



2021-2022 FINAL REPORT
KINGS COUNTY GRAND JURY

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THE HONORABLE SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES

AND THE

2021-2022 KINGS COUNTY GRAND JURY



John Wright

Judge Valerie R. Chrissakis	Judge Randy Edwards	Presiding Judge Michael J. Reinhart	Commissioner Mark Skinner	Assistant Presiding Judge Jennifer Giulliani
Judge Kathy Ciuffini	Judge Melissa D'Morias	Commissioner Brian N. Chase	Commissioner Robert Shane Burns	Judge Kathy Bare
Judge Kathleen Taylor	Committee Chair George Cleary	Committee Chair Kevin Scott	Committee Chair Sherryl Lynn	Sergeant at Arms Arnic Garza
Judge Fay Johnson	Committee Chair Gary Leasurc	Foreperson Dick Hoffmaster	Foreperson Pro Tem Ray Elizondo	Corresponding Secretary William Watson
Recording Secretary Karen Ormsby	Treasurer Ronney Wong	Committee Chair Jose Macias	Alejandro Vclasco	
	Maria Kelley			
	Valarie Parks			



Suchitra Gavini
Snack Master

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Superior Court of the State of California
County of Kings

Valerie Chrissakis
Superior Court Judge

June 07, 2022


To: Kings County Grand Jury and Affected Governmental
Agencies and Officers

The 2021-2022 Kings County Grand Jury has submitted the enclosed reports to the Presiding Judge and/or his designee of the Superior Court in accordance with Section 933 of the California Penal Code. The enclosed reports were submitted and are hereby accepted as the final reports of the Grand Jury concerning these areas of inquiry.

The agencies and elected officials who are affected by the enclosed reports are each hereby notified that they are required to comment to the Presiding Judge and/or his designee concerning these findings and recommendations as they pertain to the subject agency or elected official. Comments are due on behalf of each elected county officer or agency head that has responsibility for the agencies and functions described in these reports within 60 days from this date. The governing bodies of the public agencies affected by the reports have a 90-day time limit within which to submit comments pursuant to Penal Code Section 933 (c). In addition, a copy of each response shall be placed on file with the clerk of the public agency on whose behalf the response is made.

Those having questions concerning their responsibilities to respond to the Grand Jury's recommendations should contact County Counsel or their agency's general counsel.

The Judges of the Superior Court wish to express our sincere appreciation for the long hours of service given by members of the 2021-2022 Grand Jury, with special thanks to their Foreperson, Dick Hoffmaster. Selfless dedication to public service such as that demonstrated by this Grand Jury is crucial to the survival of the institution of the Grand Jury, which is itself an important part of the checks and balances necessary for our democracy to function.


Valerie Chrissakis
Judge of the Superior Court

RECEIVED

JUN 09 2022

1640 Kings County Drive
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-1010 ext. 6002

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County of Kings
Grand Jury
P. O. Box 1562 Hanford, CA 93232
449 C Street Lemoore, CA 93245
grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us
559-852-2892

June 6, 2022

The Honorable Valarie R. Chrissakis
Advising Judge, Superior Court of the State of California
1640 Kings County Drive
Hanford, California 93230

Judge Chrissakis:

The 2021-2022 Kings County Grand Jury hereby submits the final report to the Kings County Superior Court and the citizens of Kings County. Without the sound council of the advising judge, the Office of County Council, the Office of the District Attorney and the Office of the Jury Commissioner, this report would not have been possible. We also thank the court staff for the many instances where they aided in administrative matters.

Being given the opportunity to serve as a grand jury member is both rewarding and educational. Grand juries are given the responsibility to protect the interests of the county citizens. Countless hours go into interviews and research necessary to complete each project. I also extend my sincere thanks to the members of the 2021-2022 Kings County Grand Jury. The many hours spent by these dedicated people are reflected in this final report. The work done shows the commitment to serve the needs of the people of Kings County. It is a great responsibility, but also a great honor to serve as a member of the Grand Jury.

