



PUBLIC SAFETY CITIZEN TASK FORCE

Research, Findings and Recommendations: Santa Cruz City Public Safety Citizen Task Force

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December 3, 2013

Mayor Bryant and City Council
809 Center Street, Room 10
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Mayor Bryant and City Council Members:

On behalf of the 14 members of the Public Safety Citizen Task Force, I am pleased to transmit our Report: *Research, Findings and Recommendations: Santa Cruz City Public Safety Citizen Task Force*. This report serves as the culmination of the six-month process and addresses the charge of the Task Force as stipulated by the April 9, 2013 City Council Agenda Report on the subject.

The Task Force committed to exploring the underlying safety issues impacting our community from a factual basis, and to developing recommendations to bring to City Council for thoughtful consideration. Despite our different backgrounds, perspectives and life experiences, we worked cohesively as group to learn about the pressing safety issues, to engage a wide array of experts in the fields of public safety and health, and to listen to community-members.

Together we learned that Santa Cruz faces a host of complex public safety challenges, and that our local governments (City and County) and social service providers need to collaborate to address them effectively. Many of the conversations were quite difficult given the sensitive nature of the topics and the Task Force was not in full agreement on each and every recommendation. However, we remained committed to the process, put our personal opinions to the side, analyzed the issues over four months and worked for the last two months to develop feasible recommendations for your review. The recommendations reflect a principled compromise of Task Force members, but not a compromise of our principles. We stand behind this serious work and are deeply appreciative of the time, energy and thought that Santa Cruz County Treasurer Fred Keeley, City of Santa Cruz staff Susie O'Hara and Scott Collins, and the expert panelists added to the process.

Santa Cruz can address these difficult issues; now is our opportunity. We urge the City Council and City staff to review the report and determine how best to operationalize the recommendations. We understand that the City will need time to assess each recommendation and work with its partners to make them a reality. That being said, we ask that the City Council conduct a 6-month and 12-month check-in with the community to measure progress made on these recommendations.

Thank you all for your continued work to make Santa Cruz a safer place to live, work and play.

Sincerely,



Kris Reyes
Public Safety Citizen Task Force Chair



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Introduction

Santa Cruz is a community of limitless beauty and opportunity. Towering redwood forests and verdant coastal grasslands dominate the hillside landscape. Pristine beaches and world-class surf breaks bring Monterey Bay and Pacific tides to the edge of the forest. This extraordinary community is tucked in between the sea and the mountains.

Cradled by this exceptional natural environment, Santa Cruz enjoys opportunities not usually found in small rural areas. The community is home to a University of California campus. Students and university jobs bolster the local economy. Research and entrepreneurship are shared values of faculty and local residents, oftentimes leading to remarkable innovation.

Santa Cruz hosts visitors from around the world and its tourism industry is the economic bedrock of the town. Tourists are drawn to Santa Cruz for its recreation, seaside amusement park, bustling downtown, and endless beaches. Art, culture, sustainable agriculture and locally sourced food and drink connect community members and visitors alike in museums, along Downtown streets, on farms and vineyards, and around local restaurant tables.

The community fabric is woven with these threads of beauty and opportunity. People lucky enough to live and spend time in Santa Cruz reap the benefits of this vibrant community. However, the fabric of Santa Cruz also contains-different and troubling threads that impact our community.

The small geographical space between the mountains and the sea is also home to metropolis-level crime and complex societal issues. Santa Cruz property and violent crime rates rival or surpass even those of inner-city California communities.¹ Drug addiction is rampant and fuels high property crime rates and a public health crisis around carelessly discarded hypodermic syringes in public spaces. Alcohol spurs violence in the Downtown entertainment district. Like other Central Coast cities, gang culture exists and impacts the lives of countless at-risk youth and young men of all ethnicities. Youth violence is sparked by gang rivalries, at times ending in homicides. When compared with other cities in California, the city of Santa Cruz has one of the highest per capita rates of homelessness. Many Santa Cruz homeless suffer from crippling addiction and/or mental illness, symptoms of which may result in public nuisance and criminal behaviors.

Large metropolitan cities manage the myriad of public safety issues within their much larger geographic boundaries utilizing substantial budget resources, a broader tax base, health services and all-encompassing criminal justice systems. Further, some metropolitan cities and counties are bundled under one combined government agency, ensuring common public safety goals are achieved through better management of resources and cost-savings.²

¹ 2012 Crime rates: California Metropolitan Statistical Area (violent crime rate: 424/100,000 inhabitants, property crime rate: 2767/100,000 inhabitants); Compton (violent crime rate: 1242/100,000 inhabitants, property crime rate: 2447/100,000 inhabitants); San José (violent crime rate: 363/100,000 inhabitants, property crime rate: 2914/100,000 inhabitants); Santa Cruz (violent crime rate: 711/100,000 inhabitants, property crime rate: 5887/100,000 inhabitants)

² An example of a bundled city/county management structure is the City/County of San Francisco.



In contrast, Santa Cruz must tackle these same issues with a lean police force, budget and tax base within a high density geographical space. The City's public safety goals have not historically been prioritized by the County even though the City hosts County Heath, the Main Jail, the Superior Court, and is the County seat. Lack of inter-agency collaboration and coordination as well as a unified City/County vision is partly to blame for the City's public safety challenges.

Community discourse over Santa Cruz's public safety challenges has evolved over the years. There is widespread support for the funding programs that improve public safety by treating addiction, providing affordable housing, and reducing poverty. However, views on tolerance, which has long been an overarching value of the community, have changed. Many now believe tolerance without accountability is a cause of the City's current safety concerns, especially around drug addiction, related crime, and public health concerns. Recent community discussions are focused on balancing tolerance and compassion with accountability.

Responding to this recent community discourse, and on the heels of a series of horrific events, the Santa Cruz City Council elected to form a Public Safety Citizen Task Force to grapple with the “deep-rooted issues affecting our public safety.” 15 members³ were selected and given six months to arrive at a set of policy recommendations capable of improving public safety conditions in the City. Although a colossal task, Task Force members rose to the challenge, bringing open minds and hearts, a common purpose and respect for each other and the process. After six months of education and heated deliberation, several high-priority recommendations were identified that coalesce around the following topics.

Prevention

Discarded hypodermic syringes in the City’s open spaces, beaches and residential neighborhoods pose a significant public health problem. The Task Force finds that the County has not properly accounted for and mitigated the unintended consequences of locating a Syringe Services Program (SSP) within a residential neighborhood and the geographical boundaries of the City of Santa Cruz. Discarded hypodermic syringes in public and privately-owned spaces must be significantly reduced . Until this public safety crisis is rectified, the Task Force strongly recommends that the County Board of Supervisors consider the management of SSP as a top priority and relocate SSP to a non-residential area.

Current prevention programs for drug addiction and gang involvement are under-serving the community. Additionally, the City’s open spaces are not designed and utilized effectively to reduce crime opportunities. The Task Force strongly believes that to reduce criminal conduct and recidivism within its boundaries, the City must re-evaluate its priorities regarding public safety to focus more on drug treatment funding and efficacy to reduce criminal recidivism, support at-risk youth after-school programming, and enhance environmental design and pro-social activation of the City's most crime-ridden open spaces, business districts, and parks.

³ One member resigned leaving a voting membership of 14 during deliberations on recommendations.



Strategic Police Enforcement

The Santa Cruz Police Department (SCPD) is understaffed and is thus unable to focus on community policing, directed enforcement, and/or enforcement of low-level crimes and nuisance behaviors in the City's open spaces, gateways and other geographical focal points. This leads to disorder and high crime rates in the City's most beloved areas. The Task Force has identified two critical SCPD priorities. The Task Force recommends the City take immediate measures to staff the SCPD at budgeted levels, and move towards a long-term goal of building a police force-on par with national per capita levels. The Task Force also recommends implementing a targeted policing model that emphasizes enforcement of nuisance crimes in natural, city entry and focal point areas.

Strategic Code Enforcement

Santa Cruz is burdened with a high number of high-risk alcohol outlets⁴ and residential indoor and outdoor marijuana grow operations for medical and recreational purposes. High-risk alcohol outlets contribute to alcohol-fueled violence and crime. Growing, cultivation and processing of marijuana in residential neighborhoods is a serious public safety concern, a code enforcement issue, and often involves secondary criminal activity. The Task Force therefore recommends regulatory reform of the City's high-risk alcohol outlets and medical marijuana grows.

Offender Assistance with Accountability/Recidivism Reduction

Repeat offenders are an ongoing challenge to the City. A relatively small number of individuals are responsible for an excessive number of arrests and citations.⁵ A new collaborative management model, in partnership with the City's regional partners in Health Services, non-profits, and criminal justice system, is needed to reduce the impact of repeat offenders on the community. The Task Force recommends a specialty court model for veterans, substance abusers, mentally ill and/or homeless offenders. The specialty court is a proven model in halting the revolving door of recidivism by linking offenders to treatment and rigorous judicial monitoring. Specialty courts are highly collaborative, bringing together the criminal justice system and service providers to enforce court-ordered sanctions. The Task Force finds that the specialty court model would provide offenders with the right balance of treatment assistance with accountability.

Criminal Justice Accountability

The Task Force finds that the Santa Cruz County Courts have failed the community with regards to criminal sentencing. Improved accountability should come in the form of increased

⁴ According to the City of Santa Cruz Ordinance No. 2010-02, "a high-risk alcohol... retail outlet [is] where alcoholic beverages are sold such as a bar, tavern, liquor store, convenience store, nightclub, banquet facility, and/or premise where live entertainment and/or dancing occurs."
(<http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=12253>)

⁵ See Introduction and Background for more information.



transparency, consistent adjudication of the City's municipal code violations, and implementation of a specialty court model (as noted above).

The Task Force recommends the following measures be implemented by the Santa Cruz County Superior Court:

- Court to issue a misdemeanor warrant to individuals following three failures to appear in a six-month period. This automatic warrant issuance will eliminate the need for the City Attorney to prosecute repeat municipal code infraction offenders who fail to appear.
- Compel the Presiding Judge of the Santa Cruz County Superior Court to appear before the Santa Cruz City Council twice a year to share what the Court is doing to address high repeat offender rates in the City of Santa Cruz and receive input from the City Council and City Attorney.

Collaborative Accountability and Appropriate Funding

The Task Force strongly recommends that the City communicate with each jurisdiction named in the report and ask that it be responsive, in writing, to the recommendations that impact their operations. Further, the Task Force recommends the City Council and County Board of Supervisors consider an alternative funding mechanism to support any Task Force recommendations that are outside of the City and County's regular budget.

Conclusion

Santa Cruz's public safety problems are complex, but can be solved. Multiple factors including substance abuse, tolerance without accountability, and lack of inter-agency collaborative strategies among the City, County and Court system have led to a serious public safety problem within the City. Fourteen City residents took on the challenge of identifying solutions through education, collaboration, and respectful dialogue, a trend that will hopefully spread to others throughout the rest of the County. The outcome of the Task Force process is a set of policy recommendations capable of far-reaching influence and a community united behind positive change. Change will only happen with the full commitment of the City, County, criminal justice system, social service nonprofits, and residents to move together towards a common goal of improved public safety for all.

Introduction

Background

Set on the idyllic central coast of California, Santa Cruz, a small city of 62,000 residents, has grappled historically with a difficult dichotomy. Santa Cruz is both a tight-knit community with strong preservationist values, and an isolated city that depends on outsiders to sustain its economy. These seemingly paradoxical qualities of protection and openness have long been the overarching management principles of Santa Cruz government and politics. This dichotomy is also a large part of Santa Cruz's public image.

As far back as the late 19th century, local leaders communicated the Santa Cruz image and lifestyle to would-be migrants and tourists. Public safety and the efficacy of the police force was a hot topic in one 1896 publication, *Santa Cruz County, a Faithful Reproduction in Print and Photography of its Climate, Capabilities and Beauties*, whose aim was to promote Santa Cruz and "to attract the attention of people in other parts of the country. "

The orderliness and sobriety of Santa Cruz is one of its best features. I know of no place in the United States which can surpass its admirable record. I doubt if there is one of the same size which can equal it. The three officers whose pictures appear on this page constitute the entire night and day police force of this city of nine thousand inhabitants, and they are found amply sufficient to police it... The few arrests are due wholly to the almost total lack of drunkenness and crime.



Setting aside the unavoidable influx of pickpockets and petty thieves which comes upon such occasions as the great Water Carnival week, along with the thousands who then throng the city, the record of the police docket is practically clean all the year round. In the two years falling under the writer's observation no man has drawn a pistol, nor does the writer believe that a dozen men in the whole population carry such

a weapon... It is absolutely safe for a woman or child, unattended, to traverse the streets of Santa Cruz after nightfall in any direction she chooses. Not only is a woman perfectly safe from danger of harm, but she is perfectly certain of immunity from anything bordering on insult. I dwell on these facts not because they excite any comment here, where they are taken as matters of course, but because they will help to eradicate from the Eastern reader's mind the absurd and unjust notion that the far West is "wild and woolly" ...

