

Responses to the 2020-2021 Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury Reports

Providing Continuity by Following Through on Previous Investigations

SUMMARY

The 2021-2022 Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury has reviewed the responses to the investigations and Recommendations made by the 2020-2021 Grand Jury. The 2020-2021 Grand Jury produced five investigative reports. This summary addresses the responses received from the responsible entities named in those reports. Although respondents did not adopt all Recommendations, their responses do comply with the requirements of the Penal Code.

BACKGROUND

The Civil Grand Jury system in California exists to promote effective and efficient local government. The Penal Code gives the Grand Jury broad investigative powers to provide oversight to County and City governments, and to special districts within Sonoma County. The intent is to bring positive change in the best interest of all residents.

Each year the Grand Jury investigates local government institutions. It issues reports containing the results of these investigations, and Findings that lead to Recommendations for improvement. Governing bodies and department officials are required to respond to these Findings and Recommendations. Boards are directed to respond within 90 days of the release of a grand jury's report. Elected county officials are required to respond within 60 days. (Penal Code § 933(c)).

Succeeding grand juries review those responses and determine whether they meet the requirements of the Penal Code. This review establishes continuity from one grand jury to the next. The seated grand jury may evaluate responses for adequacy and determine whether appropriate steps have been taken to implement Recommendations.

METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury evaluated responses for compliance with the governing sections of the Penal Code § 933.05.

DISCUSSION

According to the Penal Code, governing bodies and officials are required to respond to Findings in grand jury reports and the respondent shall indicate one of the following:

- The respondent agrees with the Finding.
- The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the Finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefor.

According to the Penal Code, as to each grand jury Recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:

Continuity Responses to 2020-2021 Report

- The Recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implementation action.
- The Recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.
- The Recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.
- The Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.

CONCLUSION

The 2021-2022 Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury concluded that the responses to the 2020-2021 Grand Jury Recommendations comply with the Penal Code. In addition, the Grand Jury has included its observations on the responses following pages titled: 2020-2021 Grand Jury Response Summary Chart.

Within the five issued reports, the 2020-2021 Grand Jury made 66 Findings and issued 47 Recommendations requiring a total of 98 responses from 19 different County and City agencies and governing boards. There were also two invited responses and five commendations.

Responses sometimes indicate partial implementation of a Recommendation and are sometimes ambiguous; the table below is intended to give a general overview. Roughly two thirds of the Recommendations have been or will be implemented and about one fifth have been rejected.

Report	Recommendation Actions					
	Total	Implemented	In Progress	Implemented In Future	Further Analysis	Will Not Be Implemented
Rohnert Park Districts	3	2	1	0	0	0
Broadband Access	18	5	0	6	7	0
Jail Telephone and Commissary	9	2	0	1	4	2
COVID Mitigation at the Jail	7	1	0	2	1	3
Emergency Communications	62	32	6	9	2	13
Total	99	42	7	18	14	18

Percent of all Recommendations

43%	7%	18%	14%	18%
69%				

A copy of the full 2020-2021 Grand Jury report and responses received can be located within the County of Sonoma, Superior Court of California website.

2020-2021 Grand Jury Response Summary Chart

ROHNERT PARK ELECTION DISTRICTS

Background: In October, 2019 the City of Rohnert Park initiated actions to change City Council representation from an at-large basis (individuals vote for all council seats) to a district basis (individuals vote for only the seat for the district in which they reside). In response to citizen concerns the Grand Jury investigated the procedures that were followed in the transition process. They concluded that the rules governing the creation of district-based representation were followed, as were the rules governing election sequencing. Further, the Grand Jury found no credible evidence that open meeting laws were violated. However, the Jury did find a deficit in implementing and monitoring the required ethics training of City Council members, and noted a potential need to update district boundaries in response to the 2020 census.

