

STRATEGIC PLAN

ORIGINALLY DRAFTED

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REVISED

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**SAN MATEO COUNTY
JUVENILE JUSTICE & DELINQUENCY PREVENTION
COMMISSION**

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Introduction

The Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Commission (JJJPC) was formed in 2009 when the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors combined the Juvenile Justice and the Delinquency Prevention Commissions. For nearly 12 years, the JJJPC has been a public conscience for all youth in the county. Prior to 2020, the focus of the commission was on improving the well-being of and creating future opportunities for youth within the juvenile justice system.

In the fall of 2019, the JJJPC began looking into the changing needs of youth and families in San Mateo County and decided to increase emphasis on the delinquency prevention aspects of our mission and to increase engagement with more JJJPC stakeholders and partners. In order to guide this effort and determine how the JJJPC could have the greatest impact over the next several years, we began a Strategic Planning Project in January 2020 and completed a multi-year Strategic Plan in May 2020.

During the first quarter of 2020, the JJJPC strategic planning committee gathered input from a wide variety of stakeholders, reviewed numerous reports and research studies, analyzed material, and summarized results. In April, with a clearer understanding of why youth enter the justice system and the most effective means of prevention and rehabilitation, the JJJPC formally approved a new “Mission and Aspirations for our Community”, which follows on the next page.

The Aspirations are expected to focus the efforts of the JJJPC over several years, and we choose our projects each year with the hope that they will move us closer to fulfilling the Aspirations. We expect the JJJPC Strategic Plan to be a living document as conditions change, research is updated, projects are completed, and new needs arise, and to that end a planning committee spent the past two months reaching out to stakeholders for input and reviewing our plan and projects in order to refresh the strategy for 2021. We also made very slight revisions to the Aspirations.

What follows after the Mission and Aspirations below is the story of how the Commission came to draft and adopt its new direction and projects.

Mission and Community Aspirations

for

The Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Commission

Mission

It is the mission of the San Mateo County Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Commission to be a public conscience in the best interest of juveniles. The Commission advocates for programs and services that prevent youth entry into the juvenile justice system and promotes respect for the human dignity of all minors who do enter the system.

Aspirations for our Community

1. The voices of communities most likely to be affected by the juvenile justice system are heard regularly by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors and other elected officials in the county.
2. Every youth who comes into contact with the San Mateo County juvenile justice system has convenient, affordable access to appropriate transitional, mental health, and substance abuse programs.
3. All elementary and middle school children in underserved neighborhoods in San Mateo County have convenient, affordable access to programs that engage and support them after school and that provide services to address early childhood trauma as needed.

What is Strategic Planning?

“Strategic planning is an organization's process of defining its strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy.”¹

To elaborate, strategic planning is a collaborative process of gathering internal and external inputs, or information, to assess what opportunities and challenges an organization faces, what goals therefore it wants to set, and what activities it should take in order to achieve those goals. If the process of strategic planning is conducted in a collaborative way, involving as many of the internal and external stakeholders as possible, with feedback loops along the way, then the stakeholders should feel at the end that they had a part in constructing the strategic plan.

At the end of strategic planning then, ideally, the organization’s stakeholders are all invested in the direction for the organization and are clear on what they each need to do to achieve its goals.

Our Process

After approving the request to create the Strategic Plan at the end of 2019, the Commission appointed three Commissioners to form a strategic planning committee for the purpose of running the planning process. The three Commissioners were our Co-Chairs, Toni Barrack and Debora Telleria, and Commissioner Monroe Labouisse. The committee spent four months at the beginning of 2020 completing the Strategic Plan, and six weeks at the end of 2020 and beginning of 2021 refreshing the Strategic Plan.

Interviews

The first task for gathering internal and external information was to conduct interviews of stakeholders. A set of common questions to be asked in all the interviews was drafted, with a focus on two areas: 1) how could the Commission conduct itself in a way to be more effective in achieving its goals, and 2) what were the significant issues that need to be addressed in our communities in order to improve the lives of youth who are engaged with the juvenile justice system and to prevent youth from having contact with the system in the first place.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_planning

The default assumption for all interviews was that they would be confidential, so that all interviewees could speak their mind freely, both about the Commission and about the community's issues. The intention of gathering information through interviews was to aggregate points of view and find common observations, not to quote any particular interviewee and attribute ideas or opinions to any one individual.

In early 2020, all Commissioners were interviewed one on one by the planning committee members. After all Commissioners had had a chance to provide their input and ideas, the planning committee reached out to representatives of partner organizations, in the County government, at non-profit community based organizations, as well as representatives in city government, such as police departments. For a list of all interviewees from early 2020, see Appendix A.

Commissioners and stakeholders were consulted again for the refresh of the Strategic Plan that began in December 2020. New stakeholders were added to the list based on the work conducted by the Commission during 2020. The first outreach to the group was through a survey and follow-up interviews were conducted for those who requested it.

External Research

After summarizing the input from interviews at the January 2020 Commission meeting, the committee moved on to gathering external research on the causes and conditions of youth interaction with the juvenile justice system. The research addressed juvenile justice in San Mateo County, California, and the United States. A complete list of sources used in this research can be found in Appendix B. No further external research was conducted for the strategy refresh at the beginning of 2021.

Mission and Aspirations

After conducting external research, the committee had reached the halfway point of the initial project. The next step was to begin considering, and drafting, a new Mission Statement and new Goals, based on the information gathered to-date. The committee drafted these statements and circulated them to Commissioners for feedback. After receiving Commissioner feedback, the committee decided to rename Goals as Community Aspirations, and circulated the drafts to our partner organizations for feedback. The revised Mission Statement and Community Aspirations were presented and approved at the April 2020 Commission meeting.