All work done by the Grand Jury is dependent on the individual members both in committee and in full body. It is important to work together for the good of all citizens of Kings County. My congratulations to the committee chairs who coordinated the work in each committee and to the general membership for supporting the work being done.

Sincerely,

Dick Hoffmaster
Foreperson

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REPORTS

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Kings County Elections Department

December 9, 2021

SUMMARY

The 2021-2022 Kings County Grand Jury conducted an investigation of the Kings County Election's Department. The focus of the review was to determine how the department was functioning.

The public has great concern regarding the State policy of being sent a ballot, the integrity of voting, and the vote by mail that is taking place in California as a whole. There are also questions regarding the equipment and processes of elections including signature verification.

BACKGROUND

The Kings County Elections Department is the agency that provides voter registration, voter outreach, and the tabulation of ballots in elections. They are also responsible for the storage of used ballots and envelopes for 22 months.

The public can register to vote anytime including the day of the election. Those votes are counted as conditional ballots and stored until the registration information is validated and then processed. Voter eligibility is ultimately determined by the Secretary of State's Office.

Equipment that is used in the Elections Department has previously been selected and approved by the California Secretary of State. The current equipment is the Dominion 5.1 system which was also approved by the Kings County Board of Supervisors. A computer is used to compare signatures and an additional piece of equipment to open ballots.

An "air gap" system is used in the Kings County Elections Office. An "air gap" system is a network security measure employed on one or more computers to insure that a secure computer network is physically isolated from unsecure networks such as the public internet or unsecured local area networks. There are four poll pads (iPads) at every polling place that have replaced the old paper voter lists.

The Voter Choice Act (VCA) Model exists and is a goal to implement by the Kings County Elections Department. It requires that every registered voter receives a mail-in ballot 28 days before the election. There are three ways for the ballot to be returned which are: mail in, drop the ballot off in a secure county ballot drop box or visit any voter center in the County of Kings.

Traditional polling places will be replaced by vote centers. Voters will have the ability to cast a ballot in person at any vote center in their county instead of being required to vote at a single assigned polling location.

Starting 28 days before Election Day, there would be at least one drop off location for every 15,000 registered voters. Drop off locations must be secure, accessible to voters with disabilities, and located as near as possible to public transportation. Counties would also be required to hold educational workshops and adopt the model through an open, public process.

METHODOLOGY

This investigation was conducted by on-site observation of the elections department before and during the recall election of the California governor. Members of the Grand Jury took turns visiting the elections department before, during and after the election to learn about and observe the processes that take place during the election. This includes receiving of ballots, time stamping, signature verification, opening of the ballots, the duplication of damaged ballots, the tabulation process, and the storing of used envelopes and ballots. The Grand Jury also had the Kings County Registrar of Voters meet with the Grand Jury to answer additional questions about the department's processes and procedures. All questions were answered honestly, openly and with conviction. The Registrar shared that during the recall election 61,000 ballots were sent out but only 31,000 were returned and that after every election 1% of the cast ballots are hand counted to help validate the election results. The Registrar of Voters takes great pride in his efforts to run the elections department openly and with integrity.

DISCUSSION

The Kings County Elections Department is headed by the Registrar of Voters which is an appointed position and selected by the Kings County Board of Supervisors. The current Registrar was appointed to the position in July of 2019. Prior to his selection as Kings County Registrar of Voters, the Registrar worked for 25 years in other departments for the County of Kings.

There are currently 5 employees working in the Elections Department with one vacancy yet to be filled. Employees have frequent training which includes signature verification methods taught by ex-FBI agents.

Signature verification is done by an employee comparing the signature on the ballot envelope by eye to the signature of the voter's original registration card. The only time two employees do signature comparison is when there is a question or doubt about the signatures matching. The voter can be contacted if further verification is needed.