RES = Respondent; GJ = Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury
 CRP = City of Rohnert Park; CCRP = City Council of Rohnert Park;

RECOMMENDATIONS	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
R1. The City of Rohnert Park establish a procedure to monitor and track ethics training for publicly elected officials as required by California Assembly Bill No. 1234. This should occur by December 31, 2021.	CRP	This Recommendation has been implemented. Procedures are in place to arrange and provide training and to monitor compliance with AB 1234.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has been implemented.
R2. The City of Rohnert Park notify elected officials of ethics training bi-annual deadlines by December 31, 2021.	CRP	This Recommendation has been implemented. Notifications of online training were sent in November 2020.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has been implemented.
R3. The City Council members proactively plan in advance and allocate time in Council Meeting agendas to give the public opportunity for robust and ongoing discussion of any changes to the City’s demographics that need to be addressed when the new Census data is released on September 30, 2021. This should occur by December 31, 2021.	CCRP	This Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future. Plans have been established for contracting with demographic and outreach consultants. At least four public hearings will be scheduled in 2021 in order to give the public opportunities for robust and ongoing discussion on any changes in the City’s demographics that need to be addressed. The City’s actions will comply with the Fair and Inclusive Redistricting for Municipalities and Political Subdivisions (Fair Maps) Act.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation will be implemented in the future.

COUNTY JAIL INMATE TELEPHONE AND COMMISSARY

Background: As part of its inquiry into the Sonoma County Main Adult Detention Facility’s (MADF) telephone service, the Grand Jury found a pattern of charges for inmate phone use that exceeds the market rate by more than tenfold. The Sheriff’s Office also runs a commissary inside the MADF and its prices are typically 200% to 300% over the jail’s wholesale cost. The Sheriff’s Office deposits the phone commissions and commissary mark-up into the Inmate Welfare Trust (IWT) as State law requires. The Inmate Welfare Trust (IWT) was established to provide inmate programs, and in any given year, the IWT Committee may decide not to spend all of the money it raised. As of early 2021, the IWT held a surplus of over \$1.6 million. The Grand Jury offered these Recommendations to provide inmates a more accessible phone system and a more affordable commissary.

RES = Respondent; GJ = Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury

BOS = Sonoma County Board of Supervisors MADF = Main Adult Detention Facility;

SCSO = Sonoma County Sheriff’s Office; GTL = Global Tel Link, (MADF telephone provider)

RECOMMENDATIONS	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
R1. The Sheriff’s Office work with the Board of Supervisors to replace the current commission-based audio and video contract with Global Tel Link, using a model based on the San Francisco County Sheriff’s Department, by December 31, 2021.	SCSO	This Recommendation requires further analysis. The SCSO is open to replacing the commission-based contract, as long as the inmate programs it supports are not sacrificed. The SCSO would look to the BOS to commit General Funds for these programs so they would not be discontinued.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation requires further analysis and cannot be implemented until the analysis is completed.
	BOS	This Recommendation requires further analysis. County staff will research San Francisco County’s commission-free model to evaluate feasibility, fiscal impact and operational impact. Upon completion of the analysis, the BOS will look to the Sheriff’s office to determine if the program and structure should be changed, and then bring a recommendation to the BOS as needed.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation requires further analysis, and that the BOS cannot implement it by December 31, 2021. The GJ recognizes that the BOS will direct staff to perform the necessary research for the analysis.
R2. By September 30, 2021, the Sheriff’s Office develop a new communications model to provide for sufficient telephone kiosks to allow the inmate population free telephone and video visitation for at least 90 minutes per week until such time as a new	SCSO	This Recommendation has been partially implemented and requires further analysis. Detention staff is currently in communication with GTL for additional telephone kiosks and video visitation at the MADF. The SCSO is currently offering each inmate 70 minutes of free phone calls per week. Sheriff’s staff has prepared a funding request to the BOS to ensure continued funding, and if provided, will work with GTL for more equipment as needed.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation requires further analysis, and that the analysis should be completed by December 2021. The GJ recognizes that the SCSO has made changes to improve inmate telephone access by offering 70 minutes of free phone calls per inmate per week.