After receiving feedback through a survey and follow-up interviews in early 2021, the planning committee made very slight adjustments to the wording of the Commission's third Aspiration. Those changes were voted on and approved during the January 2021 monthly public meeting of the Commission.

Projects

The final step of both the 2020 and 2021 processes was to develop Projects that could move San Mateo County closer to fulfilling the JJDPC's Community Aspirations. The committee at both points brainstormed a draft list of projects based on its interviews and research.

In April 2020, the committee drafted one paragraph descriptions of the proposed projects for the Commission and then circulated them for feedback. The committee also decided to use a rank choice voting system at the April Commission meeting in order to decide which projects to pursue first. At that meeting, two additional projects were added to the list. Rank choice voting at the meeting determined the priority of projects and who would be assigned to each.

In January 2021, completed projects were removed, ongoing projects revised to make descriptions current, and new projects were added by the committee. That project list was circulated to Commissioners and voted on and approved at the January 2021 monthly public meeting.

Completion

After the April 2020 and January 2021 meetings, the planning process was complete for each year. The Commission then moved on to execution of the Projects.

Interviews

Gathering input from our stakeholders is the first substantive step in strategic planning. Stakeholders included all Commissioners and external partners, such as leaders of County departments and local, non-profit, community-based organizations. A complete list of interviewees from 2020 is in Appendix A.

There was a remarkable amount of consensus from stakeholders around some major themes, both in 2020 and 2021. Finding that consensus made it easier to determine a path forward. Below are the highlights of where there was strong consensus during the interviews of 2020.

Root causes of youth engagement with the justice system

First, with regard to the issues related to juvenile justice and delinquency in the County, we asked stakeholders what they believed are the root causes of youth engagement with the justice system. Virtually everyone interviewed named economic stresses on families as the primary root cause. Struggles to pay rent and the strain of supporting families lead to less time spent with children and mental health issues for parents. The second common answer, related often to the first, was that untreated family trauma, mental health issues and substance abuse have negative effects on children. Some stakeholders, though not a majority, pointed to systemic racism as being a related cause, as was parent involvement in criminal activity. Finally, educators and parent advocates for education also stressed the negative impact of children not attending school and falling behind in reading and math levels at school. All of the above issues have significant negative consequences for the County's youth.

Programs most effective for prevention and rehabilitation

Given those root causes, the committee asked interviewees, what are the most effective programs for delinquency prevention and youth rehabilitation. Many Commissioners and outside partners stressed the importance of starting early, i.e. in elementary school, to address underlying issues. Elementary school is a time when children are more impressionable and less influenced by peer pressure, and they can more easily be guided in new directions and helped with intervention. In 2021 interviews, several partners suggested that while less impressionable, middle schoolers are still able to be steered in a positive direction and should also be a part of the Commission's focus. Given economic stresses on working parents, affordable and preferably free after-school programs were named as important preventative programs. The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula were named as good examples. However, emotional support is not enough for underserved youth, our interviewees told us. Youth need to be taught practical skills and given tools

for navigating the world as well, such as educational support, job skills training for high school students, and practical life skills at all ages. As just one example, the Big Lift supports very young children in achieving third-grade reading level by third grade, which is critical for all other learning beyond third grade.

In addition, especially our partners in County departments said, our underserved youth need more help with mental health issues and substance abuse. External partners placed a stronger emphasis on this need than Commissioners did in their interviews. Partners in County departments pointed to their programs that they say are working: supervision by Probation, drug testing, teaching empathy through community service, and work by police departments in early intervention, parent education and diversion programs.

What is working well and not working well in the juvenile justice system

Commissioners applauded the justice system in San Mateo County for using more progressive practices in arrests, prosecution and sentencing for youth who come into contact with the justice system. This starts with police interaction and police department diversion programs, as well as school suspensions and discipline, and continues with sentencing recommendations from the District Attorney, sentencing decisions by the Juvenile Court, and finally Probation Department practices in carrying out incarceration and/or probation for youth. In those interactions, Commissioners also cited greater awareness of mental health issues and trauma-informed practices by those who work in the justice system.

Commissioners and outside partners would all like to see more connection to services for youth and families who do come into contact with the system, both more access to existing services as well as an expansion of services. More progressive practices lead to fewer incarcerated youth and youth spending less time incarcerated, and even more so in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, and there is strong consensus that less incarceration is a good thing. However, it also means that delivery of services for youth needs to shift more to communities. Delivery of services is easier when youth are a captive audience in an institution, but harder when youth live in their communities. Stakeholders said that in order to enable that shift, they need to reduce the caseload per County employee with more staffing.

What is working well and not working well with the Commission

Many Commissioners, especially those who have served on the Commission for a number of years, praised the strong engagement and interest in the work by Commissioners. Interviewers were told that this is a change from recent years and a positive step. That said, Commissioners wanted to see more focused and productive monthly meetings and projects, more outreach to stakeholders and communities, and

some funding for the Commission, so it can bring resources to bear on the issues it proposes to address.

Partners of the Commission applauded the engagement and interest as well, but asked that the Commissioners channel their passion more into advocating for resources for partners. The message from partners for ways to improve the Commission's effectiveness was to be more practical, with "concrete end-goals" in mind. They asked that the Commission work more collaboratively with stakeholders and not take an adversarial tone when dealing with them, in order to be more effective advocates for actual change.

