisco General Hospital, the failure to present a bond issue to the citizens for approval and move forward with the project could result in the unnecessary closing of SFGH.

Contracting 1 and 2: The Contracting reports recommended a number of changes to contracting processes and procedures.

All required responses were submitted and the Board of Supervisors held a hearing. A majority of the major recommended changes were implemented immediately following the issuance of these reports, although some issues remain to be addressed.

Outdoor Advertising Sign (Billboard) Enforcement: The Billboards report included a number of recommendations to monitor billboards allowed within the City and County.

All required responses were received and the Board of Supervisors held a hearing. Implementation of the recommendations is not complete in a number of areas due to budgetary constraints. After the report was issued, a referendum adopted by the City voters grandfathered legal billboards. Two staff members of the Planning Department monitor all the billboards. Progress has been made in creating an inventory of all billboards in the City.

The Board of Supervisors is considering legislation: 1) to charge an annual fee for companies using a billboard to fund additional enforcement personnel. [This type of fee has been challenged in Los Angeles County and the Board is waiting for the appeals process to finalize before enforcing the fees.]; and, 2) to identify the legal billboards using the number of the ‘use’ permit.

Adult Probation: The Adult Probation Report recommended increased emphasis on functions that can reduce recidivism and accelerated movement toward community-based probation programs.

All required responses were submitted and the Board of Supervisors held a hearing. The Adult Probation Department reports that it has submitted to the Sheriff's department a proposal to fund staff for a community based program. This program was scheduled to begin April 2003. Due to budgetary constraints, the program will not begin in fiscal year 2003-2004.

Homelessness in San Francisco: The Homelessness in San Francisco report recommended a Charter Amendment, the development of an integrated information system for tracking the delivery of homeless-related services, the creation of a central database of available beds, and the initiation of a public education campaign on the root causes of homelessness.

All required responses were submitted and the Board of Supervisors held a hearing. The City has initiated a central database of beds, as recommended by the Civil Grand Jury, and reports consideration of other recommendations. However, implementation of the remaining recommendations has not been realized.

Hunter's Point Naval Shipyard: This report recommended steps to ensure environmental safety, prioritize economic development, and improve communications with the local community. The 2002-2003 Civil Grand Jury reviewed responses to the 2001-2002 Grand Jury Report on Hunters Point and determined that additional investigation was called for and provides this update on the Hunters Point report prepared by the 2001-2002 Civil Grand Jury. In particular, attention was focused on several areas including: Parcel 'A,' a key area in Hunters Point, which will be the first area developed for public purchase of housing; communication between the "Outreach Office" and other community organizations, in particular the "Window on 3rd Street" and ArcEcology; and housing those three organizations in a guard house near the entrance to Hunter Point. The Grand Jury also considered the following:

- 1) Redevelopment Agency information regarding Parcel 'A'. Clarification of the job description and activities at the "Outreach Office" funded by the Redevelopment Agency (SFRA);
- 2) Information from the "Outreach Office" as to how it understands its role;
- 3) The status, plans and coordination activities of the City Department of the Environment-funded "Window on 3rd Street" at the Bayview Hunters Point Community Advocates Office;
- 4) Clarification of the role assumed by ArcEcology, which has a Technical Assistance Grant, its intent regarding Parcel 'A,' and how it views the three organizations occupying the guard house.

Based on our interviews, we have determined the following:

SFRA believes Parcel 'A' at Hunters Point should be ready in early 2004. The services provided by the Outreach Office include: 1) day to day operations and distributing badges for personnel visiting the site; 2) coordinating and supporting Citizens Advisory Committee meetings; and 3) outreach and information gathering. Although members of the 2002-2003 Civil Grand Jury explicitly requested a job description from the SFRA, the Grand Jury was referred to the "Outreach Office," and then in turn, referred to the Board of Supervisors member who represents the Hunters Point area. A job description for workers at the Outreach office has never been provided.

Outreach Office personnel believe their job is to attend community meetings and to facilitate meetings with churches and schools as well as meetings of the Community Action Committee (CAC). At the latter meeting, the Outreach Office assumes the role of secretary, taking minutes. Outreach Office personnel acknowledge that a representative from Window on 3d Street attends the meetings; they have never spoken with the Third Street representative. In September 2002, the Mayor stated that the Outreach Office prefers to stay where it is currently located, rather than moving to the guard house.

Window on 3d Street reported that it has been educating the community on the effects of radiation, and it attends CAC meetings and community meetings. Third Street “has no regular contact with (the Outreach) office.”

ArcEcology has a Technical Assistance Grant to educate the community with interpretation of documents about the Navy cleanup and ArcEcology has been involved with BayView-Hunters Point for 20 years. ArcEcology expects to move to the guard house, but believes it will be the only tenant. ArcEcology believes Parcel ‘A’ will not be ready for development until 2007.

Therefore, it is our conclusion that improved communication, as envisioned by the 2001-2002 Civil Grand Jury, has not been implemented. It is likely that the Outreach Office and Window on 3d Street need to be convinced that the community would be better served if three offices were housed at the same location.

Continuity Report on previous years’ reports: The 2001-2002 Civil Grand Jury reported on the number of outstanding issues in reports prior to 2001. The 2002-2003 Civil Grand Jury followed up on a number of those issues and has determined the following status:

CGJ 2000-01–Elections: all outstanding issues were either satisfied or addressed again the 2002-2003 Elections Report.

CGJ 1998-99–Treasure Island: The Sheriff’s Department vacated the brig and consolidated its training facility, and Field and Support Services division in a refurbished building at 1740 Folsom Street.

CGJ 1999-2000–Jail Telephone costs to Inmates: The Sheriff’s department reports that it has not made a change to the reported system but its “quest for the lowest possible rates for prisoners and their families has severely limited the number of providers interested in working with us at all.”

CGJ 2000-01–Office of Film and Video: A Controller’s audit of the San Francisco Film Production Fund of the Film Commission was completed in 2003. The report indicates that although the Commission properly assessed fees in accordance with the San Francisco Administrative Code, the Commission does not have adequate controls to account for and safeguard the money it collects. Further, the audit reported that the Commission did not submit required annual reports detailing revenues and expenditures to the Board of Supervisors. The Office of Film and Video failed to respond to the 2000-01 CGJ.

CGJ 1999-2000–Chief Medical Examiner: Specific plans and retention of a search firm to identify candidates to replace the Chief Medical Examiner in anticipation of his retirement have not been initiated.

CGJ 1999-2000–Chief Medical Examiner–Autopsy Room Door: A physical examination of the door was made with the Chief Medical Examiner in attendance. The door is secure and can be opened only by Medical Office personnel with the appropriate touch pad code.

The 2002-2003 Civil Grand Jury encourages the 2003-2004 Civil Grand Jury to continue to be vigilant about prior years' reports and responses required, and ensure that departments and agencies responsible for responding to the Reports and recommendations made by the Grand Jury not only respond to the recommendations, but actually implement the changes and improvements they agree to initiate. Only in this way can we all be better assured that our commitment and hard work will result in positive changes and outcomes for the people of San Francisco.