Over a century later, each of the public safety themes noted in the 1896 publication: disorder, substance abuse, petty crime, and violence, are at the forefront of Santa Cruz community discourse. But the tone has changed dramatically. Rather than a story of a pristine and "safe"



environment meant to attract newcomers, contemporary perception is that "outsiders" are responsible for an unsafe environment for Santa Cruz residents. Of course, it is questionable that the 1896 characterization of public safety in Santa Cruz was entirely genuine, nor is it the case that the current public safety challenges are the sole responsibility of a transitory population.

Nevertheless, over the last five years community concern around public safety has reached a critical mass, with many residents calling into question supposed community tolerance and apathy towards illegal activity. During this period, multiple violent events jolted the community, each seemingly more senseless than the previous. In addition, persistent quality-of-life crimes, a large unsheltered homeless population, perceived disorder, and lack of pro-social opportunities in public spaces, coupled with these acts of violence, tipped the scale for many in Santa Cruz, leading to calls for more protection and security.

Much of the current community unease began with the 2009 and 2010 murders of Santa Cruz teenagers Tyler Tenorio and Carl Reimer. Both murders were gang-related and galvanized a number of robust and vocal community groups into action.

Following 2011, a year in which Santa Cruz County saw 14 homicides, the months between May 7, 2012 and February 28, 2013 could only be described as a perfect storm of criminal activity in Santa Cruz. On May 7th, local shop owner Shannon Collins was brutally murdered at midday by a mentally-ill homeless man who had recently been released from prison due to a clerical error and who had been an overnight client of the Homeless Services Center (HSC). Her death sparked debate over the management of the HSC and the local effects of Assembly Bill 109 (AB109).⁶

In August of the same year, 12-year old Joey Mendoza was gunned down in a gang-related drive-by shooting on his way home from football practice. His death opened up festering wounds from the 2009 and 2010 deaths of Tenorio and Reimer and prompted new community conversations regarding the prevalence of gangs and youth violence.

In November of 2012, a combination of heightened property crime and media attention around drug dens above Cowell Beach and illegally discarded hypodermic syringes found across town catalyzed community debate over the potential role of Syringe Exchange in perpetuating drug addiction, environmental and health hazards and neighborhood crime.

The fallout over discarded syringes lasted for several weeks with no resolution to the debate. Shortly thereafter, on February 9, 2013, 32 year-old Pauly Silva was shot and killed outside of a Downtown bar and eatery. His murder began a cycle lasting 17 days, in which Santa Cruz experienced no less than four acts of violent crime.⁷ The last event of that tragic cycle brought

⁶ In 2011, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. signed Assembly Bills 109 and 117, legislation that has helped California close the revolving door for low-level inmates who cycle in and out of state prisons. It is the cornerstone of California's proposed solution for reducing the number of inmates in the state's 33 prisons to 137.5 percent of design capacity by June 27, 2013, as ordered by the Three-Judge Court and affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court. All provisions of AB 109 and AB 117 are prospective and implementation of the 2011 Realignment Legislation began October 1, 2011. (<http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/realignment/>)

⁷ February 11th, UCSC student shot in the head during a robbery (http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/ci_22574410/)
February 13th, Food Bin robbed at gunpoint (<http://santacruz.patch.com/groups/police-and-fire/p/santa-cruz-food-bin-held-up-wednesday-night-police-saa2967fe31d>)

the community to its knees. On February 26th, Sergeant Loran "Butch" Baker and Detective Elizabeth Butler were murdered by a recent transplant with a criminal history. Their deaths ignited a firestorm of community speculation around the reputed "draw" of criminals to Santa Cruz, and renewed debate over the legitimacy of the "Keep Santa Cruz Weird" motto.

The narrative of the previous several months of violence, property crime and discarded hypodermic syringes forced the community to question the consequences of tolerance for drug abuse and illegal activity, and ultimately the dichotomy of protection and openness. The nature of the crimes and their perpetrators contributed to a perception about the "draw" of mentally ill, drug-addicted, or gang-affiliated outsiders to Santa Cruz and raised questions about how the criminal justice system is managing this supposed segment of the population.

But even as the community wrestled with such difficult questions, in the weeks following the officer shootings, Santa Cruz came together to memorialize the fallen officers and found new energy for collaboration. An important opportunity arose to address the community's most difficult public safety questions. In that spirit of collaboration, the plan for the Public Safety Citizen Task Force crystallized.

Formation of the Public Safety Citizen Task Force

The concept of the Public Safety Citizen Task Force was born out of a series of public meetings, commencing with the December 2012 City Council Public Safety Committee. At that meeting, the Committee directed City staff to return in January with "recommendations to address the public safety concerns in the City's parks, beaches, open space, neighborhoods, and commercial areas."⁸ The Committee was particularly interested in developing a forum for community input and discussion, as public meetings did not provide sufficient time and space for dialogue and exploration of public safety concerns.

Staff researched other city models and best practices for community collaboration on public safety issues. This research resulted in a recommendation to assemble a citizen task force. Diversity of residential geography, social networks, professions, gender, and age were noted to be critically important to the composition of the proposed group. A broad citizen demographic would bring unique, unfiltered, and oftentimes unheard perspectives from everyday life in Santa Cruz. The Public Safety Committee adopted staff's Task Force recommendation at its January 29th meeting. The City Council followed suit on February 12th.

Several weeks after the February tragedies, and fortified by a community unified in its call for positive change, the City Council established the scope and charge of the Task Force and confirmed the Mayor's selection of participants.

February 17th, Young woman raped, beaten at UCSC (http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/ci_22611958/officials-young-woman-raped-beaten-sunday-at-ucsc) determined to be a hoax later in March (http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/ci_22900731/prosecutor-woman-uc-santa-cruz-rape-hoax-solicited)

February 20th, Home invasion robbery on 500 block of Poplar Ave. (<http://santacruzpolice.blogspot.com/2013/02/250000-warrant-for-home-invasion.html>)

⁸ 1/29/2013 Public Safety Committee Staff Report

(<http://cityofsantacruz.com/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=30533>)

As noted in the Council Agenda Report, "the charge of the Task Force is to clearly define the underlying safety issues facing the City of Santa Cruz and present their findings and recommended solutions to the City Council, utilizing quantitative and qualitative evidence and best practice research to support that work. The Task Force will be tasked with exploring the deep-rooted issues affecting our public safety, including, but not limited to: drug abuse and treatment; drug-related crimes; transients; inappropriate social behaviors; mental illness; gang activity; and the impacts [increased calls for service have on our local justice system]. These complex issues require deep thought and analysis, and most importantly, open minds and plenty of room for disagreement and collaboration. Ultimately, the Task Force will develop a report on these issues and provide recommendations [for] short-term and long-term actions to City Council to include programmatic, budgetary, and policy-oriented solutions."

The following City of Santa Cruz residents were appointed to serve on the Task Force as they provided a "well-balanced representation of the community, including members from public safety (past and present), local non-profits, schools, university and community groups:"⁹

- Jeff Cole, Fire Captain, City of Mountain View
- Carolyn Coleman, Executive Director, Encompass Community Services (*formally Santa Cruz Community Counseling Center*)
- Renee Golder, Teacher, Santa Cruz City Schools
- Jim Howes, Assistant Director, Regional Occupational Program, Santa Cruz Office of Education (retired Santa Cruz Police Officer)
- Rod Libbey, Executive Director, Janus of Santa Cruz
- Danielle Long, Social Worker, Santa Cruz County
- Kristin Long, Family Attorney (former Assistant District Attorney)
- Kris Reyes, Director of General Services and External Relations, Santa Cruz Seaside Company
- Reyna Ruiz, Commission member, Commission for the Prevention of Violence Against Women
- Steve Schlicht, Marketing Director, easy on the eye design
- Dennis Smith, Commission member, Santa Cruz Port District Commission, (retired Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Lieutenant)
- Kim Stoner, Real Estate Appraiser and Consultant
- Bernie Tershy, Professor, University of California, Santa Cruz
- Deborah Tracy-Proulx, School Board President, Santa Cruz City Schools
- Patty Zoccoli, Business Co-Owner, Zoccoli's Deli¹⁰

⁹ April 9, 2013 City Council Agenda Report
(<http://sire.cityofsantacruz.com/sirepub/cache/2/pqw30f45qjv03r3ptdzn13zs/376769411032013025711311.PDF>)

¹⁰ Patty Zoccoli subsequently resigned from the Task Force for personal reasons.

Task Force Process

Introduction

The Task Force initiated their work on May 7, 2013 and focused the first set of meetings on establishing decorum, governance structure, work plan and educational priorities. By request of Mayor Hilary Bryant, Santa Cruz County Treasurer, Fred Keeley, provided guidance to the Task Force at their first meeting, understanding that the 15 members were heading into uncharted territory. Treasurer Keeley offered the following important advice:

- The Task Force should determine rules of engagement early in the process, by consensus.
- Meeting decorum and governance structure are fundamental components of the process.
- Conventional wisdom about issues and policy are not always the truth; therefore Task Force members should come into the process with an open mind.
- Given the diversity of opinion around the issues, the overarching goal of the Task Force should be to "manage principled compromise where no one compromises their principles." Principles are very different from ideas, opinions or notions.

Treasurer Keeley further recommended that the Task Force work plan include four components: study, analysis, solutions and recommendations. He likened the course of study to an "expanding and contracting universe." The Task Force would spend the vast majority of its time in the expanding phase, collecting data, hearing from experts, and broadening its perspectives. Then, in the contracting phase, the Task Force could use that information to assemble thoughtful, well-grounded and succinct recommendations, capable of far-reaching impacts. Finally, he suggested that the recommendations be measurable, adjustable and efficient and be operationalized by the City, County, neighborhoods and/or voters.

Leading up to the inaugural meeting, Task Force members were asked to provide their personal perspectives on the major safety issues facing the City. They identified the following list of critical issues, generally in descending order of community impact (by number of individual Task Force members identifying that issue):

- Violence
- Property/neighborhood crime
- Gangs/Gang activities
- Drug addiction
- Alcohol addiction
- Mental health issues
- Homelessness
- Homeless Service Center "enabling"
- Large number of unstable people in business district
- Transients/transient activities
- Court system/revolving door
- Jail realignment
- Environmental impacts on parks and open spaces
- Traffic safety



- Lack of sense of safety
- Pollution of beaches
- Insufficient public safety resources in City Budget
- Illegal camping
- Siphoning of police and fire resources to social problems
- Perceived high crime rates
- Syringe exchange
- Jail proximity to Downtown
- Party houses
- Aggravated assaults
- Public perception of ineffective law enforcement

The collective list of issues includes both causes and effects and many, if not all, are intrinsically related. In general, most critical issues fall into one of five categories, listed in order of causation: human conditions/afflictions, structural/systemic issues, behaviors and/or activities affecting public/community space, victimization, and public perception.

Equipped with these working priorities and Treasurer Keeley's recommendations, the Task Force elected a Chair and Vice Chair, Kris Reyes and Jim Howes respectively, developed a tentative schedule, and reached consensus on a three-meeting work plan. Heeding advice about keeping an open mind on the issues, the Task Force decided to use its list of critical issues as a baseline, but set educational priorities only after hearing the perspectives and experiences of the general public and the City's department staff. After the inaugural meeting, the next three meetings consisted of the following program:

Table 1: Prioritization of Study: Meeting Program		
May 29, 2013	June 12, 2013	June 26, 2013
City-oriented presentation (readily available data and staff testimony)	Public Comment (through survey and meeting attendance)	Prioritization of Themes of Study

Prioritization of Critical Issues/Themes of Study

The Task Force spent significant time distilling the wide range of issues identified down to the priorities it could reasonably address over their 6-month tenure. In establishing the priority list, the Task Force was mindful of incorporating the issues identified as most critical by the public, those issues that were creating significant hardship on City departments, and, in turn, issues that fell outside of the City's management jurisdiction but nonetheless negatively impacted our community. With those variables in mind, the May 29th and June 12th meetings focused on establishing those parameters and receiving the perspectives of both the City and the community.