Every stakeholder agreed that they are united with the others in the mission to be an advocate for youth. The value of hearing and compiling all of the stakeholder input was that it pointed to ways to put that advocacy into practice.

External Research

After completing stakeholder interviews, the committee turned in early 2020 to third party sources to examine the causes and conditions of youth interaction with the juvenile justice system in San Mateo County, California, and the United States. The research was conducted between January and February 2020.

The following is a high-level summary of the committee's findings. For more detailed data and information, with references to sources, see Appendix B.

Arrest and Incarceration Trends

The research indicated that nationwide, arrests of juveniles have declined significantly since the mid-1990s. California has experienced the same steep decline, with youth arrests for violent felonies dropping 68 percent — from 22,601 in 1994 to 7,291 in 2017. In San Mateo County youth arrest rates fell 72 percent — from 3,644 in 2010 to 1,024 in 2018. Correspondingly, the rates of youth on probation also fell sharply. Youth on probation reoffended an average of 15-20 percent from 2014-2018. Conversely, 0 percent of youth in diversion programs in 2018 re-offended. San Mateo County's felony arrest rates, confinement rates and out of home placements are well below the California state average. For the past few years, the Youth Services Center, which has 170 beds, has operated at less than 30% capacity. Most of the youth held in the Youth Services Center are Latinx and come from poorer neighborhoods in the county, including parts of Redwood City, East Palo Alto, Daly City, South San Francisco, San Mateo and San Bruno.

Root Causes of Juvenile Delinquency

The research identified economic hardship as one of the primary root causes of juvenile delinquency, including access to affordable housing, child care, healthcare and a living wage. San Mateo County ranks as one of the top ten counties in California for income inequality. This inequality leads to added stress on parents and less time spent with children as parents work several jobs to make ends meet. Truancy and lack of parental supervision increases the likelihood of juvenile delinquency.

Another root cause is generational hardship, defined as several generations of a family who have experienced poverty, low education, criminal involvement, mental health issues, substance abuse and/or physical abuse. Generational hardship can lead to trauma, and mental health issues. Despite the wealth in San Mateo County, youth mental health needs in the county are higher than California's state average. Gang involvement, which is often generational also leads to juvenile delinquency. Four percent of San Mateo County high school students say they are members of a gang and three percent say they have carried a weapon at school.

Alternatives to Youth Incarceration

Experts agree that youth incarceration is harmful to youth and is ineffective at lowering recidivism rates. Diversion programs tend to be more successful. As incarceration rates continue to decline, there is a need for increased community services to help youth overcome situations that lead to delinquency. Preventative programs should start early and focus on early childhood trauma, literacy and keeping children in school. After school supervision and pro-social activities are also important. To overcome generational hardship youth may need additional support in the areas of mental health, substance abuse recovery, tutoring, job training, life skills training and parenting classes.

Mission Statement

After analyzing the input from our interviews and findings of relevant reports and research studies, the JJDPC approved in early 2020 several small changes to update our mission statement.

The original JJDPC Mission Statement was:

It is the mission of the San Mateo County Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Commission to be a public conscience in the interest of juveniles. The Commission is dedicated to delinquency prevention and the promotion of respect for the human dignity of all minors who come under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court.

The new mission statement is intended to:

1. Confirm that the JJDC is concerned with the interests of all youth in San Mateo County.
2. Signify a more proactive approach to issues. Instead of simply being “dedicated” to delinquency prevention, the Commission will “advocate” for programs to prevent entry into the justice system. The more active approach is exemplified by the projects the Commission will pursue over the next several years, including cataloguing programs and services that currently exist, pinpointing gaps, and advocating for the creation of additional needed programs.
3. Broaden the concept of youth who fall under the “jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court” to those who enter the juvenile justice “system.” The JJDC is invested in the respectful treatment of all juveniles who are incarcerated, on probation, in diversion programs, or have encounters with public officials such as police or truancy officers.

So, with those new intentions in mind, the Commission approved the following new mission statement:

It is the mission of the San Mateo County Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Commission to be a public conscience in the best interest of juveniles. The Commission advocates for programs and services that prevent youth entry into the juvenile justice system and promotes respect for the human dignity of all minors who do enter the system.

Our New Aspirations

After drafting a new Mission Statement and circulating it with Commissioners, the strategic planning committee turned in early 2020 to goals, in order to guide the specific actions and projects the Commission intends to undertake. The committee’s original intention was to write goals that are specific, measurable and have clear timelines, with approximately three to five year horizons.

However, after consideration and feedback, the committee decided that the goals should be expressed instead as “Aspirations.” They describe conditions the Commission would like all youth and their families in San Mateo County to experience, but because it would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve them in a set timeframe, the Commission prefers

not to express them as goals with measurable end dates. Instead, the Commission will write goals for each project, in line with these new Aspirations, and which are also specific, measurable and with set timelines.

Three Aspirations were drafted, one for each of our intentions from planning, in this order: 1) to make the Commission operate more effectively, 2) to support youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system, and 3) to prevent youth from coming into contact with the juvenile justice system in the first place.

With those intentions in mind, the committee drafted the following Aspirations, which were approved by the Commission at its April 2020 monthly meeting, and revised slightly in January 2021.

Aspirations for our Community

1. The voices of communities most likely to be affected by the juvenile justice system are heard regularly by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors and other elected officials in the county.
2. Every youth who comes into contact with the San Mateo County juvenile justice system has convenient, affordable access to appropriate transitional, mental health, and substance abuse programs.
3. All elementary and middle school children in underserved neighborhoods in San Mateo County have convenient, affordable access to programs that engage and support them after school and that provide services to address early childhood trauma as needed.