RECOMMENDATIONS	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
communication contract is in effect.			
R3. As required by PC § 4025(e), the Sheriff’s Office provide an annual report to the Board of Supervisors detailing line item revenue and expenses within the Inmate Welfare Trust, beginning with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, with the initial report due by November 30, 2021.	SCSO BOS	This Recommendation has been implemented. The SCSO has been providing an annual report to the BOS as required by PC § 4025(e) since FY 03-04, and will submit the report for fiscal year ending June 30, 2021 by November 30, 2021.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has been implemented.
R4. The Sheriff’s Office use its \$1.6 million Inmate Welfare Trust surplus to remove all charges for telephone service while in-person visitation is suspended, on or before September 30, 2021.	SCSO	This Recommendation will not be implemented. On June 17, 2021, the SCSO returned to normal visiting operations. The SCSO also continues to provide each inmate a free 10-minute phone call per day.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation will not be implemented. The GJ also recognizes that the SCSO has made changes that improve inmate access to in-person visits and phone usage.
R5. The Sheriff’s Office reevaluate its commissary markup to be in line with grocery store, as opposed to convenience store pricing, on or before September 1, 2021.	SCSO	This Recommendation requires further analysis. The SCSO intends to change the pricing structure with an updated and modernized commissary system based on analysis expected to be completed in December 2021. While it is the intent of the SCSO to sell hygiene supplies and stationery products with a 0% mark-up, snack items will not be priced similar to a grocery store because the pricing structure needs to compensate for the additional costs at the MADF (security, small storage area, delivery, etc.) that are not present in a grocery store setting.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation requires further analysis and cannot be implemented until the analysis is completed in December 2021. The GJ also recognizes the SCSO does not have the ability at the MADF to purchase in bulk and store in large quantity to obtain discount pricing. The MADF also incurs more direct overhead costs than that of a grocery store.
R6. By September 30, 2021, the Sheriff’s Office, using the reserve Inmate Welfare Trust funds, resume all inmate programs in existence pre-COVID, with funding at the same level once COVID related restrictions are lifted.	SCSO	This Recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be in the future. Prolonged interactions between inmates from different housing areas has been eliminated in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Detention staff will resume pre-pandemic level programming when it is safe to do so.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation will be implemented in the future. The GJ recognizes that the COVID-19 safety precautions create program challenges in the MADF congregate setting.

RECOMMENDATIONS	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
<p>R7. The Sheriff’s Office restructure the 10-member Inmate Welfare Trust Committee by December 31, 2021 to include more diverse representation, for example, community members, financial analysts, social workers and educators to bring the Committee more in line with the requirements of Penal Code § 5006 regarding commission membership standards for State Prisons.</p>	<p>SCSO</p>	<p>This Recommendation will not be implemented. The Inmate Welfare Trust Committee provides recommendations and direction to the Sheriff on inmate programs and IWT expenditures. The SCSO is always open to suggestions from the community.</p>	<p>The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation will not be implemented. The GJ also recognizes that Penal Code § 5006 applies only to state prisons and not the MADF.</p>

COVID-19 MITIGATION AND THE COUNTY JAIL

Background: The Grand Jury investigated activities by the Court, the District Attorney and the Sheriff’s Department to reduce jail populations and lessen the likelihood of a major COVID-19 outbreak within the jail. The Sheriff’s Office made significant efforts to mitigate Covid-19 transmission throughout its detention facilities to ensure the on-going health and safety of inmates and employees. The Grand Jury recognized the success of the Sheriff’s Office in avoiding a major COVID-19 outbreak in the jail. However, some actions significantly limited the ability of inmates to communicate with family and legal representatives. Other actions limited inmates’ access to educational and recreational resources. The Grand Jury made several Recommendations aimed at restoring inmates’ rights and maintaining reduced prison populations.

RES = Respondent; GJ = Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury;
 SCSO= Sonoma County Sheriff’s Office; DA = Sonoma County District Attorney;
 MADF = Main Adult Detention Facility