City Perspectives

The City's jurisdiction over quality of life and public safety is limited to five distinct categories: municipal infrastructure, natural and waste management; emergency first responder (policing and fire safety); code enforcement; and parks/recreation. All five categories are interrelated and

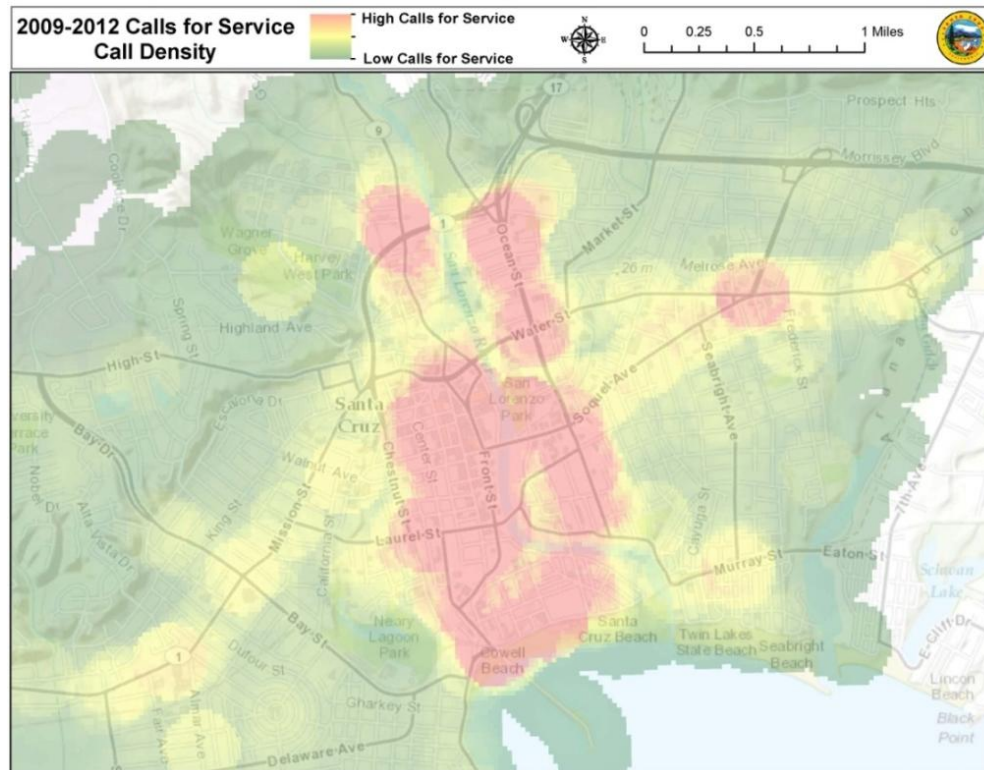
City departments work collaboratively to provide the highest quality of life for the Santa Cruz community.

On an average day, the City runs a seamless, but complex operation to ensure a safe environment for the community. Santa Cruz Police and Fire Departments typically respond to hundreds of calls for service¹¹ of varying degrees of gravity. The Police Department enforces Federal and State laws and City ordinances. The Fire Department responds to medical calls, fights fires, and performs inspections. Public Works and Park and Recreation Departments maintain City-owned facilities and the right-of-way. Park Rangers monitor the City’s parks, beaches and open spaces to ensure order. Code Enforcement upholds the City’s building and health standards.

The Task Force asked the City to provide insight on the safety challenges most burdensome to City operations, that is, those requiring the most staff and fiscal resources. City staff provided written material and testimony that highlighted several recurring themes.

Calls for Service: Calls for service are at an all-time high. Police responded to an astonishing 104,836 calls for service in 2012 (15.8% increase from 2011). Calls are trending up for 2013. Mapping of the annual calls for service provides insight on areas of public safety concern, from day to night, high tourist season to low season. The vast majority of calls for service are located in close proximity to the San Lorenzo River basin¹².

Figure 1: 2009-2012 Calls for Service Call Density



¹¹ Calls for service generally refers to assignments that are typically distributed to public safety professionals that require their presence to resolve, correct or assist a particular situation. The calls are generally initiated by the public or responding officer and relayed through the emergency telephone service (911).

¹² See Appendix 1 for more information.

Further, a large percentage of calls for service are related to individuals who self-identify as homeless, transient or use 115 Coral Street (the address of the Homeless Services Center) as their personal address. In fielding this record volume of calls for service, Police and Fire Department staffs are diverted from other important functions, limiting the amount of time and resources they can devote to prevention activities, training and community outreach.

Figure 2: 2012 Calls for Service Top 100 Call Locations



Repeat Offenders: Repeat offenders create a significant drain on the City’s public safety management resources. The City generated a report in April 2013 to track the number of arrests of repeat offenders (those with more than 10 arrests in the study period). Over a 28-month period—January 2011 to April 2013—146 individuals were arrested a total of 3,598 times. On average, these individuals were arrested 24 times during this period. Over 50 percent of the arrests were related to drugs or alcohol.¹³

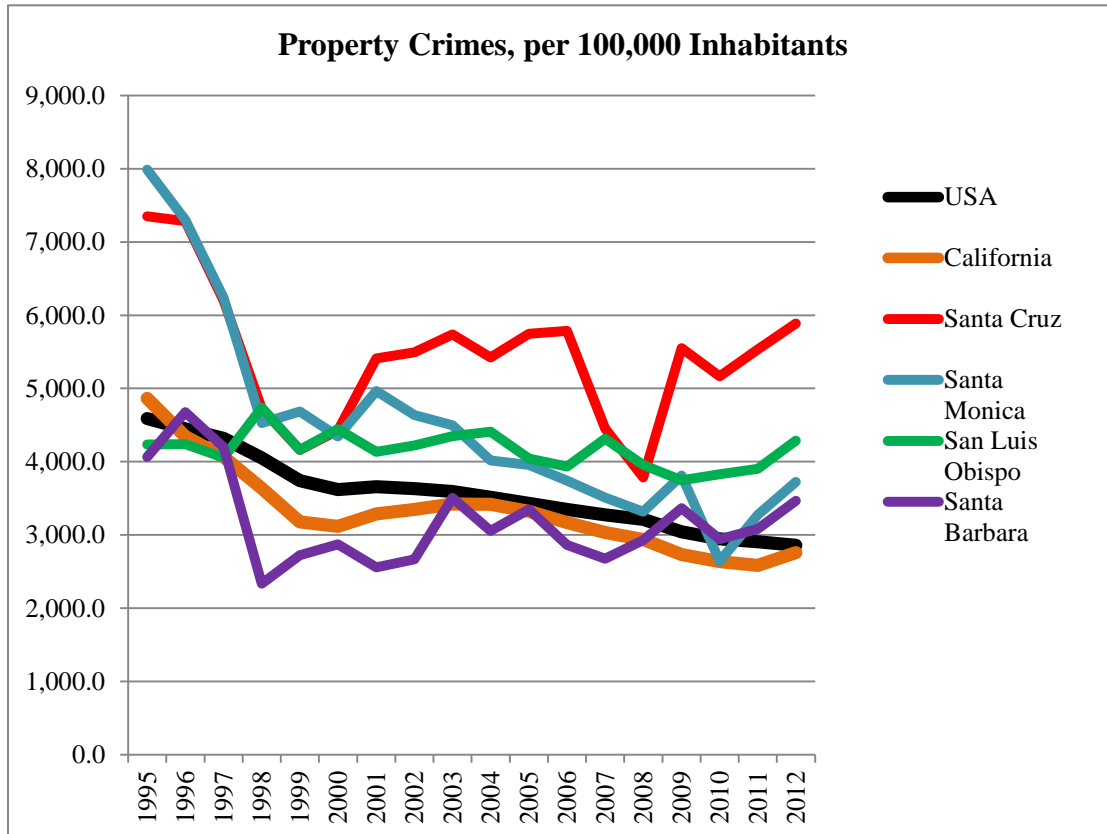
Crime Rates: Repeat offenders are a part of an intricate puzzle of crime in Santa Cruz. As a destination city, Santa Cruz sees spikes in crime rates for myriad reasons. On any given summer holiday weekend, the City experiences an influx of hundreds of thousands of visitors to its tourist destinations. Santa Cruz is the entertainment hub for the County, and alcohol-fueled violence and crime are factors on weekend nights Downtown throughout the year. Out-of-town gang members

¹³ See Appendix 2 for more information.

often spark gang-related violence. Substance abuse and addiction contribute to high property crime rates.

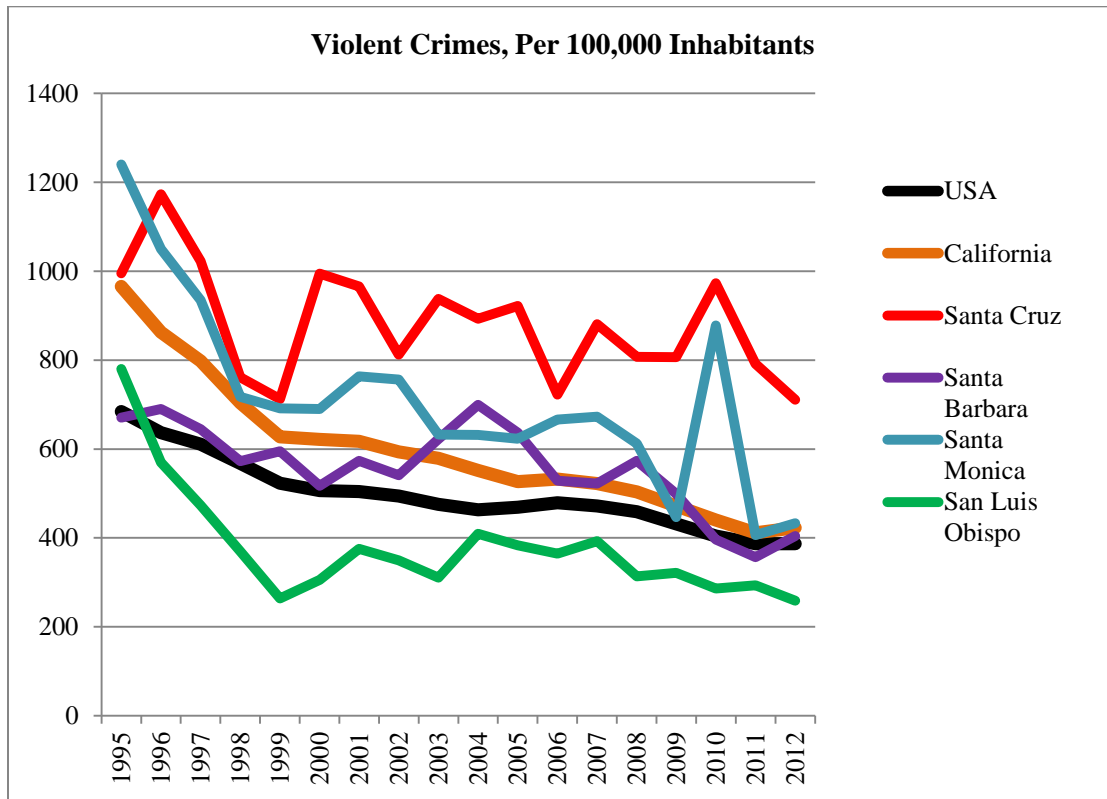
As demonstrated in the following charts, property and violent crime rates have dropped significantly from 1995 to 2012. However, Santa Cruz crime rates remain higher than state and national averages, and other similar communities. In fact, Santa Cruz has seen spikes in crime throughout that 17-year period, and is currently experiencing an uptick in property crime.

Figure 3: Santa Cruz Property Crime Rate Comparison



*Source: <http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/crimestats>. See Appendix 3 for more information.

Figure 4: Santa Cruz Violent Crime Rate Comparison



*Source: <http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/crimestats>. See Appendix 3 for more information.

The themes noted above (high volume of calls for service, repeat offenders and disproportionately high crime rates) present a constant set of public safety management challenges for the City. Additionally, several prominent issues routinely compound these challenges, resulting in very few “average days” for City public safety operations. Illegal camping and trash dumping, public nuisance and erratic behaviors, addiction-fueled petty crime, alcohol-fueled violence, gang-related drug trafficking and violence, and a “revolving door” criminal justice system place an extremely heavy load on City resources.

Environmental and geographical factors add to the management complexity of these issues as well. Santa Cruz is the County seat and the city center is home to the vast majority of North County’s social and health services, the criminal justice system, and many non-profit social services, resulting in a high concentration of vulnerable people in the heart of the community. The city center is also home to large and forested open spaces, creating an ideal setting to congregate, hide, take drugs, and commit crime. Taken separately, these conditions pose challenges. With all these factors occurring in concert almost every day of the year, the City and our partners’ systems are overwhelmed, creating an untenable public safety management scenario.



The outcome of the May 29th City-oriented data and testimony validated many of the critical issues identified by the individual Task Force members. Similar top priorities included: substance abuse; environmental and social degradation of City parks, open spaces and business districts; violent crime; and lack of judicial recourse for municipal code violations.

Participating Community Perspective

Staff disseminated an informal poll in early June in preparation of the June 12th Public Comment meeting. Within a week of the poll’s release, over a thousand responses were tabulated. Although not a statistically relevant data set, poll results were used to shed light on community perception around public safety issues for those who responded.

Poll respondents were asked to select their top three public safety concerns from a list of identified safety issues generated by the Task Force members; alternatively, respondents could provide their own prioritization and feedback. The results of the poll can be found in the table below.

Table 2: Results of Informal Community Poll

Safety Issue	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority	Total	% of Responses
Inappropriate Transient/ Homeless Activity	199	157	134	490	48%
Gang Activity	116	120	85	321	31%
Substance Abuse	108	114	93	315	31%
Violent Crime	108	62	50	220	21%
Homeless Service Center Enabling	60	62	60	182	18%
Homelessness	58	58	44	160	16%
Property and Neighborhood Crime	58	72	111	241	23%
Lack of Sense of Safety	47	37	50	134	13%
Mental Illness	45	63	42	150	15%
Lack of Public Safety Funding	44	14	12	70	7%
Syringe Exchange	28	51	47	126	12%
Environmental Impacts on Parks, Open Spaces and Beaches	19	45	56	120	12%
Perceived High Crime Rate	17	12	14	43	4%
Traffic Safety	15	8	27	50	5%
Citizens Feel Law Enforcement is Ineffective	10	12	21	43	4%
Jail Realignment	4	7	11	22	2%
Siphoning of Resources	4	9	17	30	3%
Jail Proximity to Downtown	3	8	8	19	2%
Inappropriate College Student Activity	0	2	7	9	1%

In addition to the results tabulated above, the poll gave respondents an opportunity to provide their own list of priorities and comment on the characterizations of the public safety issues included in the poll. Over 200 responses included a write-in comment or prioritization of issues. For the most part respondents elaborated on the issues included in the poll, but several additional themes surfaced as a result of the write-in option. These included:

- Investment in prevention and treatment of mental illness and addiction has a higher payoff compared to criminalizing those suffering from these issues.
- The City needs more foot patrol police officers.
- The City needs more low-income housing.
- Unemployment plays a large role in our homeless issue.
- There is not an integrated approach to our regional public safety issues.
- Bike safety should be a priority.
- There is a major problem with how the court system handles drug and public nuisance crimes.
- More resources should go to the pursuit and arrest of drug dealers in town.
- Public discourse around these issues should shift to a conversation about unacceptable behaviors and crimes rather than housing and health status.