Meaning of certain terms in the Aspirations

Below are definitions to clarify certain terms in the Aspirations.

Aspiration #1

We define “communities most likely to be affected by the juvenile justice system”, also sometimes called ‘underserved communities’, using the excellent work done in 2018 and 2019 by the Community Collaboration for Children’s Success initiative (CCCS) at Get Healthy San Mateo County, a “local collaborative of community-based organizations, County agencies, cities, schools, and hospitals”.²

CCCS looked at neighborhoods in San Mateo County that have, for example, high incidences of juvenile probation, use of San Mateo County Behavioral Health resources,

² Get Healthy San Mateo County -- About Us: <http://www.gethealthysmc.org/about>

and reports of child abuse and neglect. With that they created a “Youth Need Index” and identified underserved neighborhoods, such as in East Palo Alto, North Fair Oaks, eastern San Mateo, South San Francisco and Daly City.³

Aspiration #2

Because the Mission of the Commission is to advocate for all youth in the County, and to prevent juvenile delinquency, we believe we should cast a wide net when we ask which youth our second Aspiration applies to. We define a “youth who comes into contact with the San Mateo County juvenile justice system” not just as a youth who formally enters the system by being arrested, having a case heard in Juvenile Court or by coming under the supervision of the San Mateo County Probation Department. “Coming into contact” also includes, in the Commission’s definition, interaction with police departments, school resource officers and other city and school district employees who intervene with underserved youth by providing them counseling or requiring that they enter into diversion programs.

Finally, to be clear, “transitional programs” are those that a) support youth in transitioning from incarceration to returning to their community, their families and their schools and b) support youth in transitioning from probation to non-probation.

³ Youth Need Index: <http://www.gethealthysmc.org/youth-need-data>

Aspiration #3

Per above, “underserved neighborhoods” are the same as “communities most likely to be affected by the juvenile justice system” as defined by the Community Collaboration for Children’s Success initiative (CCCS).

The term “after school” also requires some definition. Because working parents, and/or friends and neighbors, may be unavailable to support and supervise children at various times of day or during the week and year, then “after school” is not necessarily just weekday afternoons and early evenings during the school year. It may also include weekends, nights, and weeks and months of the year when school is not in session. Depending on the need for such programs, which the Commission will work to identify with one of its projects, “after school” might be expanded to include those times as well.

2021 Projects

The final outcome of the Commission's strategic planning efforts are projects intended to move San Mateo County towards fulfilling the JJDPC's Aspirations. So, the projects described below are organized where possible according to the Aspirations.

In January 2021, the planning committee updated the JJDPC's list of projects for 2021, and the Commission discussed and voted on the new list of projects in its January 2021 monthly meeting, held by videoconference. The following projects were approved and work has begun.

Making Communities' Voices Heard by Elected Officials

Communicate regularly with elected officials

**Continuing* from 2020*

So that voices in underserved communities are heard by elected officials, the Commission will seek out opportunities to communicate directly with the Board of Supervisors and other elected officials in San Mateo County. Giving underserved community members opportunities to communicate directly with, and Commissioners communicating their concerns to, elected officials are both strategies to employ. Becoming familiar with legislative priorities at city and county levels, learning how things get done in city and county governments, and identifying key players are necessary activities in this project. Questions to answer include which elected officials to target, what steps should be taken and in what order, how to use both private and public meetings effectively, and what community advocates to partner with and how. The project leads will be expected to provide monthly reports on their activity to the Commission, and to otherwise keep the Commission updated on their activity in a timely manner. *Project co-leads will be Monroe Labouisse and Paul Bocanegra.*

Outreach to Underserved Youth and their Families

**NEW* in 2021*

This project will reach out to youth and families in underserved communities to better understand their needs and concerns. Their feedback will help direct the work of the San Mateo County JJDPC going forward. Outreach opportunities may include attending and presenting at local community meetings in underserved communities, whether via videoconference or in-person when possible; researching the viability of a youth council for youth on probation; holding commission meetings in underserved communities once in-person meetings are possible; and holding focus groups with underserved communities. Underserved communities are those described by the Community Collaboration for Children's Success initiative (CCCS) as high on its Youth Need Index⁴;

⁴ <http://www.gethealthysmc.org/youth-need-data>

they include, amongst others, North Fair Oaks/Redwood City, South San Francisco, East Palo Alto, the northeastern part of San Mateo, and Daly City. *Project co-leads will be Debora Telleria and Johanna Rasmussen.*

Recruit more youth commissioners

**Continuing* from 2020*

Note: This is now the permanent responsibility of the JJDPC's Vice Chair for Recruiting, and so it will be removed in the future from lists of annual projects. The following is a brief description of its goals: Recruit youth commissioners, especially those who have interacted with the juvenile justice system, to better understand their experiences and needs. This project includes partnering with community-based organizations ("CBOs") and others who regularly interact with this population to identify and recruit youth commissioners. The Commission should have at least one youth Commissioner with experience in the justice system at all times.

Providing Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Transitional Services

Advocate for county task force on alternatives to youth incarceration **NEW* in 2021*

In 2019, the JJDPC sent a letter to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors requesting that they convene a task force to discuss alternatives to youth incarceration. The Board of Supervisors did not act on that request, but with the outreach in 2020 to the Board of Supervisors, the Commission has learned that there is greater opportunity to form this task force in 2021. The leads for this project will work to advocate for such a task force. The Commission representatives on the task force will draw on all of the work of the Commission and its various projects to inform discussion on the task force. *Project co-leads will be Monroe Labouisse and Paul Bocanegra.*

How can we benefit from lessons learned during COVID-19?