If a ballot is damaged in the tabulation process, a new ballot can be made. Two employees are required for the duplication of the damaged ballot and both the damaged ballot and the newly printed ballot are kept on file.

The elections department is notified by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) when residents apply for a driver's license or apply for a change of address. They are also notified when a person is declared deceased. Ultimately it is the responsibility of the voter to reregister when they move which includes moving out of Kings County.

The Registrar does not handle ballots, compare signatures or do tabulating. His responsibility is that of management to make sure that the department operates efficiently and properly. A cataloging system has also been installed to know where cast ballots are stored in order to be able to retrieve a particular ballot if needed. A penetration test was also conducted to see where the system could be vulnerable. His goal is to complete a Policy and Procedures Manual which is currently in progress.

The Registrar has plans to implement the Voter Choice Act (VCA) which allows polling places to be open Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday (Election Day). A requirement is the establishment of a language committee and an accessibility committee. This would also allow the public to vote anywhere in their county, not just in an assigned precinct.

During a challenge of any election results, a forensic audit could be ordered by a Judge. This process opens the tabulation equipment and destroys its integrity. New equipment must then be purchased.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1

There is urgent need to help establish credibility for the Elections Department which could be provided by a Policy and Procedures Manual.

Recommendation 1

Complete the work on a Policy and Procedures Manual before the next election.

Finding 2

There is a vacancy in the department.

Recommendation 2

Fill the vacant position as soon as possible but before the next election.

Finding 3

Penetration testing has been done.

Recommendation 3

Do penetration testing more frequently.

Finding 4

Verifying signatures is of utmost importance to establish credibility.

Recommendation 4

Explore using some American Recovery Act moneys to invest in new equipment that will date stamp, verify signatures and open envelopes with a single machine.

Finding 5

Only 50% of registered voters voted in the last election.

Recommendation 5

Conduct additional community outreach to encourage more citizens to vote.

REQUIRED AND INVITED RESPONSES

California Penal Code §933 provides in part: "... within 90 days of receipt of a report the public agency shall submit its response to the presiding judge. If the report is on an elected public official, the response shall be submitted to the presiding judge within 60 days of receipt..."

Kings County Registrar of Voters
County of Kings Board of Supervisors

SEND FINAL REPORT RESPONSES TO:

Original to:
Shane Burns, Presiding Judge
Kings County Superior Court
1640 Kings Court Drive
Hanford, CA 93230

Copy to:
Kings County Grand Jury
Post Office Box #1562
Hanford, CA 93232

Corcoran Cemetery District February 28, 2022

SUMMARY

The 2021-2022 Kings County Grand Jury received two complaints regarding the Corcoran Cemetery District (“Cemetery”) upon entering service in early July. The Cemetery is located at 4170 Waukena Avenue in rural Corcoran, California. Both complaints were received by the 2020-2021 Grand Jury but were not acted upon because of the lack of time in their service year to fully investigate the issues.

A Grand Jury visit to the Cemetery was conducted in order to view, firsthand, the situation at the Cemetery. The Cemetery was found to be in good order with green grass in most areas. At the time of the visit, watering was being done and staff was working to maintain the grounds.

The Cemetery has new leadership in place with a strong plan to improve the appearance of the Cemetery as well as the quality of services provided. Staff was very accommodating to the Grand Jury by providing answers to all questions asked of them.

BACKGROUND

The complaints received about the Cemetery were that the grass was dry and the grounds were unkept with flags and flowers strewn about.



The Cemetery is managed by an elected Board of Trustees which operates under a *special district* authorized by California Health & Safety Code §9000 et seq. Special Districts are formed as divisions of local government to provide specialized services to a community. They are subject to state regulations governing special districts and must conform to the requirements of the Brown Act and Public Records Act. They are required to submit an annual financial report to the Office of the State Controller and are

subject to audits of finances. The Cemetery operates with revenue from local property taxes and sale of grave sites and cremation niches.