The public was also provided an opportunity to discuss their concerns with the Task Force at the June 12th meeting. Over 30 members of the community, including four Santa Cruz Youth Council representatives, offered public input. Major themes included:

- Overwhelming negative effect of garbage in parks, Levee, open spaces, and other public locations. The need for sharps containers, garbage cans and 24-hour bathrooms.
- The community needs more drug and mental illness treatment programs.
- Identification requirements for social service recipients.
- Need for more affordable housing supply.
- Using youth as a resource.
- Sexual assault and rape should be a high priority.
- Night Walks program could be an effective way to decrease crime.
- Santa Cruz Sanctuary Camp could be a tool for decreasing the effects of illegal camping.
- The HSC needs more monitoring and patrol around meal times.

In addition to the themes highlighted above, one community member summarized his correspondence with Santa Cruz Police Department (SCPD) Chief Kevin Vogel regarding his perspective on these issues. In these exchanges, Chief Vogel identified the following four broad topics for the Task Force to consider:

1. The negative impacts of AB109 on our community.
2. The negative impacts of the County Superior Court's current handling of municipal code infraction citations through a civil process.
3. The negative impacts of lack of treatment programs for drug addiction.
4. The negative impacts of the high number of high-risk alcohol outlets within the City of Santa Cruz.

The outcome of the public comment session yielded very similar results to the other contact points with the community, City staff and Task Force members. Comments provided by Chief Vogel particularly resonated with the oft-noted challenges around substance abuse and the criminal justice system.



Prioritization and Educational Strategy

The Task Force, with input from City staff and the general public, identified three areas of critical interest or themes of study: environmental degradation and behaviors affecting our sense of safety in the City’s parks, open spaces, beaches and businesses districts; substance abuse, drug trafficking and related non-violent crime; and gang violence/violent crime. These three critical issues draw significantly on the City’s budget and staffing resources, and increasingly limit the ability to provide the core municipal public safety functions expected by the community. Additionally, the Task Force wanted to understand the interaction of the three identified critical themes with current local and statewide criminal justice and governance policies. The Task Force decided to host a seven-meeting education program to hear from experts in the field, dialog with the City’s partner agencies, and gain a broader perspective on the role of the City and its criminal justice regional partners in managing these critical issues. The seven-week program was scheduled as follows:

Table 3: Seven-Week Program		
Task Force Meetings	Theme Covered	Expert Panelists
July 10, 2013	Theme 2: Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Drug Trafficking, and Related Non-Violent or Petty Crime.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deputy Police Rick Martinez, Santa Cruz Police Department 2. Current Addict/Criminal Justice Recidivist 3. Lynn Harrison, Drug and Alcohol Program Manager , Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency 4. Rod Libbey, Task Force Member and Director of Janus (Santa Cruz, CA)
July 24, 2013	Theme 2: Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Drug Trafficking, and Related Non-Violent or Petty Crime.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bill Manov, Program Chief, Santa Cruz Health Services Agency Drug and Alcohol Program 2. Scott MacDonald, Santa Cruz County Probation Chief 3. Lisa Hernandez, MD, Medical Services Director/County Health Officer, Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency 4. Emily Ager, Community Health and Harm Reduction Supervisor, Street Outreach Supporters (Santa Cruz, CA)
August 7, 2013	Theme 1: Environmental Degradation and Behaviors Affecting our Sense of Safety in the City’s Parks, Open Spaces, Beaches and Business Districts Spaces, Beaches and Justice System)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rick Martinez, Deputy Chief, Santa Cruz Police Department 2. Julie Hendee, Redevelopment Manager, City of Santa Cruz 3. Monica Martinez, Director, Homeless Services Center (Santa Cruz, CA) 4. Ray Bramson, Homeless Encampment Project Manager, City of San José
August 21, 2013	Theme 1: Environmental Degradation and Behaviors Affecting our Sense of Safety in the City’s Parks, Open Spaces, Beaches and Business Districts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pam Rogers-Wyman, Acute Services Program Manager, Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency 2. Judge Ariadne Symons, Santa Cruz County Superior Court 3. Ky Le, Director of Homeless Systems,

Task Force Meetings	Theme Covered	Expert Panelists
		Santa Clara County 4. Jennifer Loving, Executive Director, Destination Home (Santa Clara, CA)
September 3, 2013	Theme 4: Criminal Justice System and Governance Structure	1. John Barisone, City Attorney 2. Phil Wowak, Santa Cruz County Sheriff and Jeremy Verinsky, Chief Deputy 3. John Salazar, Presiding Judge, Santa Cruz County Superior Court
September 18, 2013	Theme 4: Criminal Justice System, Violent Crime and Governance Structure	1. Bob Lee, Santa Cruz County District Attorney 2. Jerry Christensen and Larry Biggam, Santa Cruz County Public Defenders
October 2, 2013	Theme 3: Gang Violence	1. Officer Joe Hernandez, Santa Cruz Police Department 2. Nane Alejandrez, Director, Barrios Unidos (Santa Cruz, CA) 3. Mario Sulay, Commander, Santa Cruz County Gang Task Force 4. Willie Stokes, Executive Director and Founder, Black Sheep Redemption Program (Santa Cruz, CA)

*The Task Force elected to study Theme 2 first, given that drug addiction is considered a primary cause of many public safety issues in Santa Cruz.

The educational meetings provided an opportunity for the Task Force to work with the City and its regional partners to examine the causes and effects of the critical themes of study. The resulting dialog transitioned public discourse around these issues from broad-based assumptions, conjecture and perceptions to an evidence-based and data-driven understanding of these public safety challenges. The Task Force grappled with issues and perceptions very sensitive in nature to the community, from the role of the homeless and transient populations in perpetuating the effects of Theme 1 and Theme 2, to the role of City and County governmental and criminal justice policies in creating a perceived “draw” to Santa Cruz for those participating in all of the identified themes.

Study/Analysis Phase

Introduction

The Task Force’s early discussions with City staff and the public established a framework for the remaining proceedings. Given that testimony and data, it was apparent that not only are the issues extremely complex, but also fundamentally related. Each thematic issue compounds and intensifies the challenges of the others, with substance abuse and addiction seemingly being the catalyst for much of the public nuisance behaviors and crime in the City.

In order to establish a comprehensive narrative, and equip themselves with enough information to make informed decisions, the Task Force was required to be strategic in its course of study. First, given that impressions can greatly influence community image and how community members interact with each other and their environment, it was critically important for the Task Force to understand the competing perceptions around each theme and the evolution of those perceptions. Additionally, it was important to evaluate carefully the relationship between the themes. Within that context, developing an understanding of root causes such as addiction, homelessness and mental illness became the priority in that management of symptoms alone has limited effectiveness.

Lastly, in order to identify highly effective solutions to these challenges, the Task Force needed to understand the current systems in place, outside of the City's jurisdiction, to manage the most critical public safety challenges. Social service and criminal justice systems offer prevention, intervention, enforcement and accountability measures to reduce crime and other safety challenges. Within a systems discussion framework, those working in the social service and criminal justice systems could help identify where program inefficiencies exist and be part of the dialogue to build stronger and more collaborative recommendations that connect the various public safety management pieces.

Theme 2: Drug Addiction and Non-Violent Crime

Substance abuse and addiction are societal problems and Santa Cruz is not unique in feeling their damaging effects. Few in our community are free of some connection to this problem. Whether a family member or friend suffers from the disease, or one witnesses open use of drugs or drug deals, or worse, is a victim of addiction-related crime, this issue impacts us all. Consequently, we each have an opinion of the community's problems based on our personal experiences and the stories we share with one another.

The Task Force heard from individuals who shared their stories as they related to the critical themes of study. While not a full representation of the problem, one such personal reflection from a heroin addict, Nate, sheds light on the relationship between addiction, petty crime and life on the street as an addict in Santa Cruz.

Nate

"If it's (illicit drugs) got a hold of you, you're going to get what you need no matter what. You'd have to throw me in jail, lock me up miles and miles away, to kick this habit."

Nate is a 21-year old heroin addict. Born and raised in Santa Cruz, Nate split his childhood between stints at his mother's home in Aptos and his grandmother's home on the Westside of Santa Cruz. Nate started smoking marijuana at nine. He tried heroin for the first time at 16, and acquired a hard-core addiction by 18.

Nate lives on the streets in Santa Cruz and sustains his \$80/day heroin habit by stealing from stores, cars and homes. He also steals to pay for sustenance (hotel stays and food). In his testimony, he noted it's easy to hang out Downtown because everything an addict needs is in



such close proximity. When he needs drugs, he calls a friend or finds someone on the streets. Nate panhandles for small change from people on the street when he is hungry and needs a meal. He claimed panhandling is insufficient to support his drug habit in Santa Cruz. Instead, he trades stolen goods for money or drugs.

Nate asserted that he tried for a long time to get into rehab before his first felony conviction. But, he said, it is impossible to get into a rehab in Santa Cruz that is not “overly religious” or does not require hard labor. Nate now has multiple felony convictions and layers of probation, but is no longer interested in going to rehab. He claimed the only way to get clean would be to lock him up in jail, far away from Santa Cruz.

Nate reported what he described as a new trend in Santa Cruz. Heroin has become a trendy drug for Santa Cruz high school and UCSC students, with kids as young as 14 using heroin. Heroin is a drug of choice on the party scene. Nate has frequently seen UCSC students stop their cars and ask to buy heroin from his friends. According to Nate, methamphetamine (meth) is more of a street drug used by homeless people than a recreational drug.

Though Nate has used heroin for years, he has never disposed a used syringe in a sharps container. If needed, he said, he will break off the tip of the syringe and throw it in the trash. He believes that a solution to people stealing for drugs is to have more methadone clinics, free food and clean syringes from an easily accessible syringe exchange.

Scope of the Problem/Community Perceptions

Nate is just one example of the highly challenging issues around drug addiction and crime in Santa Cruz, and certainly his story cannot be taken to represent the range of addicts and their circumstances. Nonetheless, his account resonates strongly with local attitudes regarding the nature of drug addiction. There is strong community sentiment in Santa Cruz that substance abuse and drug dealing is more prevalent here than other towns with similar demographics. Many believe that long-term community tolerance for alcohol and “recreational” drug use has contributed to County youth ambivalence towards and acceptance of illicit drug use, while creating a “brand” that draws addicts, dealers and other criminals to our town. From this perspective, such pull factors, coupled with perceived lax drug policies and sentencing of drug related offenses, have created a vicious cycle of drug abuse and petty crime in our community.

Like many communities throughout the United States and California, Santa Cruz is dealing with widespread use of meth. Meth seems to have changed the drug user demographic in Santa Cruz over the last several years. Meth users appear more inclined to indulge in risky and violent behaviors and commit crimes at a higher rate compared to addicts of depressant drugs like heroin. There is strong community sentiment that the high population of younger “transients” coming to Santa Cruz use and abuse meth.

There is little community disagreement that substance abuse is a major problem in Santa Cruz and that addiction leads to myriad crime and behavior issues. However, there are competing positions regarding the solutions to the problem. Many in the community have expressed concern over a lack of adequate substance treatment and prevention programs. Others believe only

stronger enforcement and sentencing of those dealing and abusing drugs and alcohol can root out the problem.

Expert Panelist Discussion

The Task Force discussed Theme 2 with eight expert panelists. They included:

- Deputy Police Chief Rick Martinez, Santa Cruz Police Department
- Nate, current probationer and heroin addict
- Lynn Harrison, Drug and Alcohol Program Manager, Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency
- Rod Libbey, Janus Executive Director
- Bill Manov, Program Chief, Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency Drug and Alcohol Program
- Scott MacDonald, Santa Cruz County Probation Chief
- Lisa Hernandez, MD, Medical Services Director/County Health Officer, Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency
- Emily Ager, Community Health and Harm Reduction Supervisor, Street Outreach Supporters

Discussion centered on the state of the community, from the perspective of the Santa Cruz Police Department and Santa Cruz County Health, with regard to substance abuse, local treatment options/best practices, and the relationship between the criminal justice system and drug treatment. The efficacy of the County's Syringe Exchange Program was discussed with emphasis on the distinction between enabling drug addiction and harm reduction. Nate, the current probationer/heroin addict, provided a personal perspective on the prevalence of drugs in Santa Cruz County and related crime.