RECOMMENDATIONS	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
R1. The Sheriff’s Office develop, no later than September 1, 2021, a policy to restore out of cell activity, in person and video visitation, and all programs to pre-pandemic levels.	SCSO	This Recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. However, the SCSO partially disagrees with the Recommendation because out of cell activities partly depend on inmate population over which it does not have final control. It is the goal of the Sheriff’s Office to have a revised policy completed by April 1, 2022.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation will be implemented in the future, with a specific goal of implementation of video visitation programs by April 1, 2022.
R2. The Sheriff’s Office implement 30-minutes of video visits per week by September 30, 2021, and continue until it fully restores in-person visits to the pre-pandemic levels.	SCSO	This Recommendation has been implemented. As of June 19, 2021, the Sheriff’s Office has restored in-person visiting to pre-pandemic levels.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has been implemented through the restoration of in-person visits.
R3. The Sheriff’s Office should continue the pandemic-era policies favoring citations over arrests.	SCSO	This Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable. The SCSO cannot legally “favor” citations over arrests. The decision of citation vs arrest is the responsibility of the officer in the field.	The Grand Jury acknowledges this Recommendation will not be implemented.
R4. The Sheriff’s Office and the Board of Supervisors work together to develop a plan by December 21, 2021 to increase the contracted Wellpath resources to fund four additional Wellpath	SCSO	This Recommendation requires further analysis. The SCSO recognizes the substantial role discharge planners play for inmates with ongoing mental health and medical needs. The SCSO will monitor case load and issue recommendations to the BOS as needed.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation requires further analysis. A future GJ may choose to follow up on this issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
discharge planners for mental health and medical assignments to the Main Adult Detention Facility.			
R5. The District Attorney discontinue cash bail for defendants charged with misdemeanors and non-violent, non-sexual and less serious felonies.	DA	This Recommendation will not be implemented because the DA does not have authority to unilaterally discontinue cash bail. However, the DA acknowledges that the practice of issuing citations rather than making arrests for misdemeanors and non-violent felonies has helped keep the MADF population from increasing. Further, it involves not only the arrest practices of the SCSO, but that of all law enforcement agencies.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation cannot be fully implemented at this time.
R6. The Sheriff's Office implement a surveillance-testing program and require 100% participation by all unvaccinated jail staff by September 1, 2021.	SCSO	This Recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. The California Dept of Public Health Services order dated July 26, 2021, requires implementation of the Recommendation. The SCSO will be fully compliant with the Order by August 23, 2021.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation will be implemented.
R7. The Sheriff's Office reassign jail staff who decline vaccination or participation in surveillance testing by September 1, 2021.	SCSO	This Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable. This is a Human Resources issue and will be addressed through the Sonoma County Human Resources Department.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation will not be implemented. Given the State Public Health Order, this Recommendation is no longer relevant as vaccination tracking or surveillance testing is now mandatory for State and local correctional facilities and detention centers.

BROADBAND ACCESS IN SONOMA COUNTY

Background:

Access to high quality internet (“Broadband”) is not available throughout all of Sonoma County due to the rugged, rural nature of much of the County, the reluctance of broadband providers to underwrite expansion to underserved areas, and the difficulty many residents have in paying for broadband services. This “digital divide” prevents many individuals from participating fully in our increasingly digital society. The Grand Jury investigated the current state of broadband availability in the County and identified several means through which it could be improved.

RES = Respondent; GJ = Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury;
 BOS = Sonoma County Board of Supervisors; EDB = Economic Development Board;
 TPW = Department of Transportation and Public Works; PS = Permit Sonoma;
 COA = Sonoma County Office of Administration; ASB = Access Sonoma Broadband

RECOMMENDATIONS	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
R1. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors consider recognizing and designating broadband as a “Utility” that needs prioritization by October 31, 2021.	BOS	<p>This is interpreted as a two-part Recommendation: (1) The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors consider recognizing and designating broadband as a "Utility"; (2) Broadband needs prioritization.</p> <p>Part 1 of this Recommendation requires further analysis. The Economic Development Board is beginning assessment of a governance structure that would best support broadband infrastructure development and maintenance. This assessment will also include analysis of options regarding the County's role with the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy and the State's new Office of Broadband.</p> <p>Part 2 of this Recommendation has been implemented. On March 2, 2021, the BOS approved a Five-Year Strategic Plan that includes specific objectives related to broadband deployment and access.</p>	<p>The Grand Jury recognizes that BOS has interpreted this Recommendation as having two parts. The GJ acknowledges that Part 1 requires further analysis and that designation as a “utility” is dependent on determination of a governance structure that is yet to be determined.</p> <p>The GJ acknowledges that Part 2 of this Recommendation has been partially implemented through inclusion in the Five-Year Specific Plan.</p>
R2. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors adopt and support a plan to address a lack of broadband access in the County by November 30, 2021.	BOS	This Recommendation has been implemented. On June 8, 2021, the Board of Supervisors approved the Broadband Action Plan and allocated \$315,000 to fund the initial phase of the Action Plan.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has been implemented.
R3. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors	BOS	This Recommendation has been implemented. The EDB has initiated the	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has