**NEW* in 2021*

This project will explore the changes in policing tactics, judicial sentencing and detention procedures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Project leads will look at arrest rates, types of crimes, sentencing, time in detention and recidivism among youth in the year before COVID-19 and during the COVID-19 pandemic. They will also meet with the Juvenile Judges, Probation, police departments and the Sheriff's Office to explore whether or not some of the changes to policies and procedures that resulted in fewer youth being arrested, fewer youth in custody and shorter sentences could become permanent. The project leads will produce a report on their findings and analyze which changes are feasible and which ones are not. It will outline why some changes are not feasible, and what it would take to make these changes permanent. *Project co-leads will be Melissa Wilson, Johanna Rasmussen and Sathvik Nori.*

Identify Diversion Programs in San Mateo County

**NEW* in 2021*

This project will identify and describe existing diversion programs in San Mateo County, including local police programs, the Sheriff's Office program and Probation's Intake

program at the YSC. Project leads will meet with diversion program directors and collect relevant statistics including the number of youth served and recidivism rates, as well as which diversion techniques are effective and which ones are not. They will identify best practices and areas of overlap. This project should also look at the possibility of creating one County-wide network of diversion programs, which could include disparate programs in each city working together to achieve the best outcome for youth. The final deliverable is a report which includes detailed descriptions of each diversion program, statistics, contact information and best practices. The report should be shared and discussed with local police departments, the Sheriff's Office and Probation, highlighting best practices and areas for collaboration. A follow-up project could look at expanding existing diversion programs and implementing best practices from other diversion programs. *Project co-leads will be Susan Swope, Doug Winter and Austin Willis.*

Providing After-School Care in Underserved Communities

Analyze current after school programs for elementary and middle school children

**NEW* in 2021*

This project will research, identify, and catalog existing after-school programs for elementary and middle school-age children in underserved communities. The project leads will determine the services each provides, such as support with schoolwork, life skills development, support for health and emotional needs, and pro-social activities. It will identify any barriers to full utilization of the programs and service gaps where they exist. Location, transportation, costs, family needs, etc. should be considered. The project leads will research websites, review CCCS research results, and interview key program providers. The final deliverable is a report which includes descriptions of programs and a discussion of barriers and gaps. *Project co-leads will be Toni Barrack and Rebecca Flores.*

Identify and recommend a better truancy strategy for county public schools

**Continuing* from 2020*

Truancy is a leading indicator of juvenile delinquency, and puts youth at a disadvantage for succeeding in school and life. The Commission believes that keeping students in school is key to preventing delinquency. The goal of this project is to develop recommendations on how to address truancy effectively, increase student attendance, and thereby increase the percentage of students graduating from high school. A task force consisting of representatives from the County Office of Education, school district boards of trustees, mental health, legal advocacy, and other NGOs involved in education has been meeting, and will continue to meet in 2021, to identify and assess best practices for reducing truancy. *Project lead will be Susan Swope.*

Projects to Develop Foundational Capabilities

Create a dashboard for JJDPDC to monitor data on juvenile justice *NEW* in 2021

This project will determine key indicators, and the method for tracking them, that the JJDPDC will routinely monitor. The indicators are intended to help the Commission identify trends affecting youth in San Mateo County and help identify areas of future JJDPDC study. Indicators could include: numbers and characteristics, including race and ethnicity, of youth arrested, diverted, incarcerated, and/or under supervision; recidivism rates; school statistics including number of suspensions and truancy rates; and numbers in treatment programs. Through a review of public data and interviews with key stakeholders, the committee will determine sources of information, common definitions, and a process for collecting, maintaining, and displaying the data. The final deliverable is a mock dashboard with definitions of statistics to be tracked and explanations of how data can be sourced and verified. *Project co-leads will be Toni Barrack, Debora Telleria and Austin Willis.*

Projects for a Later Date

The following projects were proposed and approved in 2020, but either there was not sufficient Commissioner capacity to work the project or the project requires completion of another project before it can begin:

Providing Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Transitional Services

Identify substance abuse, mental health, and transition solutions

Identify services that are needed but not available to youth who have come into contact with the San Mateo County juvenile justice system. As a follow-up to the 2020 project which identified gaps in services, work closely with partners like the Mental Health Commission, BHRS and community based organizations to examine potential solutions. What new solutions might be more effective, especially for boys, than the current practice of optional outpatient treatment for youth not in juvenile hall. Is a residential treatment program a better alternative? Or is a more intensive in-community solution, perhaps making greater use of community based organizations, the way to go? A full, 'ready to fund' project plan, i.e. budget, staffing, location, etc., is not expected, just a realistic description of a solution. The expectation is to produce a written report and to present it to the JJDPDC for discussion. *Project co-leads TBD.*

Providing After-School Care in Underserved Communities

Identify additional after school programs or capacity needed

After analyzing current after school programs for elementary and middle school students, a project will be needed to suggest solutions for additional or changed programs. Partner with CBOs and County officials to develop solutions. A full, 'ready to fund' project plan for

each solution, i.e. budget, staffing, location, etc., is not expected, just a realistic description of a solution. The expectation is to produce a written report and to present it to the JJDPC for discussion. *Project co-leads TBD.*

Appendix A: Interviews (2020)

The strategic planning committee would like to thank all of the Commissioners and partners listed below who took the time in early 2020 to share their thoughts for the development of this Strategic Plan. Their input was invaluable.