Several problems resonated through panel remarks and follow-up questions. In summary, Santa Cruz has a high concentration of drug and alcohol addicts. Repeat offenders, of which over 50% commit substance-related crimes, create a significant drain on City and County resources. Santa Cruz appears to provide an environment conducive to untreated and perpetuated addiction due to several factors. There currently is an oversaturation of alcohol outlets and drug dealers in our community. Publicly provided drug abuse treatment is insufficiently funded to meet demand for services. The Serial Inebriate Program (SIP) and Drug Court are successful models for treatment and recidivism reduction, yet remain underfunded, yielding mixed results. The underfunding of treatment options, in combination with overcrowding in the County Jail facilities and light criminal sentencing for drug and non-violent offences, limits the criminal justice system's ability to effectively adjudicate drug offenses. Thus, a perception has been created among the community (offenders and non-offenders alike) that there is little consequence to substance abuse and related non-violent crime.

Violent and non-violent crimes are strongly linked to substance addiction; therefore, prevention and treatment are paramount to reducing victimization in Santa Cruz. Universally, panelists were adamant that funding of prevention and intervention programs within schools, County Health and Human Services, treatment non-profits, and the criminal justice system, are more



cost-effective in reducing crime compared to incarceration. The County is home to a wealth of effective prevention and intervention programs. Unfortunately, most programs are insufficiently funded.

Conclusion

Drug addiction is pervasive in Santa Cruz and, as a result, our community has an untenable situation to overcome. There are many different interventions that can be effective in breaking the vicious cycle of drug addiction and crime (crimes fueled by drug highs and/or theft to support a habit). Early prevention and treatment are key and oftentimes more effective and less expensive than criminal justice interventions like jail time. But in Santa Cruz these strategic interventions are not currently working to address the high concentration of addicts in our community. Prevention and treatment are grossly underfunded and drug sentencing is lax, often leading to probation for felony drug charge convictions. Without an effective management strategy and interventions working seamlessly, the community is left to deal with scores of drug addicts who are unaccountable for their actions and have no resources to overcome their problems.

Theme 1: Environmental Degradation and Behaviors Affecting our Sense of Safety

Santa Cruz is a community rich in natural resources including parks, open spaces and beaches. We are a community that thoroughly enjoys the outdoors and all the landscape has to offer. The City's growth policies reflect those values, and as a result, our community is blanketed with forested open space and parks. One can traverse from the hills to the sea without touching foot on pavement.

These segments of open space connect our community's essential business and commercial districts to Downtown and the neighboring residential areas. While a unique and beautiful landscape to enjoy, the City's network of open space creates a significant public safety and health management challenge.

Many in Santa Cruz believe that the community's open spaces and business districts are not enjoyable for several reasons. A high concentration of homeless people live and camp in open areas stretching from the UCSC campus down through the San Lorenzo River Levee and surrounding parks near Downtown and the beach area. At times, this homeless population comes with erratic behaviors, trash, sleeping materials and human waste. Behaviors not perceived as normal can be off-putting to many and even frightening to others. Waste and the resulting deterioration of our public spaces create health concerns, driving away would-be park users, particularly those with small children. One only needs to visit the San Lorenzo Benchlands Park on a weekend afternoon to witness the depth of this problem.

Additionally, a high concentration of crime takes places along the San Lorenzo River corridor. Fear of crime limits pro-social opportunities along the Levee and neighboring parks. For some, this fear translates into an aversion to visit Downtown. Aggressive panhandling, public intoxication, and other unpredictable behaviors along Pacific Avenue and in the beach area are perennial problems and have diminished the potential of the community's most prized business

district to flourish and grow economically.

In an attempt to manage the challenges around our public spaces and business districts, the City has adopted several municipal codes ordinances to regulate public nuisance behavior. However, the current enforcement and accountability strategy of these ordinances is clearly not working. Many in our community witness the same individuals day in and day out behaving in erratic ways, causing disturbances, harassing others, and getting cited for municipal code infractions without consequences. This repetitive behavior and the perception that there is no accountability are genuine concerns and a significant drain on Police, Park and Public Works staff resources.

One example of individuals with repeat municipal code violations and arrests is Miguel DeLeon and Ana Richardson. Their story exemplifies the community's crisis around repeat municipal code offenders and the lack of accountability currently provided by the criminal justice system.

DeLeon and Richardson

“As time went on, he exhibited growing territorial behaviors and a mentality of entitlement. He is almost entirely free of substance abuse charges and/or signs of mental illness. He is completely competent that what he is doing is unlawful, yet he has no regard for the law.”

Miguel DeLeon is a 40-year-old resident of Santa Cruz. DeLeon is a serial municipal code infraction offender and a constant challenge for the Santa Cruz Police Department. DeLeon and his partner, Ana Richardson, together have hundreds of unpaid municipal code citations and have cost the City tens of thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours of Police Department and City Attorney time.

Originally from Elk Grove, DeLeon has lived on the streets in Santa Cruz for several years. Richardson, 32, left her Santa Cruz home at age 14. Both street musicians, DeLeon and Richardson “dream of making a living and making the world a better place with their music.”¹⁴

DeLeon's first contact with SCPD was in 2002, and since that time he has been a constant fixture of the Santa Cruz criminal backdrop. His offenses are varied - illegal camping, urinating in public, in park space after hours, and washing in public fountains, amongst others - but the rate of his offenses is constant. SCPD has been managing DeLeon and his behaviors since the first year he moved from Elk Grove to Santa Cruz.

In 2008, DeLeon began exhibiting territorial behavior around his campsites, at times creating barriers that made entering into businesses impossible for workers and clients. Almost entirely free of substance abuse charges and/or signs of mental illness, he was considered completely competent, and aware that what he was doing was unlawful. Quite simply, he had no regard for the law.

In 2009, with over 60 unpaid citations at the time, and complaints from the post office, Bunny's Shoes, Borders Books, Lulu Carpenter's, and the Palomar Building, the City decided to file a

¹⁴ http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/ci_12483386?source=most_viewed

permanent civil injunction against DeLeon and Richardson to prohibit them from sleeping and committing muni code violations Downtown.

Judge Paul Burdick granted the injunction. Since that time, DeLeon continues to be cited for muni code violations and continues to live on the streets in Santa Cruz. His behavior has not changed; in fact, his offenses have escalated in severity.

In the last year, DeLeon has been arrested 18 times for warrants, probation violations, narcotics, theft, resisting arrest and trespassing. Over that span of 12 months, DeLeon was cited 15 times for municipal code violations and had eight other SCPD contacts.

Scope of the Problem/Community Perceptions

DeLeon and Richardson are indeed just one example of Santa Cruz's difficult problem of nuisance behaviors in our public spaces. However, there are many others with similar stories, creating disorder Downtown, along the Levee, and in other parts of the City. While not exclusively a homeless or transient issue, there is strong public sentiment in Santa Cruz that the homeless are responsible for much of the behaviors and activities around Theme 1. Many in our community perceive transients to be drawn to Santa Cruz because of mild weather, easy access to drugs, lax criminal justice policies, and plentiful social service provisions.

Many in Santa Cruz believe there to be a significant public health threat due to human waste and hypodermic syringes in our public spaces. While difficult to quantify, many also believe that our business districts suffer due to the disruptive behaviors and loitering.

There is also strong public sentiment in Santa Cruz that those experiencing homelessness should not be persecuted or become scapegoats for the behaviors and activities around Theme 1. As one of the most vulnerable segments of the Santa Cruz population, many believe that our homelessness problem and the behaviors and activities around Theme 1 are crimes of circumstance (living in the open) and a function of limited affordable housing options, high cost of living, insufficient social services and/or a lack of organized homeless camping.

Thus, there seems to be competing sentiments about the supposed causes and solutions to the behaviors and activities around Theme 1. Some feel that stronger enforcement and penalties are required, others feel that underlying factors (i.e., homelessness and substance addiction), which they perceive to be the root causes of the behaviors mentioned above, should be addressed more effectively. Fortunately, there is common ground to build upon, as most community members attest that less homelessness is better for all, and we need work together to address this difficult issue.

Expert Panelist Discussion

The Task Force discussed Theme 1 with eight expert panelists. They included:

- Deputy Police Chief Rick Martinez, Santa Cruz Police Department
- Julie Hendee, Redevelopment Manager, City of Santa Cruz
- Monica Martinez, Director, Homeless Services Center
- Ray Bramson, Homeless Encampment Project Manager, City of San José
- Pam Rogers-Wyman, Acute Services Program Manager, Santa Cruz County
- Ky Le, Director of Homeless Systems, Santa Clara County
- Jennifer Loving, Executive Director, Destination Home
- Judge Ariadne Symons, Santa Cruz County Superior Court

Discussion centered on the environmental, economic, programmatic and budgetary impacts to the City caused by quality-of-life crimes, anti-social behaviors, and illegal camping. Panelists offered their perspectives on best-practice solutions to reduce behaviors that fuel these problems, ranging from housing homeless individuals and drug and mental health treatment, to reprogramming/reactivation and enforcement. Several themes crystallized through panel remarks and Task Force follow-up questions.

In summary, Santa Cruz has a disproportionately large homeless population (over 3,500 countywide), many living completely unsheltered.¹⁵ Mental illness and addiction, whether individual conditions or co-occurring, directly influence how a large percentage of our homeless population interacts with the community and our environment. Large swaths of open space, heavily forested and abundant in natural cover, provide ideal spaces to camp illegally and commit crime. Our community's open spaces and business districts are geographically linked, moreover, with the San Lorenzo River corridor providing access from encampments to social services and the Downtown district.

Lack of jail space, treatment options, and ineffective methods for managing quality-of-life crimes within the criminal justice system greatly diminish the Santa Cruz Police Department's capacity to limit these behaviors. Calls for service and arrests are at a record high, with a heavy concentration along the San Lorenzo River corridor. Despite this effort, the problems persist. Without an effective way to manage this problem, potential for crime and drug abuse to escalate is a concern.

Panelists agreed that solutions need to balance prevention with enforcement. Housing the most vulnerable and chronic homeless demonstrably reduces law enforcement costs and could create a marked improvement to community perceptions around homeless behaviors. With substance abuse and mental illness a root cause of the behaviors around Theme 1, prevention and treatment programs should be considered first. Homeless encampment removals can be effective and long lasting with early outreach and services to those affected. Greater collaboration between law

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http://www.appliedsurveyresearch.org/storage/database/homelessness/santacruz/Homeless2013_SantaCruz_FullReport.pdf



enforcement and the courts is necessary to create more accountability for public nuisance offenders. It is essential for each of these solutions to work in concert, thus requiring strong collaboration between jurisdictions and social service providers.

Conclusion

Santa Cruz has a staggering homelessness problem with over 3,500 individuals countywide living without a home. This overwhelming number challenges all public and non-profit systems, from hospitals, health care, service providers, and shelters, to parks and open space, to police and the Superior Court. The impacts on our community members from hosting such a large population of unsheltered people are real; residents, business owners, visitors, community service workers, public safety officers and homeless individuals themselves feel these impacts on a daily basis.

From a tangible perspective, illegal encampments pepper the landscape throughout the City and County. The accumulation of human waste, trash, and spent hypodermic syringes create real public health hazards and safety issues for park and open space attendees. Further, attitudes of entitlement from illegal campers create physical and social barriers to communal use of many of our open spaces and parks. From a theoretical perspective, as a community of both housed and unsheltered residents, Santa Cruz is faced with a difficult moral dilemma as we share space with fellow citizens living in substandard conditions that affect physical health, mental health and spirit. Competition over the use of public and community spaces creates divisions within a community, leading to breakdowns of social cohesion.¹⁶

While the vast majority of homeless individuals in the community abide by the law, Santa Cruz is burdened by a segment of the homeless population that is responsible for escalated disorder and public health concerns. Disruptive behaviors and flagrant disposal of human waste, illegal trash and hypodermic syringes, oftentimes symptoms of substance abuse and mental illness, are a major public health concern and exacerbate fear of crime in Santa Cruz. A commonly held perception that homelessness is uniquely tied to crime and substance abuse further marginalizes that segment of the community.

A solution to Santa Cruz's homelessness problem is incredibly complex and falls outside of the charge of the Task Force. However, there are systems in place to reduce the effects of this staggering problem. Providing housing to those most vulnerable and likely to benefit from additional services is a primary goal. It is equally important to build new prevention and intervention techniques within the social service and criminal justice systems to manage the most disruptive criminal element of the population.

Theme 3: Gang Violence and Violent Crime

Many kids in Santa Cruz County, especially those from under-represented families, are tangled in a complex web of gang culture. Predominately Hispanic Norteño/Northerner and Sureño/Southerner gangs have established territorial lines all over the County. Gangs prey on and

¹⁶ *Understanding How Homelessness Affects Us All*, Renfrew Collingwood Steering Committee, Vancouver, Canada.



victimize families experiencing poverty and other social inequities, recruiting youngsters looking for a culture of support and connection. Oftentimes, kids are simply victims of their geographical circumstances, with neighborhoods across the County claimed by certain gangs. Simply living in specific areas increases one's risk to experience gang violence and rivalry issues. Families in Beach Flats and Lower Ocean understand this problem first hand.