The Cemetery staff includes the manager, an assistant manager and several laborers. Work is assigned by the manager as necessary to meet the needs of pending services and ensure maintenance of the grounds.

METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury conducted a site tour of the Cemetery on Thursday, August 5, 2021. Members of the Grand Jury spoke with the interim supervisor who has been promoted to the position of supervisor since

the Grand Jury visit. Information sheets, including a price list at the Cemetery were provided at the time of the visit. These were reviewed by the Grand Jury to better understand the business operations of the Cemetery.

DISCUSSION

The Cemetery is a community facility which means that its burial plots have a wide variety of headstones. Some are very simple while others are more elaborate. Most headstones have a container to hold flowers. The Grand Jury noticed that some headstones were below the level of the grass which created a ponding situation with water covering the headstones. The Grand Jury observed watering being done and that headstones were actually standing in water.

The Cemetery has given special consideration to those who are cremated. Two areas of the Cemetery have been developed to accommodate cremains. The first is a special area of the Cemetery that was elevated and separated to accommodate the urns of those who wish to be buried in a “regular” in ground burial site. The second is above ground and will accommodate many urns in a small area. It appeared that the community has accepted this type of burial.

There is apparently no policy regarding flowers at the cemetery. Most cemeteries visited by the Grand Jury have published procedures which state specific requirements for the removal of flowers at least once or twice a year. At the Cemetery, both real and artificial flowers are left at the grave site until they are blown away or removed by visitors.

While the interim supervisor was helpful in providing a price list and information sheets, no preprinted documents were available. The information provided was complete but not a professional presentation. Also, no Corcoran Cemetery or Corcoran Cemetery District website were found.



FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding #1 – There is a need to develop a specific schedule for maintenance of the grounds including lawn care, filling gopher holes and tree trimming.

Recommendation #1 – Continue to develop a specific schedule for maintenance of the grounds to make sure that the grounds remain respectful.

Finding #2 – There is not a regular schedule for cleaning out fresh or artificial flowers that have been placed on gravesites.

Recommendation #2 – A policy should be adopted and published that identifies a regular schedule for removing flowers that are no longer appropriate to be displayed.

Finding #3 – Information sheets and price lists of the Cemetery were only available when the manager actually printed a copy on his computer.

Recommendation #3 – A professional brochure should be printed and made available not only at the Cemetery but be available at other agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce.

Finding #4 – It appears that there is greater need for specific communication to staff regarding a work schedule as well as work expectations, including a policies and procedures manual.

Recommendation #4 – A regular maintenance schedule and policies and procedures manual should be adopted and approved by the Board of Trustees and distributed to each employee to create understanding and work expectations.

Finding #5 – Many headstones are below ground level causing them to collect ponding water.

Recommendation #5 – Adopt and carry out a plan to raise sunken headstones back to ground level.

Finding #6 – There is no website for the Cemetery.

Recommendation #6 – Create a professional website to help communicate information regarding the Cemetery.

REQUIRED AND INVITED RESPONSES

California Penal Code §933 provides in part: “... within 90 days of receipt of a report the public agency shall submit its response to the presiding judge. If the report is on an elected public official, the response shall be submitted to the presiding judge within 60 days of receipt...”

Corcoran Cemetery District Board of Trustees.
Corcoran Cemetery District Manager

SEND FINAL REPORT RESPONSES TO:

Original to:
Shane Burns, Presiding Judge
Kings County Superior Court
1640 Kings Court Drive
Hanford, CA 93230

Copy to:
Kings County Grand Jury
Post Office Box #1562
Hanford, CA 93232

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Lemoore City Offices/Cinnamon Municipal Complex

April 1, 2022

SUMMARY



The Grand Jury conducted a review of the Cinnamon Municipal Complex and the Lemoore Recreation Center located at 711/721 West Cinnamon Drive in Lemoore California. The purpose of the review was to shed light on the use of the old Candlewick building that was

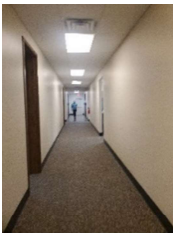


review

of the Cinnamon Municipal Complex and the Lemoore Recreation Center located at 711/721 West Cinnamon Drive in Lemoore California. The purpose of the review was to shed light on the use of the old Candlewick building that was purchased by the City of Lemoore and to provide a continuity or follow up to the previous investigations of the Lemoore City Recreation department.