RECOMMENDATIONS	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
provide staff and funding to allow the Economic Development Board and Access Sonoma Broadband to develop accurate data on broadband service for the County by December 31, 2021.		Broadband Speed Test Initiative, which allows community members to test their current home internet speeds. When all tests are complete, the EDB will analyze the data, and may request funding from the Board of Supervisors if additional study is needed.	been implemented. The GJ also notes that speed tests do not address a lack of service due to unavailability or cost.
R4. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and Economic Development Board assemble an interdepartmental group to coordinate and oversee efforts in Broadband expansion by November 30, 2021.	BOS	This Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future. The Board of Supervisors is awaiting a set of recommendations from EDB concerning the governing structure needed to implement their Broadband Action plan.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future.
	EDB	This Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future. An RFP for consulting services related to Broadband expansion is currently in development, with a release planned for late July 2021. The scope includes comprehensive research of potential governing structures and the creation of a business plan for the recommended structure. It is anticipated that a contract will be awarded in September 2021, with a governance structure and partnerships identified in late 2021.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has not been implemented but it will be implemented in the future.
R5. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and the Economic Development Board consider the establishment of a broadband Joint Powers Agreement that includes Sonoma County, Mendocino County, and possibly other neighboring counties by November 30, 2021.	BOS	This Recommendation has been implemented. In 2016, the County of Sonoma entered into a Joint Powers Agreement with Marin County, Napa County and Mendocino County to coordinate efforts to improve broadband access for rural communities. Through the North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC) the four counties have worked to identify broadband deployment opportunities, locate broadband funding sources, complete broadband strategic plans and help broadband service providers take advantage of funding to address broadband opportunities. The NBNCBC has also worked to recommend the member counties authorize coordination with local,	The Grand Jury acknowledges that the Recommendation has been implemented by means of the NBNCBC, and that a potentially more powerful JPA is under consideration (see EDB response below).

RECOMMENDATIONS	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
		state and federal officials to review and support regulations and policies to further expand broadband deployment to rural areas.	
	EDB	This Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future. A Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) is one of the structures recommended by the Broadband Action Plan, and will be considered as part of the scope of work outlined in the response to R4. The County will consider if a regional model is an appropriate tool for deploying broadband infrastructure in Sonoma County.	The Grand Jury recognizes that this Recommendation will be implemented in the future.
R6. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors give a high priority to addressing personnel levels sufficient to accomplish the goals of a broadband specific plan.	BOS	This Recommendation has been implemented. The County has given high priority to accomplishing the Broadband Action Plan and has allocated \$315,000 for the initial stages of this work (consulting service, legal services, and grant management).	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has been implemented. However, the GJ notes that the allocation addresses the initial phase of this work and does not directly address personnel levels.
R7. The Sonoma County Department of Transportation, Permit Sonoma and Access Sonoma Broadband develop procedures and standards that would ensure placement of broadband conduit in all appropriate situations by December 31, 2021.	TPW PS	This Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future. By December 31, 2021, TPW will begin working with Permit Sonoma to start the development of formal public right-of-way construction standards that will facilitate the permitting and installation of broadband facilities.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future.
	ASB	This Recommendation requires further analysis. It is unlikely that ASB will exist at an operational capacity sufficient to create and recommend policy before a governance structure is identified and created (see R4 above).	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation requires further analysis on the part of ASB.
R8. In the annual budget process the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and the Office of Administration include evaluation of the costs of laying cable or empty conduit in upcoming	BOS	This Recommendation requires further analysis. The next opportunity to allocate funding, during the annual budget process, will take place in June, 2022.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation requires further analysis and that the County budget is set on an annual basis. BOS will not be able to consider cable/conduit fund allocation until June 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
infrastructure projects by December 31, 2021.	COA	This Recommendation requires further analysis. The County Administrator's Office will work with departments to determine if funding is available for "laying cable or empty conduit in upcoming infrastructure projects" and will make appropriate recommendations to the Board of Supervisors through the normal budget hearing process.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation requires further analysis.
R9. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, the Economic Development Board, and Access Sonoma Broadband include in the implementation of any broadband plan a clear requirement for the download and upload speeds of 100/20 proposed in State of California Executive Order N-73-20 to be the minimal acceptable level of service by September 30, 2021.	BOS EDB and ASB	This Recommendation requires further analysis. Though download/upload speeds of 100/20 have been recommended by the state as well as identified by NBNCBC as a target, it is unlikely that formal adoption of any particular speed recommendation will be made locally before a governing structure and business plan are identified and created. It is anticipated that an update on this work would be made to the BOS within six months.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation requires further analysis and that implementation depends on establishment of a working plan.
R10. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors assure that any plan for broadband expansion should utilize fiber optic cable transmission or its equivalent whenever it is possible by November 30, 2021.	BOS	This Recommendation requires further analysis. Though fiber optic cable or its equivalent is a widely used benchmark, it is unlikely that the County will adopt formal transmission standards before a governing structure and business plan are identified and created.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation requires further analysis and depends on adoption of a plan.