Many in our community have no personal experience with the damaging effects of gang violence in Santa Cruz. But that does not make the problem any less severe for those families involved in gang culture. One such story, of a teenage boy from South County, demonstrates the critical need for everyone in Santa Cruz to understand the issues around gang violence and culture.

Juan

“Are you optimistic about your future? No, not really. I think I’ll probably be dead in a few years.”

Juan is a teenager from Santa Cruz County. A son of migrant farm workers, Juan has spent his entire life in the same house in a rural neighborhood. His parents pick berries for a living. He is the oldest of the family.

Juan spends every minute of his waking hours fearing for his life. Although he has never been “jumped in,” Juan is a Sureño gang member by affiliation. Juan is a victim of poor judgment and a set of circumstances far outside of his control. His story is tragic but is no different than the stories of countless kids living in Santa Cruz County.

Juan's parents migrated to Santa Cruz County as teenagers and had Juan when they were 19 years old. In the berry season, his father and mother pick from 6:00 am - 6:00 pm, making \$1.40 box and \$4.00/hour in wages. Picking labor is strenuous and exhausting, leaving Juan's parents oftentimes too tired to care for their children above their most basic needs. On school days growing up, Juan was left to his own devices. He was never self-motivated in school and did not receive consistent support from his parents.

Juan's neighborhood is traditionally Sureño. Growing up with kids from the neighborhood with Sureño familial ties, by his middle school years, Juan was identified Sureño simply by association. While not interested in being officially initiated into the gang, Juan considered himself Sureño and spent most of his school days smoking weed with his friends. He was not involved in after-school programs and no one paid attention to his grades.

Juan attended a local high school for two years but only managed to accrue 10 credits while he was there. He failed nearly every class, leading to his expulsion for failing grades. He transferred to an alternative high school to finish his high school education. With most kids at the alternative school affiliated with Norteño gangs, Juan was quickly identified as a Sureño scrub. Juan's stint at the alternative school lasted only six months because he was jumped and severely beaten. He was so traumatized by the experience, he finished high school through the Santa Cruz County Office of Education with their independent study program, commuting to weekly Santa Cruz to take classes.



Although done with high school and currently employed full time, Juan continues to be plagued by his Sureño affiliation. His life has been threatened multiple times. Recently, while sitting in his car in a parking lot, a Norteño gang member pointed a gun at his head but did not pull the trigger.

Juan is expecting a baby with his teenage girlfriend who lives with her mom in his neighborhood. Her family doesn't know she's having a baby. While excited to be a parent and meet his child, Juan worries about how to provide for his girlfriend and his child. He doesn't have the means to rent an apartment. He doesn't have a plan for building a career. He feels stuck and has no optimism for his future. In fact, he's not hopeful about seeing his child grow up.

Juan believes that kids join gangs for the lifestyle. Guns, drugs, girls and partying are the main draw for kids. Initiated young, middle school kids are not aware of the risks involved in gangs or don't believe they'll be involved in the most violent acts. Juan believes that if kids had other interesting things to do, they might be able to stay out of gangs. Most importantly, he maintains that strong family and community support are essential for the survival of Latino youth in Santa Cruz County.

Scope of the Problem/Community Perceptions

While in recent months much of the community discourse over our public safety challenges has focused on Theme 1 and Theme 2, there continues to be very deep concerns around gang violence. Juan's story, including the exceedingly difficult circumstances of his life, is a prime example of how a large segment of our community is suffering because of gang issues. Gang violence has plagued his life even though he never formally joined a gang.

Over the last several years, Santa Cruz has experienced many high-profile aggravated assaults and murders, both with and without gang associations. There is much community speculation on the role of local gangs in drug trafficking, and how much violent crime is tied to drug deals. Gang initiations create a sense of randomness around youth violence. It is apparent that rival gang interactions often end in acts of extreme violence.

In contrast to the first two themes, there does not seem to be competing discourse on how to solve the problems around gang violence. In fact, this theme seems to be the least understood or discussed by those participating in the Task Force proceedings. There was strong agreement, however, that gang violence needs to be examined closely and addressed by the Task Force.

Expert Panelist Discussion

The Task Force discussed Theme 3 with four expert panelists. They included:

- Officer Joe Hernandez, Santa Cruz Police Department
- Nane Alejandrez, Director, Barrios Unidos
- Mario Sulay, Commander, Santa Cruz County Gang Task Force
- Willie Stokes, Director, Black Sheep Redemption Program

Discussions centered on the nature of gang activity and violence in Santa Cruz County, what gangs are involved, and the social and economic structures in our community that catalyze gang assemblage, drug trafficking and violence.

Gangs within the City of Santa Cruz span racial lines, with territorial rivalries predominately fueling violent crime. Santa Cruz County has approximately 1,200 documented gangs members, of which 64% are 25 years or younger. Current County programs, both preventative and suppression, concentrate resources on the predominately Hispanic Norteño/Northerner and Sureño/Southerner gangs, as these gangs are responsible for the vast majority of gang crime and violence in the region.

The Santa Cruz County Gang Task Force deploys predominately in South County, where 75% of the gang cases take place. Rival gang members from outside of the area frequently spark Santa Cruz City's gang-related violence. South County and neighboring region gang members elect to commit crime in Santa Cruz to avoid detection from local law enforcement. Neighborhoods in Santa Cruz, particularly concentrated in Beach Flats and the Westside, fall victim to territorial gang rivalries, much of which does not originate with Santa Cruz gang-affiliated residents.¹⁷

Overwhelmingly, panelists agreed that prevention and early intervention are critical to limit the number of young males entering gangs in Santa Cruz County. Because active and supervised youth are much less likely to join a gang, after-school enrichment programs are essential for under-represented and at-risk school children. Families from under-represented and low socio-economic classes need community support and outreach, with wraparound models providing services, counseling and familiarity with law enforcement officials. Panelists agreed that more structured and supervised activities during the 3:00-9:00 pm timeframe are essential for the engagement of youth in a positive direction.

Conclusion

At-risk youth in Santa Cruz and all across the County are highly susceptible to joining a gang. Economically disadvantaged families often spend a disproportionately high amount of time working, leaving children to the own devices after school and on weekends.

While gang violence is not experienced community-wide, Santa Cruz has an obligation nonetheless to manage this problem with prevention and enforcement. After-school programming is essential for pre at-risk and at-risk kids. A child that stays in school and is active after school is much less likely to commit crime, try drugs or join a gang. While an important gang desistance technique, youth programs are capable of far-reaching effects, and have the potential of long-term benefit for crime reduction.

Theme 4: Criminal Justice System and Governance Structure¹⁸

The criminal justice system has two overarching goals: preventing and controlling crime and achieving justice. It is comprised of many different parts, all-working simultaneously to process

¹⁷ See Appendix 4 for more information.

¹⁸ Violent crime was discussed within Theme 4 rather than Theme 3.

the defendant. Above all, the system is intended to be fair and equally responsive, affording criminal defendants their full rights and societal privileges. When applied appropriately, the criminal justice system can have a positive impact, reducing crime, advocating for victims, correcting behaviors, and successfully reintroducing offenders back into society. When misapplied, the system has the potential to fail in any or all of those desired outcomes.

Many in Santa Cruz believe our local criminal justice system is failing. SCPD is making more arrests than ever, but crime rates remain high and repeat offenders routinely victimize the community. While difficult to pinpoint the precise causes, it is obvious that the essential elements of the system are not working together as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Bryan Matthew Martin was a habitual offender in Santa Cruz and is now serving a 16-year prison sentence for burglary. His story demonstrates the failure of the criminal justice system in managing our community's repeat offenders.

Bryan Matthew Martin

"The trial court found true that [the] defendant had two prison priors... The court sentenced him to the aggravated five-year term for the robbery (Pen. Code, § 213, subd. (a)(2)) and one year for each prior prison term, but suspended execution of the sentence and placed defendant on probation."¹⁹

While awaiting trial for stealing a backpack from a hotel worker's car, Bryan Matthew Martin escaped from the Rountree medium-security prison during a lunch break from a recidivism reduction class. He and accomplice, Blaine Richard Collamore, simply walked out of the building, broke into a neighboring house, stole the resident's car and purse and drove away. Martin was arrested two days later and subsequently sentenced to 16 years and 8 months in prison. That sentence term culminated his eleven-year criminal history in Santa Cruz County.

Born in 1983, Martin is a Santa Cruz local. He was convicted as an adult in 2001 for a felony theft. He received probation for that first adult conviction. Since that time, Martin wracked up the following record:

2003: Felony Check Fraud, probation
2003: Felony meth possession, probation
2003: Resisting Arrest, misdemeanor, probation
2004: Felony Check Fraud, prison sentence
2005: Felony Auto Theft, prison sentence
2006: 18 counts, 13 felonies (drug, theft), 4 years, 8 months suspended prison sentence, Delancy Street Program
2008: Falsify Information, misdemeanor, probation
2008: Under the Influence, misdemeanor, probation
2008: Drunk in Public, misdemeanor, probation
2011: Under the Influence, misdemeanor, probation

¹⁹ <http://www.courts.ca.gov/opinions/nonpub/H037468.PDF>

Martin went to prison twice in 2004 and 2005 and was convicted of 13 additional felonies in 2006. The court ordered a 4 year, 8 month suspended prison sentence at that time, meaning if he violated his probation he would automatically serve the imposed sentence.

Following the 2006 convictions, Martin was convicted of four misdemeanors from 2008-2011. He was given probation for each, rather than the suspended sentence.

While on probation, Martin was convicted of robbery in 2011. The District Attorney in that case asked for prison time, especially given his suspended sentence from 2006 and the subsequent repeat misdemeanors. The judge declined, sentencing Martin to one year in County Jail and suspended another 7-year prison term.

Due to the Court's soft handling of Martin, he was allowed to victimize the community to the tune of 30 convictions of 18 felonies, receiving only two years of prison time over the course of a decade. It took Martin's brazen escape from Rountree and subsequent melee for him to finally receive a significant sentence. Prior to that incident, each time his prison sentence was suspended by a Santa Cruz Superior Court judge, subsequent judges failed to impose the sentence for significant probation violations, leaving Martin free to repeatedly victimize the community.

Scope of the Problem/Community Perceptions

There are numerous other repeat offenders in Santa Cruz, many with felony convictions. Many repeat offenders are low-level criminals that accumulate municipal code infraction citations, and then, over time, escalate in criminality to misdemeanors and felonies. Because of the problems around repeat offenders, there is substantial public sentiment that local and state-wide criminal justice and governmental policies contribute directly to the severity of Themes 1-3. Many believe that the Santa Cruz Superior Court and jail system are essentially "revolving" doors for criminals, particularly those with substance abuse issues.

There is also significant public concern around the issuance of civil penalties for the City's municipal code infractions. Many in the community believe this civil process to be completely ineffective and partially responsible for the perceived "draw" of criminals and transients to Santa Cruz.

The local effects of AB109 are also widely speculated on by the public. Many believe that Santa Cruz has seen a shift in demographics of our homeless and transient population as a result of this legislation, with many more violent criminals on our streets and committing crimes.

Expert Panelist Discussion

The Task Force discussed Theme 4 with seven expert panelists. They included:

- John Barisone, Santa Cruz City Attorney
- Phil Wowak, Sheriff, Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office
- Jeremy Verinsky, Chief Deputy of Adult Corrections, Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office
- John Salazar, Presiding Judge, Santa Cruz County Superior Court

- Bob Lee, District Attorney, Santa Cruz County
- Jerry Christensen, Public Defender, Santa Cruz County
- Larry Biggam, Public Defender, Santa Cruz County

The two-part meeting covered a range of topics, but focused particularly on the role of the criminal justice system in managing the behaviors and activities around the other three themes of study. The panelists identified several problems. Although all of the specific issues had been raised at previous meetings, the City's criminal justice partners voiced several areas of heightened concern.

The City Attorney, acting as municipal code infraction prosecutor, lacks adequate resources to prosecute effectively the concentration of nuisance crimes committed locally. As a result, the City Attorney pursues only the most egregious cases. However, a relatively small number of individuals, around 100 in a typical year, are responsible for the vast majority of the adjudicated citations.

The community's serial inebriate population is a significant drain on public resources across the spectrum, from law enforcement to hospital emergency rooms. With jail overcrowding and funding constraints, the SIP program is not as effective as it could be.

A significant portion of the City's crime takes place along the San Lorenzo River corridor. The environmental design of the Levee and lack of programming in the adjoining parks and neighborhoods contributes to the prevalence of loitering, problematic behaviors and crime along the river corridor. All panelists voiced support for revitalizing and reprogramming the Levee and adjoining areas.

Panelists further discussed Santa Cruz crime rates. There was consensus among the panelists that the rates of crime are decreasing, across all types of offenses, in line with California and national crime rates. However, they posited that crime rates remain too high, and our rates are skewed because we are an extremely popular destination (for tourists, students, families, transients and criminals alike) and the central city for Santa Cruz County (county seat, home to the main jail and major entertainment district in the region, etc.)