Commissioners who were interviewed

- Antoinette Barrack
- Paul Bocanegra
- Rebecca Flores
- Valerie Gibbs
- Michele Gustafson
- Monroe Labouisse
- Susan Swope
- Debora Telleria
- Sonoo Thadaney
- Melissa Wilson
- Douglas Winter

Partners and stakeholders who were interviewed

San Mateo County Departments

- Juvenile Court:
 - Judge Susan Etezadi
 - Judge Susan Jakubowski
- Probation Department:
 - Chief John Keene
- Attorneys
 - Rebecca Baum, District Attorney's Office, Deputy in Charge, Juvenile Div
 - Bonnie Miller, Attorney, Juvenile Branch Private Defender Program
 - Ron Rayes, Managing Attorney, Juvenile Branch Private Defender Program
- Human Services Agency:
 - John Fong, Director of Children and Family Services
- Behavioral Health and Recovery Services
 - Regina Moreno, Manager
 - Aurora Pena, Supervising Mental Health Clinician

County Office of Education, and School Districts

- Nancy Magee, Superintendent of Schools, County Office of Education
- Jenee Littrell, Deputy Superintendent, County Office of Education

- Rod Hsiao, Trustee, San Mateo County Board of Education
- Carrie DuBois, Trustee, Sequoia Union High School District
- Alisa MacAvoy, Trustee, Redwood City School District
- Keiko Smith, VP Advocacy & Community Services, San Mateo County PTA

City Police Departments

- Monica De La Cerda, Juvenile Detective, RWC Police Department
- Lt. Ryan Johansen, San Bruno Police Department
- Lt. Jay Kiely, Burlingame Police Department
- Lt. Matthew Lethin, San Mateo Police Department
- Victoria Trask, SRO, Menlo Park Police Department
- Manuel Velarde, Juvenile Specialist, RWC Police Department

Community Based Organizations

- Harold Atkins, Program Manager, Success Center
- Peter Ehrhorn, Department Director Youth Empowerment Services, Star Vista
- Kate Hiester, Associate Director of Programs & Partnerships, FLY
- Mike Jones, Senior Director, Boys and Girls Club in North Fair Oaks, Redwood City

Appendix B: External Research (2020)

External Research Sources

- [Annie E. Casey Foundation \(AECF\): Kids Count Data Center](#)
- [Annie E. Casey Foundation: *Transforming Justice*, Dec. 9, 2019](#)
- [Board of State and Community Corrections \(BSCC\): Juvenile Detention Profile Survey Database](#)
- [California Budget and Policy Center](#)
- [Cal Matters: California Divide](#)
- [Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice \(CJCJ\)](#)
- [Community Collaboration for Children's Success initiative \(CCCS\)](#)
- [Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health: Kidsdata](#)
- [Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention \(OJJDP\): *LGBTQ Youths in the Juvenile Justice System*, 2014](#)
- [Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention \(OJJDP\): *Trends and characteristics of arrests involving juveniles*, 2018](#)
- [San Francisco Chronicle: *Facing rising costs per youth, San Mateo County considers future of juvenile hall*, July 25, 2019](#)
- [San Francisco Chronicle: *Vanishing Violence Series*, 2019](#)
- [San Mateo County Probation Annual Reports](#)
- [San Mateo Probation: *Annual JJCPA & JPCF Evaluation Report 2017-2018*](#)
- [San Mateo Union High School District: *Healthy Kids Survey*](#)

Global Findings

- Treat juvenile crime as a (mental) health issue, not a criminal issue
- Important to develop strategic alliance with agencies that have similar goals (i.e. CCCS and JJCC)
- As use of detention declines, not enough services in the community to replace that method of handling kids who are delinquent or have tendency to be
- Need to identify funding sources for programs, in addition to JJCPA and JPCF

Root Causes of Juvenile Delinquency

Our allies pointed us towards the following causes of juvenile delinquency, which research backs up.

- **Economic Hardship (affordable housing, living wage, health care)**
 - 2018 bottom quintile SMC avg income \$25k ([California Budget and Policy Center](#))
 - Rent ^ 16% 2006-2017 in CA, while wages down 0.5% ([Cal Divide](#))
 - In 2017, 37% of SMC households had a high affordability burden, i.e. spent >30% of income on housing; vs. 42% CA, 31% US ([KidsData](#), Lucile Packard Foundation)
 - San Mateo County: ([KidsData](#), Lucile Packard Foundation)
 - ✓ Children living in poverty 21% (2014-16)
 - ✓ Children in low income working families 18% (2016)
 - ✓ Children in Food Insecure Households 13% (2017)
 - 11% residents <18 yr old in households below the poverty line. CA=21%
 - San Mateo County has the lowest use of CalWORKs of any county in the state (9 kids per 1000 vs 82 statewide) ([KidsData](#), Lucile Packard Foundation), but also top ten amongst CA counties for income inequality, as measured by Gini coefficient ([KidsData](#), Lucile Packard Foundation)
 - SMC: No space available in child care for 74% children ([KidsData](#), Lucile Packard Foundation)
 - Above leads to lack of time to spend with children and stress on parents
- **Generational Hardship** (Education, mental health, crime, and substance abuse in families and parents)
 - Leads to stress on children and children's mental health issues
 - Youth mental health need in SMC higher than average of CA as a whole, despite wealth (interview with CCCS director)
 - 14% children have had parents report 2+ adverse experiences ([KidsData](#), Lucile Packard Foundation)
 - Above leads to substance abuse and falling behind in / trouble at school
 - 1/3rd of kids in SMC are Latino; 50% of them are reading at grade level in 3rd grade ([AECF Data Center](#)), vs. 85% for Whites (who are also 1/3rd of kids in SMC). 75% of Latinos are not at State Standards in Math in 8th grade, vs. 34% of Whites
 - In SMC, performance of African Americans on average very similar to Latinos; African Americans represent only 1.5% of youth population of SMC ([AECF Data Center](#))