EMERGENCY ALERTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Background: Wildfires and other emergency situations have threatened Sonoma County and its residents for many of the last several years. There have been losses of lives, property, and a sense of security. This Grand Jury Report centered on emergency communications. Information must be precise, accurate and continuously updated. The Jury found that significant improvements in communication policies, procedures, and practices have been made since the Tubbs fire in 2017. The Sonoma County Sheriff’s Office and the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) have worked in conjunction with the nine cities of the county to ensure that all residents have access to good information. The Jury also noted four specific areas in which improvement was still needed.

In addition, the Jury included a comprehensive listing of available resources for information, both before and in case of an emergency. This information is on pages 83-87 of the full report, which is available at any County library and online at www.sonomagrandjury.org.

RES = Respondent; GJ = Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury;
 SCSO = Sonoma County Sheriff’s Office; DEM = Dept. of Emergency Management;
 CCL = City of Cloverdale; CC = City of Cotati; CH = City of Healdsburg;
 CP = City of Petaluma; CRP = City of Rohnert Park; CSR = City of Santa Rosa;
 CS = City of Sebastopol; CSO = City of Sonoma; TW = Town of Windsor;
 BOS = Sonoma County Board of Supervisors; SCFCA = Sonoma County Fire Chief’s Association

RECOMMENDATIONS	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
ALERTS AND WARNINGS			
R1. By October 31, 2021, the Sheriff’s office, Dept. of Emergency Management and nine cities’ departments include within their Emergency Operations Plans action steps to reach all subpopulations within the County who may not otherwise receive an alert.	SCSO CSO	The Recommendation will not be implemented. The Sonoma County Sheriff’s Office is not responsible for the county’s EOPs nor does it control the county’s disaster alert and warning program.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation will not be implemented. The GJ notes that the Sheriff’s Office does post alerts on Nixle.
	DEM	The Recommendation may not be implemented as it is vague. The County’s Alert and Warning Annex is responsible for these requirements.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation may not be implemented.
	CCL SR CS	This Recommendation has been implemented.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has been implemented.
	CC CP CRP CH	This Recommendation is being implemented. The EOP will be updated by October 31, 2021.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation is being implemented.
	TW	This Recommendation has not been implemented. Emergency alert services are provided by the SoCo Sheriff’s Office	The Grand Jury acknowledges that that this Recommendation

RECOMMENDATIONS	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
		and the SoCo Fire District which use Nixle and social media platforms to alert residents of emergencies. Windsor’s EOP will be updated in 2022.	will be part of Town of Windsor updated EOP in 2022.
R2. By October 31, 2021, the Board of Supervisors review and propose additional alert and warning methods such as air raid sirens and public address systems to put contingencies in place when broadband fails or is not available.	BOS	This Recommendation has not and may not be implemented. The County has developed robust systems to reach most residents, as demonstrated in recent disasters. In cases of broadband unavailability it has used National Weather Radio to target challenging areas and populations, and has provided more than 10,000 weather radios. Hi-Lo sirens have been mounted on vehicles, and DEM continues to explore siren networks and other technologies.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has not been implemented. The GJ also recognizes that BOS and DES continue to explore additional ways to improve and expand warning systems.
R3. By October 31, 2021, the Department of Emergency Management explain the challenges behind the emergency communications in order that residents may understand, trust and appreciate the complexity and the ongoing work it takes to maintain effectiveness-	DEM	This Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future. Emergency communications are addressed with residents at every event.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that that this Recommendation will be implemented in the future.

EVACUATIONS			
R4. By October 8, 2021, the Sheriff’s Office, Department of Emergency Management, and nine cities work together to ensure consistent naming for all evacuation maps used by the public and first responders.	SCO DEM CC CCL CH CP CRP CS CSO CSR TW	This Recommendation has been implemented. The evacuation map has been shared with all nine cities, the DEM and every law enforcement agency and fire agency within Sonoma County.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has been implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
R5. By October 8, 2021, the Sheriff's Office, Department of Emergency Management, and nine cities work together to ensure the public is informed of their evacuation zones by publishing evacuation maps in local media, online, and through SoCo Emergency.	SCSO DEM CC CCL CH CP CRP CS CSO CSR TW	This Recommendation has been implemented. Since late 2020 the Sheriff's Office worked with all nine cities to create a unified evacuation mapping system. This County-wide evacuation map of the unincorporated areas along with all nine cities was posted on the websites of the Sheriff's Office and the Department of Emergency Management on May 24, 2021.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has been implemented.