A current case study of violent criminals, specifically those in custody for murder, was discussed. Of the 18 cases currently pending, 17 are local residents, and 15 went to high school in Santa Cruz County. The point was made that our violent criminals are primarily local, and not out-of-towners drawn to Santa Cruz for services and community tolerance of criminogenic lifestyles.²⁰

This information was in contrast to a case study provided earlier in the proceedings by Judge Symons. That case study focused on a number of homicides committed within the homeless or transient population over the last several years and noted a common series of events leading to the tragedy. Symons argued that there is a transient population in our community drawn to Santa Cruz to live a criminogenic lifestyle. Fueled by addiction and sustained by social service

²⁰ See Appendix 5 for more information.

provisions, the offenders committed crimes of escalating significance over several months, starting with public nuisance violations and ending in homicides. Heavier enforcement of the lesser crimes, consistent with the “broken window” theory of crime prevention, was suggested by Judge Symons as a way to intervene in this series of events.²¹

The expert panelists discussed management of violent criminals. All were in agreement that violent crime is effectively adjudicated within the criminal justice system. Police enforcement and investigations are streamlined, the District Attorney builds solid cases, conviction rates are high, but trials are fair, and the Public Defender's office frequently prevails when evidence does not suggest a guilty verdict. Juries in Santa Cruz do not shy away from convicting violent criminals. This may be in contrast to juries on lower level offenses.²²

Both panels highlighted insufficient early prevention and education as contributors to the safety issues in Santa Cruz. School-aged children are our most vulnerable population; therefore early and effective prevention of drug abuse and truancy would greatly reduce future crime locally. Finally, the panelists voiced strong support for problem solving courts like Drug, Homeless, Veterans, etc.

Conclusion

Literally hundreds of individuals in our community walk through the doors of the Superior Court every day. Hundreds are in our local jails. Hundreds more are contacted, cited, and arrested by our police officers. Each person bears a unique set of conditions that propelled him or her into the criminal justice system. Some may be experiencing homelessness or suffering from addiction or mental illness. Others may have been recruited into a gang as a youngster. Many have cycled through the system for years, never achieving successful rehabilitation and assimilation back into society.

A community's trust and confidence in its criminal justice system is built upon perceptions of fairness and effectiveness. These perceptions may be widely skewed depending on an individual's relationship with the system (offender, victim, observer, community member) and how the system is portrayed in the media (both social and traditional).

²¹ See Appendix 6 for more information.

²² The recent spike in violent crime contributed to the creation of the Task Force and was one of the highest concerns of individual Task Force members at the beginning of the process. However, the course of study and follow-up questions did not focus directly on violent crime, but rather its intersection with the other major themes of study. This is likely because panelists exhibited confidence in the criminal justice system as it relates to the management of violent offenders. In addition, violent crime is a more difficult issue to tackle, with many dynamic variables. Unlike the other themes of study, violent crime is less of a systemic issue with common root causes. Causes are widespread, variable and dependent on many factors.

This decision of the Task Force was not made lightly, nor does it reflect upon the importance of the issue. Violent crime scars victims and their families for life, and contributes to perceptions around safety in the community. However, the time constraints placed upon the group and the realities of violent crime (i.e., it is typically random and sporadic) led the Task Force to focus on themes of study that were systemic and citywide, and which the Task Force was relatively optimistic it could improve.



Testimony received by the Task Force indicates that Santa Cruz's confidence in its criminal justice system is low and in line with the rest of the Country. Recent Gallup polls demonstrate that only a third of Americans have confidence in their criminal justice system. This is in striking contrast to confidence levels in policing, with 60% of respondents expressing a great deal or quite a bit of confidence in that institution.²³ Our community's support for our police force is likely at an all-time high.

As demonstrated by the data and testimony provided by the expert panelists, Santa Cruz's criminal justice system is overburdened and dealing with an extenuating set of circumstances. Rates of addiction are high, leading to property crime. A segment of the homeless population is susceptible to escalating criminality; victimization among our homeless is a grave concern. Repeat offenders, especially those with low-level, non-violent and drug offenses are difficult to adjudicate for lack of jail space and treatment options. But even though the criminal justice system is burdened with these challenges, it has a real obligation to the community of Santa Cruz to apply justice and rehabilitation in an effective manner and to reduce the impact criminals have on the community. Our community's trust in the system will not increase unless steps are taken to rectify these very serious concerns.

²³ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/163175/minorities-less-confident-police-small-business.aspx>



Deliberative Process

Treasurer Fred Keeley convened the Task Force deliberations on recommendations. The Task Force adopted a legislative process for this aspect of its work. The fundamentals of the legislative process are outlined as follows:

- City Staff provided a draft report of recommendations for the first round of deliberations.
- The Task Force moved, line by line, through the document and was asked to indicate where they had tentative agreement and items for amendment.
- The voting membership of the Task Force was fourteen (14) members. A majority was eight (8). It was suggested that the Task Force resolve as many issues as possible by consensus. For those points where a consensus could not be reached, a majority vote prevailed.
- In order to provide the maximum opportunity for reaching consensus on the final work product, the Task Force adopted a “Caucus” procedure. This gave individual members a moment to speak in a less formal setting.
- Each deliberative meeting produced a new draft recommendation report. Subsequent deliberative meetings followed the same procedure until each recommendation was voted on and adopted.

Policy Recommendations

The following recommendations came from a variety of sources – experts, community members and individual Task Force members. Every recommendation presented was considered by the Task Force. The Task Force was provided with substantial data, material and testimony and used that information to make these recommendations.

Public safety policy recommendations consist of a four-pronged approach: prevention, strategic enforcement with accountability, collaborative oversight, and appropriate funding.

Highest Priority Prevention Initiatives

Although more long-range in nature, preventative programs are essential to reduce crime and victimization in a sustainable fashion. The Task Force recommends policy changes to be heavily weighted towards prevention initiatives, with the City, County, schools, neighborhoods and our non-profit service partners playing an integral role in funding, implementation and management.

Prevention initiatives should include the following highest priorities:

1. Environmental design and protection of high crime areas and open spaces
2. Enhancement of drug and alcohol treatment funding
3. Expansion of pro-social youth programs



Environmental Design and Protection of High Crime Areas and Open Spaces

Findings

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and reactivation of spaces are data-driven crime prevention programs. With proven efficacy in many cities, CPTED reduces criminal opportunity through landscape and architectural design of space (lighting, visibility, cover reduction, etc.) while reactivation is intended to create pro-social activities in public locations. Environmental design and pro-social activities are lacking in the City's greenbelt and commercial areas, particularly along the San Lorenzo River corridor, on Pacific Avenue, and in Harvey West.

The County's Syringe Services Program (SSP) is effective in lowering the transmission of blood borne diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C for intravenous drug uses. However, the Task Force finds that the County has not properly accounted for and mitigated the unintended consequences of locating a syringe exchange within a residential neighborhood and the geographical boundaries of Santa Cruz. No spent hypodermic syringes should be found in the City's open spaces, parks, neighborhoods, beaches and business districts. Until this public health crisis is rectified, the Task Force finds that the County Board of Supervisors should consider the management of SSP a top priority.

Recommendations

The Task Force recommends a comprehensive environmental design and programming study of the City's most crime-ridden public and commercial areas. The study's implementation plan should be phased to target the community's highest areas of safety concern. While the study is underway, the City should immediately improve lighting on the San Lorenzo River Levee and Park and the Harvey West area to discourage illegal behavior and reinvigorate those public spaces.

With regard to the County's Syringe Exchange Program, the Task Force recommends that City staff and the City Council work with the County Health Services Agency and 3rd/5th District Supervisor Office to ensure the public safety efficacy (harm reduction of users and community affected by discarded syringes) of the County's Syringe Services Program. The following measures are considered the highest priority by the Task Force:

- Insist that the County Board of Supervisors address the community-wide impacts of SSP on their work plan/agenda.
- Ensure best practices are in place for SSP to mitigate impacts to the City's public spaces and neighborhoods.
 - Relocate SSP to County-owned property located in a non-residential area.
 - Implement a syringe identification tagging program (e.g. color coding or serial number).
 - Exchange to be on a true one-for-one basis with an actual physical count of syringes being exchanged. No estimations should be allowed.



- Account for both syringes being distributed and returned. Account separately for syringes without identification tag.
- City should prevent additional syringe exchange programs from operating or opening within the City limits.

Enhancement of Drug and Alcohol Treatment Funding

Findings

Treatment of drug addiction is underfunded in Santa Cruz County. Given that addiction treatment lowers the rate of criminal recidivism, the Task Force finds that investment in (and greater collaboration between) proven effective treatment programs is essential.

Recommendations

The Task Force therefore recommends that City Council and staff work with the County Board of Supervisors and the County Health Services Agency staff on the County Strategic Plan for Alcohol and Drug Treatment and Intervention to insure that proven, evidence-based interventions and treatment programs that address specific City needs are included in the Strategic Plan and adequately funded.

Needs specific to the City noted by the Task Force include the following:

- Reduce public anti-social behaviors caused by serial inebriates and drug users.
- Reduce both violent and non-violent crime caused by addiction to opiates and other drugs.

With these measures, the Task Force believes that the County's Strategic Plan will further help to delineate the problems and their interventions and treatment that contribute to unsafe environments.

Expansion of Pro-Social Youth Programs

Findings

The Task Force finds that an investment in our youth is part of an essential strategy to reduce future criminal behavior. Children that stay in school and are active under adult supervision during after-school hours are far less likely to try drugs and/or alcohol, develop addiction, join gangs, and engage in criminal activity as young adults.

Recommendations

The Task Force recommends leveraging existing programs and, if necessary, consider creating new programs to provide pro-social activities, focusing on the 3-9 p.m. period, that serve both at-risk and pre at-risk youth. These programs should include activities that appeal to particular



cultures and subcultures (e.g., baile folklórica and skate boarding) as well as programs that bring different cultures and subcultures together (such as Little League and soccer). These programs should be both attractive to a wide variety of youth and focus on minimizing barriers to participation, such as costs, accessibility, complex sign ups/initiation processes, location of programs, hours and duration of programs.

- City should create a mechanism to inform community residents, businesses and non-profits on how to provide scholarships for Task Force recommended youth programming initiatives.
- City Park and Recreation Department (P&R) shall develop an outreach strategy that targets underserved youth in our community with the goal being to involve them in more P&R programs. The outreach should be both in English and Spanish.
- Ensure that the long range plan for P&R includes appropriate facilities for demographic trends and to increase participation rates.
- Youth Programming recommendations should include information published by the Criminal Justice Council Report on Youth Violence.

Secondary Priority Prevention Initiatives

Additional preventative recommendations were identified by the Task Force for City Council consideration. These include more specific youth programming initiatives, truancy enforcement enhancements, education and neighborhood connection, and enhancements to social service activities.



# Table 4: Prevention/Education/Connection	
Youth Programming	
1	City partner with Santa Cruz City Schools District (SCCS) and Santa Cruz County Office of Education (COE) to support and expand existing after school programming, specifically academic enrichment (e.g. Arts Academy) and scholastic sports programs.
2	Partner with SCCS and COE to develop mentoring/internship programs for high school students. City to incentivize businesses, non-profits and local non-governmental agencies (NGOs) to participate in mentoring/internship programming.
3	Work with Santa Cruz Metro (Metro) to explore transportation options for youth and families, specifically in regard to getting kids to school in the morning and home from school and after school programming.
4	Collaborate with SCCS and the COE to address the summer gap in programming.
5	The City to collaborate with SCCS and COE to support and expand Adult Education with emphasis on General Education Development (GED) and High School (HS) diploma programs.
6	City Council to partner with Santa Cruz Youth City Council to develop all Youth Programming recommendations herein.
7	Leverage existing programs and, if necessary, consider creating new programs to provide mentoring and job opportunities to local teenagers.
Truancy Enforcement	
8	City partner with SCCS and COE to enhance and strengthen truancy policies and enforcement processes.
9	Increase the number of school resource officers to four.
Environmental Design/Reactivation of Spaces	
10	Instruct the City representatives to the Metro Board to ensure that the new transit hub is designed to minimize illegal behavior and promote positive use. (External review may be necessary).
Social Service Enhancements	
11	Add questions that concern the City to the point-in-time Homeless Census Survey.
12	Expand the Homeward Bound program.
13	Recommend that City and County Planning Departments encourage landlords within the City and County to support investment in HUD recognized best practice programs including Housing First models such as 180/180, and any kind of incentive to renting to special needs populations. See “Santa Clara program.”
14	City to coordinate with faith-based, government and non-governmental organizations to operate social service programs (soup feeds, overnight shelter, RV parking, etc.) in order to ensure public safety impacts to community are minimized.
15	City to develop and publicize self-supporting alternative to giving money to panhandlers. Program will include mobile application and other possible ways of donating such as web-based. Proceeds of program will go to proven effective programs to support people who are homeless, mentally ill and substance abusers.
Education	
16	Increased community education (includes schools on certain topics) in the areas of substance abuse, domestic violence, bullying, sexual assault, mental health, gang desistence/prevention, and perhaps other related topics. In the design, development, and implementation of prevention, education and other programs that will promote a higher level of safety for Santa Cruz residents, the City will make a special effort to include marginalized and under-represented communities. In particular, the City should identify members of those communities with the knowledge and leadership necessary to insure cultural competency in those programs.
17	Collaborate with SCCS and COE and others to ensure all youth are educated around the issues of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational drug use



#	Table 4: Prevention/Education/Connection
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underage alcohol use • Gangs • Sexual assault • Domestic violence • bullying <p>City to provide relative data to support grant renewal of elementary counselor positions to build on existing social curriculum.</p>
	Connection
18	Recommend the City conduct community outreach “see something, say something” campaign to engage the public in crime prevention.
19	<p>Every resident should belong to a neighborhood group and be civically engaged. Neighbor to neighbor networking outreach is recommended.</p> <p>Revitalize the Neighborhood Services Team to meet quarterly or more frequently as needed to collaborate with all existing neighborhood groups to address collectively issues impacting neighborhoods throughout the City.</p>
20	Increase City coordination, financial support, and social services outreach for volunteer clean-up efforts (such as the Leveelies, Clean Team, Save our Shores, Beach Flats, Community Center, NoLo).