- In SMC, 20-25% of Latinos and African Americans are not graduating high school on time, vs. <10% of Caucasians. Whites ([AECF Data Center](#))

- **Organized Crime**

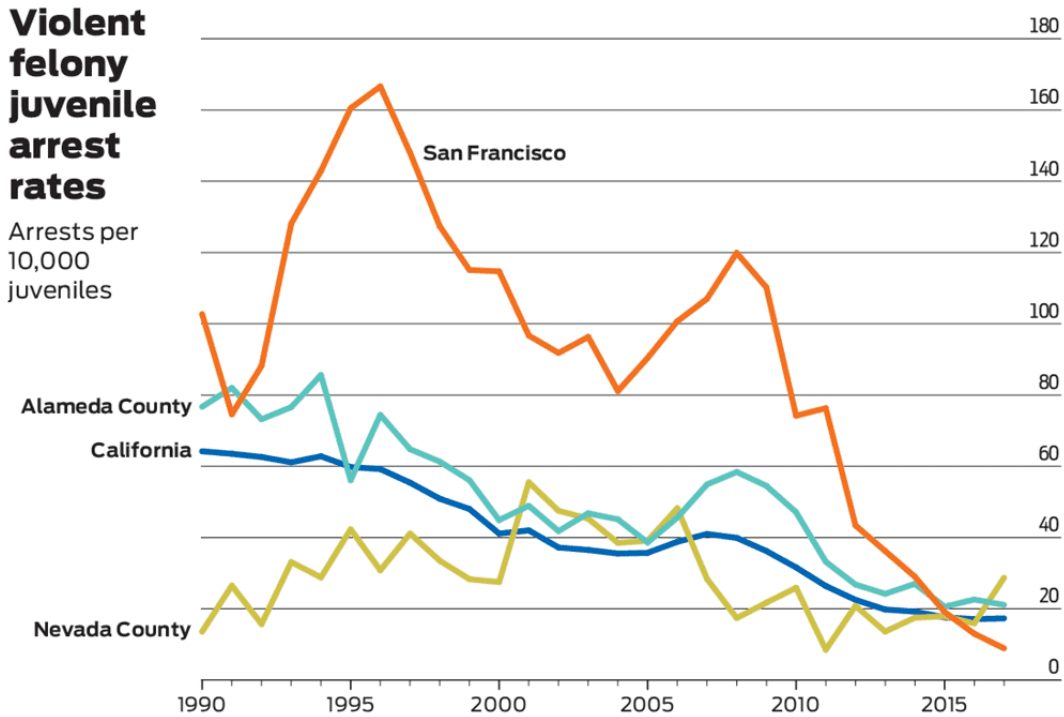
- ~4% of high school kids in SMUHD say they are members of gangs = ~80 per class or >300 total ([Healthy Kids Survey](#), 2017-2018)
- 3% of high school students say they have carried a weapon at school (~250 kids total), 1% a gun. Between 2-4% say they have been threatened with a weapon ([Healthy Kids Survey](#), 2017-2018)

Community Concerns

- CCCS Daly City Neighborhood Plan ([CCCS Report](#))
 - Lack of affordability (low wages, high housing costs), which makes parenting hard
 - Police need more trauma-informed responses
 - Structural racism in criminal justice, education
 - Not enough affordable preschool, or public school staffing
 - Youth mental health, and substance abuse
 - Not enough safe after-school spaces for kids (inc. weekend and summer)

Effects of Juvenile Delinquency

- Suspensions, offenses, probation, incarceration
- Generally, the Annie E. Casey Foundation concludes, youth incarceration is harmful to youth and ineffective. ([Transforming Justice](#), December 9, 2019)
- Nationwide, arrests of juveniles have declined significantly since the mid-1990s ([OJJDP](#)), and California is the same.
- In California, homicides of juveniles dropped 83 percent — from 382 in 1995 to 63 in 2017, the latest state data show. Youth arrests for violent felonies in the state dropped 68 percent — from 22,601 in 1994 to 7,291 in 2017. ([SF Chronicle: Vanishing Violence 2019](#))



- San Mateo County is no different
 - Youth (<18 yrs old) Arrest Rates by County, 2010-2018 ([CJ CJ](#), Mike Males)

Arrests/100K population	2010	2014	2018
SMC	3,644	2,137	1,024 (-72%)
CA	4,445	2,112	1,113 (-75%)

- In San Mateo County, the number of kids on probation has declined over time: ([SMC Probation Annual Reports](#))
 - ✓ June 2015: 559
 - ✓ June 2016: 521
 - ✓ June 2017: 306
 - ✓ June 2018: 286
- Of kids on probation, 15-20% from 2014-2018 re-offended
- Of kids in diversion programs in 2018, 0% re-offended ([SMC Probation Annual Reports](#))

- # of youth in supervision; half or less in intensive programs ([SMC Probation Annual Reports](#))

Year	General	Intensive
June 2016	115 (50%)	116 (50%)
June 2017	112 (56%)	88 (44%)
June 2018	101 (55%)	83 (45%)