RECOMMENDATION	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
INFRASTRUCTURE			
R6. By December 31, 2021, the Sheriff's Office develop a plan and identify what is needed to bring the communication tower equipment/repeaters up-to-date to ensure during an emergency the systems function (legacy and end of life systems.)	SCSO	The Recommendation has been implemented. The SCSO Telecommunications Bureau continually monitors and analyzes existing equipment and systems. Critical items are submitted annually to BOS for funding. A current list of projects is in the FY 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Plan.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has been implemented.
R7. By March 31, 2022, the Sheriff's Office and Board of Supervisors provide funding to maintain the communication tower equipment/repeaters.	SCSO	The Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future. SCSO submits requests on behalf of the Telecommunications Bureau through the County's Capital Improvement Plan. Funding is part of the annual spring budgeting process.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that implementation of this Recommendation depends on budget decisions made each spring by BOS.
	BOS	This Recommendation requires further analysis. The next opportunity to allocate funding will be through the annual budgeting process in June, 2022. The Administration will work with departments to determine if projects are warranted and funding is available.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation requires further analysis and cannot be implemented until budget decisions are made.

RECOMMENDATION	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
R8. By June 30, 2022, the Sheriff's Office implement the plan to bring the communication tower equipment/repeaters up-to-date.	SCSO	This Recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. Actions will depend on the assessment of needs (R7) and BOS funding of projects in the 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Plan.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation will be implemented in the future as budgeting decisions are made by BOS each spring.
R9. By December 31, 2021, the Department of Emergency Management work with Permit Sonoma to identify where all cellular provider towers are in the county.	DEM PS	This Recommendation has not been implemented and may not be implemented. Commercial broadband providers are not required to share infrastructure location and do not do so as it is considered proprietary information. Some locations are known, but this is not considered necessary for optimal use of alert warning systems.	The Grand Jury recognizes that implementation of this Recommendation relies on the cooperation of commercial cellular providers which may not be forthcoming. The GJ accepts that DEM also considers this location information is not needed for use of the emergency alert system
R10. By October 31, 2021 the Sheriff's Office and Department of Emergency Management work with the Fire Agencies in the county work to ensure that defensible space standards (as outlined by CAL FIRE) are met for all county communication towers/repeaters and cellular provider network towers.	SCSO DEM	This Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable. The County cannot assume responsibility for vegetation management on sites it does not own or control.	The Grand Jury accepts that SCSO and DEM cannot assume responsibility for sites that are not under County control. However, the GJ encourages county agencies to support efforts to maintain defensible space standards for all infrastructure that is involved in emergency alert systems.
	SCFCA	SCFCA supports and concurs with this Recommendation.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that SCFCA supports this Recommendation.
R11. By September 30, 2021, The Sheriff's Office and Department of Emergency Management work with the Fire Agencies in the County to define actions to take during a disaster for the protection of all County communication towers/repeaters and cellular network towers.	SCSO DEM	This Recommendation has been implemented. SCSO and DEM coordinate with CALFIRE and local agencies to protect local infrastructure. An example is protection of the Mt. Jackson site during the LNU Complex fire in 2020.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has been implemented.
	SCFCA	SCFCA supports and concurs with this Recommendation.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that SCFCA supports this Recommendation.
R12. By December 31, 2021, the Department of Emergency Management	DEM	This Recommendation has not been implemented and may not be implemented. DEM does not establish infrastructure	The Grand Jury accepts that DEM does not set safety requirements for commercial