Highest Priority Strategic Enforcement with Accountability Initiatives

Findings

The mission of the Santa Cruz Police Department (SCPD) is to provide protection and services to our community. With a \$23 million annual budget and 94 budgeted sworn officers serving a population of 62,000, the force runs a lean operation. In fact, an average police force for a city of 60,000 is about 140 sworn officers.²⁴ As a destination spot for summer tourists, University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC) students, and transients, and as an entertainment hub for Santa Cruz County and beyond, the SCPD is often stretched extremely thin.

SCPD currently has 6 vacant officer positions, with several officers out on work related and non-work related injuries, and several other individuals in the training process. In total, SCPD are at 75 percent of sworn strength in the field. Currently there are no gaps in service or coverage. However, this shortage puts a significant strain on those officers serving the community. While there are a number of factors contributing to officer attrition (the recent tragedy, long-term disability, retirement, etc.), SCPD historically has had difficulty maintaining a fully-staffed force. With current staffing levels, it becomes difficult to effectively balance department priorities: crime prevention, investigations, community programming, etc.

Public nuisance/quality of life crimes and repeat offenders put a heavy strain on SCPD resources. Calls for service are at an all-time high, and individuals that self-affiliated with the Homeless Services Center (by providing 115 Coral Street address at the time of arrest) accounted for about 40% of arrests and 30 % of citations in 2012. Repeat offenders, averaging 100 individuals per year, are responsible for a staggering number of total arrests.²⁵ Over 50 percent of repeat offender arrests are in some manner related to drugs or alcohol.

SCPD's record volume of repeat offender arrests and municipal code violations is a symptom of a failing criminal justice system for low-level crimes in Santa Cruz County. Lack of jail space, treatment options, Probation Department capacity, and the Superior Court's apparent indifference to nuisance crimes has created an endless cycle of recidivism among low-level criminals.

Santa Cruz is burdened with a high number of high-risk alcohol outlets. Santa Cruz is approved by Alcohol and Beverage Control (ABC) for 102 alcohol outlets and currently has 249. In addition, Santa Cruz is overburdened with residential indoor and outdoor marijuana grow operations for medical and recreational purposes. High-risk alcohol outlets contribute to alcohol-fueled violence and crime. Growing, cultivation and processing of marijuana in residential neighborhoods is a serious public safety concern, a code enforcement issue, and often involves criminal activity. The Task Force finds that a strategic intervention is required to improve community conditions around addiction-related crime and public nuisance behaviors in our neighborhoods, open spaces, parks, and business districts. Therefore, the Task Force recommends four priorities: strategic police and code enforcement, offender assistance with accountability/recidivism reduction, and criminal justice system accountability.

²⁴ <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=71>

²⁵ See Introduction and Background for more information on repeat offenders.



Recommendations

Strategic Police Enforcement

The Task Force has identified several critical priorities for SCPD. The Task Force recommends the City, with the highest priority and utmost urgency, fill existing and budgeted SCPD vacancies and, further, to increase the SCPD police force to national averages. The Task Force recommends moving to a targeted policing model, with a strategy that emphasizes enforcement of nuisance crimes in natural, city entry and focal point areas (i.e., a “broken window” policing model).

In addition, to enhance the City’s enforcement of repeat municipal code offenders, the City Council should designate existing infractions as misdemeanors in the municipal code for current infractions such as depositing of public waste, multiple offenses for illegal camping, and other offenses that the City Council designates to curb quality of life crimes in the City. This recommendation would include a request to the County to fund a municipal code prosecutor as well as designating the revenue from current infraction penalties to fund the increased court costs.

Strategic Code Enforcement

The PSTF recommends two priorities for enhanced code enforcement:

- City Council to work with Code Enforcement to reduce and reform high-risk alcohol outlets.
- Rewrite the municipal code 6.90.040 to prohibit the cultivation and processing of marijuana in residential properties in Santa Cruz City. Marijuana should be subject to the same zoning regulations as other agriculture.

Offender Assistance with Accountability/Recidivism Reduction

The Task Force recommends a specialty court model for substance abusers, veterans, mentally ill and/or homeless offenders. The specialty court model is proven to halt the revolving door of recidivism by linking offenders to treatment and rigorous judicial monitoring. Specialty courts are highly collaborative, bringing together the criminal justice system and service providers to enforce court-ordered sanctions. The Task Force finds that the specialty court model would provide offenders with the right balance of treatment assistance with accountability.

The Task Force recommends that the City collaborate in developing a strategic multi-disciplinary team (enforcement, criminal justice, drug treatment, social service providers) to identify individuals repeatedly exhibiting behaviors and crimes harmful to the community (i.e., the “top offenders” as identified by SCPD). This strategic team will develop an intervention and accountability plan on a case-by case-basis for each offender in order to reduce criminal behavior and harm to the community. The overall goal of the team would be reduce recidivism and crime in the City. The strategic team would work with SCPD to identify those that are generating the most calls for services, arrests, and municipal code infraction citations.



Additionally, after implementation of the photo identification system and gate at the Homeless Services Center (HSC) campus, the City should work with HSC campus managers to minimize unintended negative impacts of homeless services to Santa Cruz community, while maximizing program effectiveness. Agencies located at Coral Street (on HSC campus) should cooperate with SCPD in recommendations to modify or eliminate services to persons identified as chronic offenders who threaten public safety.

The purpose of this recommendation is to improve accountability for those that continually break the law and have repeat municipal code violations.

Superior Court Accountability

The Task Force finds that the Santa Cruz County Courts have failed the community as it relates to criminal sentencing. Improved accountability should take the form of increased transparency, consistent adjudication of the City's municipal code violations, and implementation of a specialty court model (as noted above).

The Task Force recommends the following measures be implemented by the Santa Cruz County Superior Court:

- Court to issue a misdemeanor warrant after three failures to appear in a six-month period. This automatic warrant issuance will eliminate the need for the City Attorney to prosecute repeat municipal code infraction offenders who fail to appear.
- Compel the Presiding Judge of the Santa Cruz County Superior Court to appear before the Santa Cruz City Council twice a year to share what the Court is doing to address high repeat offender rates in the City of Santa Cruz and to receive input from the City Council and City Attorney.

Secondary Priority Strategic Enforcement with Accountability Initiatives

Several additional recommendations were identified by the Task Force with regard to Strategic Enforcement with Accountability. In general, secondary priority recommendations are more specific about new policing strategies, code enforcement, and additional accountability measures within the criminal justice system.



#		Table 5: Strategic Enforcement With Accountability
		Strategic Police Enforcement
21	In order to achieve maximum organizational efficiency and performance relative to public safety, it is recommended that an external review be conducted of the City of Santa Cruz Police Department (SCPD), City Manager’s Office, Planning and Community Development, Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments.	
22	City will consider setting SCPD total compensation packages at a level that will improve recruitment and retention.	
23	City to explore alternative staffing positions such as reserve officers and expand community service officers.	
24	Increase SCPD foot/bike/street patrols.	
25	Vigorous enforcement of bike license law/illegal to have unlicensed bike or bike with shaved serial numbers.	
26	Coordinated strategy with community groups to reactivate one public area at a time, starting with San Lorenzo (SL) park and Harvey West.	
27	Explore civil litigation against Caltrans, local railroads, Army Corps of Engineers, State of Nevada, State of California & other property owners/businesses who create “crime pollution externalities” as defined in the literature.	
28	City to identify, fund and promote improved ways to report crimes, track City response to reported crimes and judicial system response to crimes. System should be easy to use, integrated and include web-, text- and application-based systems.	
29	City to implement non-judicial consequences for multiple failures to appear.	
30	Maintain curfew at Cowell Beach.	
31	The City and University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) ban and enforce all public celebration of illicit drug use.	
32	City and UCSC police should vigorously enforce state marijuana laws regarding minors, public spaces, and driving under the influence (as stipulated by Measure K).	
		Strategic Code Enforcement
33	City of Santa Cruz Code Enforcement should explore a zoning ordinance regarding indoor agriculture. City should support landlords in eviction process against tenants who have made illegal/unsafe modifications to property to support indoor agriculture.	
34	Recommend to City to make a high priority to fund additional code enforcement officers with an emphasis on life-threatening violations and public safety in Santa Cruz.	
35	Recommend City review and implement strict parking and overnight camping ordinance related to RVs on City streets. Increase enforcement of muni code violations related to RV parking in the City of Santa Cruz.	
36	City to implement a time limit (example 4-hour parking) within selected City-owned parking spaces/lots along West Cliff and East Cliff Drives during daylight hours. Enforcement recommended by City parking control by marking tires and issuing parking tickets.	
37	Recommend City to coordinate with California State Parks (e.g., obtain a letter of trespass to patrol Lighthouse Field during darkness to enforce illegal camping, drug use and sales, litter, pollution, and other unsafe activities).	
38	Explore relocation of recycling center from Harvey West to another area of the City.	
39	City Council to work with Code Enforcement to reduce and reform medical marijuana dispensaries.	
40	City consider a priority to either reactivate or revisit the SCPD’s Alcohol Education Monitoring and Compliance Program Officer to collaborate with Alcohol and Beverage Control (ABC), all other government, non-government and community groups to address the alcohol issue in Santa Cruz.	
41	City develops and implements new web-based reporting process for code enforcement with a priority on public safety.	
42	Where statute allows, implement cost recovery from the responsible party for police response and enforcement of misdemeanor and/or felony convictions and drunk in public arrests.	
43	Develop or increase penalties for property owners that refuse to address habitual code compliance violations.	
44	Penalties (like party house ordinance) for high crime residential addresses. Three (3) violations in six months will be charged with a municipal code	



# Table 5: Strategic Enforcement With Accountability	
	misdemeanor (also including 647Fs).
45	In all commercial and agricultural rental agreements, there shall be written permission from the landlord to grow or process marijuana on the property.
Offender Assistance with Accountability	
46	Work with County to increase funding to facilitate Rountree as a coerced treatment facility for serial inebriates/substance abusers, and as a mental health treatment center for County inmates already in custody.
Criminal Justice System Accountability	
47	Publicly available reporting on Santa Cruz Superior Court judges' decision records.
48	Compel Santa Cruz County Probation Chief to appear before City Council twice per year to inform what the Probation Dept. is doing to address probation-related offenses on adult chronic reoffenders.
49	Grand Jury investigation (external review) of the current Santa Cruz Superior Court bench as it relates to the use of discretionary power of sentencing of offenders.
50	More jail space for short term incarceration post-conviction.
51	Recommend the City hire a part-time or full-time paralegal to process failure to appears on municipal code violations.
52	City develop 3 or more non judicial mechanisms to deal with 3 failures to appear.
53	Work with County Probation to improve transparency of AB109 released prisoners into the county. Recommend County increase staffing levels of probation officers for adult population to adequately deal with AB109.
54	Recommend that the County Jail has access to funds for transportation in order for inmates to return to community of origin whenever possible, unless they are released on their own recognizance (ROR).



Highest Priority Collaborative Accountability and Appropriate Funding Initiatives

Within three months of accepting the Task Force report, the City shall notify in writing, each department, agency, and organization outside of their jurisdiction of the Task Force recommendations that impact their operations and ask that those named agencies respond in writing as to how they will begin to work towards achieving the objectives in the relative recommendations.

The Task Force recommends the City Council and County Board of Supervisors consider an alternative funding mechanism to fund any programs identified herein that are outside of the City and County's regular budget. The City should consider various options to fund many of these new recommendations, including but not limited to a city alcohol tax with proceeds going directly to fund public safety programs, a city or county sales tax dedicated to funding public safety programs, as well as innovative private funding and federal grant opportunities such as "Pay For Success" programs and Social Impact Bonds. The city should re-evaluate Measure E funding for specific use of clean-up programs on the San Lorenzo Riverway. The city should also consider using municipal code violation revenue to specifically fund a specialty to deal with recidivist violations. The city should also tie the distribution of Community Development Block Grants as it relates to public safety to results-based programs and require measurable deliverables.

Secondary Priority Collaborative Accountability and Appropriate Funding Initiatives

Two additional priority recommendations were identified by the Task Force including creating a Department of Public Safety to review all City public safety-related actions and coordinate between the other departments.



#	Table 6: Accountability, Collaborative Oversight and Appropriate Funding
	Collaborative Oversight
55	Create Dept. of Public Safety to review all city actions and integrate City Departments.
56	Instruct the City to report at a council meeting regarding their progress on the TF recommendations 6 months and 12 months after accepting the TF recommendations.