- Relative to the rest of the state, SMC is doing well (2016 figures, CA Sentencing Institute, [CJCJ](#)):
 - ✓ Felony Arrest Rates: SMC = 369/100K ages 10-17. CA avg = 478
 - ✓ Confinement Rates: SMC = 12/1000 juvenile felony arrests. CA avg = 34
 - ✓ Out-of-home Placements: 207/100K youth were in foster or group home care. CA = 666/100K
- On June 19, 2019, the YSC held only 40 youth. ([SMC Probation, report to JJDPC](#))
 - ✓ 33 male
 - ✓ 70% Latinx
 - ✓ 46% from RWC or EPA (28% and 18% respectively)
 - ✓ 26 had committed felonies
 - ✓ 7 were being held during pre-disposition for potential felony charges
 - ✓ % LGBTQ?
 - ✓ *Note: Nationwide, LGBTQ over-represented in detention ([OJJDP](#))*
- [BSCC](#) confirms that the snapshot above is representative (re: population, gender mix, felony mix, pre-disposition mix) for most of 2018-2019
- At the YSC, “115 of 170 cell beds were empty on an average day in 2018.” ([SF Chronicle, July 25, 2019](#))
- “Counts [in 2018] showed that between 47% and 74% of the youths in San Mateo County’s juvenile hall were there for felonies or technical violations related to serious crimes, according to Board of State and Community Corrections data.” ([SF Chronicle, July 25, 2019](#))
- In San Mateo County, 53% of youth clients in Probation and 43% in Behavioral Health and Recovery Services come from 4 zip codes ([CCCS](#))
 - ✓ Daly City (10% Probation, 11% BHRS)
 - ✓ EPA

- ✓ North Fair Oaks/Redwood City
- ✓ South San Francisco
- These four were not the only hot spots, but they also measured high on “Youth Planning Readiness”, so were targeted by CCCS. Other hot spots were:
 - ✓ East San Mateo (east of downtown, west of 101)
 - ✓ San Bruno

Delinquency Prevention

- Commissioner and stakeholder interviews listed the following as effective delinquency prevention measures
 - For prevention, it’s programs that start early, i.e. elementary school
 - For both prevention and rehabilitation: it’s affordable after school programs like Boys & Girls Clubs and practical programs for education support, job skill training, life skills
 - Stakeholders also put emphasis on mental health treatment and added that many system programs do work:
 - ✓ Supervision by Probation
 - ✓ Drug testing
 - ✓ Teaching empathy through community service
 - ✓ PDs: Early intervention, parent education and diversion programs
 - Recommendation from AECF: Impose Statutory Limits on Detention and Commitment ([AECF: Transforming Justice](#), December 9, 2019)

Existing Programs

The JJCC and Probation allocate funds from JJCPA and JPCF to programs that assist youth that come into contact with the juvenile justice system. ([Probation: JJCPA & JPCF Evaluation 2017-2018.](#))

- **JJCPA Programs**
 - **Acknowledge Alliance:** Provides counseling for youth attending community and court schools
 - **Juvenile Assessment Center:** Provides case management and supervision of youth with significant mental health and family issues in partnership with other county agencies such as Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) and the Human Services Agency (HSA)

- **Family Preservation Program:** Provides multidisciplinary team risk/needs assessments to youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system
- **Fresh Lifelines for Youth:** Provides mentoring and case management for youth on probation
- **StarVista Insights:** Provides substance use treatment and family counseling for youth on probation
- **JPCF Programs**
 - **Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto:** Provides legal consultation/representation for youth and families
 - **Boys and Girls Clubs of the Peninsula:** Provides mentoring services and enrichment activities to underserved youth
 - **StarVista Strengthen Our Youth:** Provides group and individual counseling to underserved middle and high school students and parenting workshops
 - **YMCA of San Francisco School Safety Advocates:** Provides school safety advocates to create safe environments on schools campuses
 - **Probation Parent Programs:** Provides parenting education to parents of youth on probation
- Several of these providers indicate that these funds are insufficient to run the programs
- **Programs in the Youth Services Center**
 - Fresh Lifelines for Youth (education about law and constitutional rights, re-entry, leadership and gang programs)
 - Church services and bible study
 - Staff led life skills programming (resume writing, anger management)
 - The Beat Within (writing program)
 - Each One Reach One (tutoring, playwriting)
 - Mind Body Awareness (meditation)
 - The Art of Yoga
 - Pyramid (anger management, drug and alcohol prevention)
 - Brighter Day (career readiness, leading to jobs at Safeway)
 - Book club
 - Omega (staff led monthly program including speakers on relevant topics)
 - Adding Success Centers as a partner in 2020

Alternative Programs

- “San Francisco supervisors, with support from 10 of 11 members, voted in early June [2019] to close the city’s juvenile hall by the end of 2021. The legislation requires the creation of a committee to create community-based and rehabilitative alternatives, including a secure setting for those who pose a safety risk.” ([SF Chronicle, July 25, 2019](#))
- SMC BoS recommends forming a task force to study closing YSC
- In 2016, a civil grand jury recommended that San Mateo County examine whether the cost of detaining youths at juvenile hall could be trimmed and the empty space repurposed.” SMC Board of Supervisors recommends in 2019-2020 to study closing YSC, just as SF Board of Supervisors has recommended the same. ([SF Chronicle, July 25, 2019](#))
- Chief Keene not in favor of full closure. “Keene acknowledged the need to address the vacancy rate in juvenile hall and said he would support repurposing parts of the facility, creating space for after-school programs or community organizations. ... But, he added, state and federal restrictions limit what he can do — red tape that won’t allow him to knock down walls.” ([SF Chronicle, July 25, 2019](#))