RECOMMENDATION	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
work with cellular tower providers to ensure a plan is developed to ensure defensible space standards are implemented around each tower.		safety requirements for cellular providers, but as partners in public safety will support their efforts.	cellular providers' infrastructure. The Jury encourages DEM to facilitate measures that support the spirit of this Recommendation.
R13. By October 31, 2021, the Department of Emergency Management update the County Emergency Operations Plan to incorporate and post on the Department of Emergency Management website the most up-to-date information and Recommendations from the After Action Reports since the disasters of 2017.	DEM	This Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future. A new County Emergency Management Plan is expected to be submitted for review and approval by BOS in the 4 th quarter of 2021. After Action Reports will continue to be posted on the DEM website.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation will be implemented by the end of 2021, and that After Action Reports and Recommendations will be posted.
R14. By October 31, 2021, the Board of Supervisors approve the updated County Emergency Operations Plan.	BOS	This Recommendation is in the process of being implemented. An updated plan is being prepared and is expected to be submitted to BOS in the first quarter of 2022. Completion has been delayed by the need to comply with the County's new strategic plan and a new State law dealing with community engagement and cultural considerations.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation will be implemented early in 2022.
R15. By October 31, 2021, the nine cities update their Emergency Operations Plan to incorporate the most up-to-date information and lessons learned since the disasters of 2017 and post it on their websites.	CC CCL CH CS	This Recommendation has been implemented, although the Emergency Operations Plan is a long-term planning document and is not necessarily an appropriate site for most up to date information.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has been implemented.
	CSO CSR CRP CP	This Recommendation has not been implemented but it will be in the future. Updating is a continuing process, and the Emergency Operating Plan is not necessarily an appropriate site for the most up to date information.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation will be implemented in the future.
	TW	This Recommendation has not been Implemented and may not be implemented because the Emergency Operation Plan is not an appropriate site for detailed information.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation may not be implemented.

RECOMMENDATION	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
<p>R16. By September 30, 2021, Department of Emergency Management obtain from the US Army Corps of Engineers a copy of the Emergency Operations Plan for Warm Springs Dam and incorporate it into the County Emergency Operations Plan and post it on the Department of Emergency Management website.</p>	DEM	<p>This Recommendation has not been implemented and may not be implemented. The Emergency Operations Plan for Warm Springs Dam is available to County officials but subject to a non-disclosure agreement. The Army Corps of Engineers must balance security concerns and public safety with release of information.</p>	<p>The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has not been implemented because the Emergency Operations Plan is subject to a non-disclosure agreement.</p>
<p>R17. By December 31, 2021, Department of Emergency Management, through the San Francisco Bay Area Counties, submit its annual Emergency Alert System Plan to the State Emergency Alert System Committee of California as recommended within the 2019 State of California Alert and Warnings Guidelines.</p>	DEM	<p>This Recommendation has not been implemented and may not be implemented. The County submits reports as part of the SF Bay Area Local Emergency Communications Committee which has not met since 2010; this local committee is controlled by the State Emergency Communications Committee which has not met since 2011 but is being reconstituted and will hold annual meetings.</p>	<p>The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation will not be implemented because the appropriate Bay Area and State organizations are currently non-functional. These organizations are expected to be reconstituted.</p>
<p>R18. By December 31, 2021, the Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution that all major County disaster plans having to do with Emergencies and Emergency Preparedness be considered “Living Documents” to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.</p>	BOS	<p>This Recommendation has not been implemented and may not be implemented. These plans are multiple and complex and it is impractical to review and update them annually. Plans will be updated on a three year or as needed basis.</p>	<p>The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation has not been implemented and may not be implemented because annual updating is impractical.</p>
<p>R19. By December 31, 2021, the Department of Emergency Management publicize the work of community preparedness groups such as Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies, Community</p>	DEM	<p>This Recommendation has not been implemented but it will be implemented in the future. DEM supports multiple community preparedness groups and will continue to do so. DEM has applied for a grant to support these efforts.</p>	<p>The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation will be implemented in the future and that support of community preparedness groups is an ongoing process.</p>

RECOMMENDATION	RES.	RESPONSES	2021-2022 GJ OBSERVATIONS
Emergency Response Teams, and Community Organizations Around Disasters to more effectively reach all residents about emergency alerts and warnings.			
R20. By December 31, 2021, the Board of Supervisors increase the capacity of the Department of Emergency Management’s Community Preparedness function in order to effectively engage the greater community in disaster preparedness with groups such as Fire Safe Sonoma, neighborhood groups such as Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies, and Community Emergency Response Teams to foster resilience.	BOS	This Recommendation has not been implemented and requires further analysis. The capacity of the DEM Community Preparedness function has been increased over the last several years. Community Preparedness is a BOS priority and we anticipate this discussion will take place during budget hearings. DEM is currently applying for federal grants, which would support preparedness efforts including developing Community Emergency Response Teams.	The Grand Jury acknowledges that this Recommendation requires further analysis and implementation will be part of the budgeting process.