BACKGROUND

The Candlewick building was purchased by the City of Lemoore for use as a City Government Complex in the effort to consolidate all City functions in one accessible place. It was a less expensive option than renovating the current City Hall which was not American with



Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. The 300,000 foot Candlewick building, and 25 acres were purchased in November of 2002 for the sum of 2.08 million dollars. In 2005 ARK Partners, a private company, purchased 12 ½ acres and 150,000 square feet of the original building for 1.7 million dollars. The remaining



use as

square

150,000 square feet and 12 ½ acres of land is currently used by the city to provide municipal services, including water, sewer, streets, refuse, fleet maintenance, administration offices, and a recreation complex.

The recreation complex includes a teen center, dance room, supervised play area, basketball courts, boxing ring, a CrossFit training area, a walking track, and an indoor soccer field. Summer Camp is offered, and a commercial kitchen has been completed. The facility may be rented by the public.



A community vegetable garden exists on the outside of the recreation complex area. Garden plots are available on a first serve basis to the public.

The large parking area has been covered with solar panels to low-cost electricity. In addition, the Grand Jury also viewed for recycling of electronic waste.



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an area

METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury conducted a site tour of the Candlewick/Cinnamon Municipal Complex and the Lemoore Recreation Center on Friday October 22, 2021. The tour was led by the Lemoore City Manager. The Recreation manager joined the tour of the recreation center and explained each areas use.

DISCUSSION



The renovation of the current City Hall, which is ADA compliant, would have been cost prohibitive. The consolidation of the administrative offices and maintenance facility allowed the city to close two maintenance yards. became the Northside Fire Station, and one was



not
also
One
sold.

The installation of solar panels has allowed the City of Lemoore to become a greener city. Parking enforcement uses electric vehicles to conduct business.

The kitchen that was installed has been leased out as a commercial kitchen. Another goal of the city appears to be obtaining the parcel of land between the Cinnamon Complex and the Lemoore Police Department, along Cinnamon Avenue, for further expansion of city services.

FINDING #1:

The acquisition of Candlewick complex has provided a one stop location for all city business, i.e., water utility payment, building permits, planning and engineering, human resources, finance and administration, public works maintenance and storage, city vehicle repairs and maintenance.

RECOMMENDATION #1:

None

FINDING #2:

The acquisition of Candlewick complex has provided a recreation complex which includes a teen center, dance room, supervised play area, basketball courts, boxing ring, a CrossFit training area, a walking track, and an indoor soccer field. The recreation department has provided an array of activities for the community and is viewed as a model for excellence.

RECOMMENDATION #2:

None

REQUIRED RESPONSES

California Penal Code §933 provides in part: "... within 90 days of receipt of a report the public agency shall submit its response to the presiding judge. If the report is on an elected public official, the response shall be submitted to the presiding judge within 60 days of receipt..."

Lemoore City Council
Lemoore City Manager

SEND FINAL REPORT RESPONSES TO:

Original to:

Shane Burns, Presiding Judge
Kings County Superior Court
1640 Kings Court Drive
Hanford, CA 93230

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Kings County Grand Jury
Post Office Box #1562
Hanford, CA 93232

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FOLLOW UP REPORT TO GRAND JURY 2020-2021
PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IN KETTLEMAN CITY
A COMMUNITY'S LONG-STANDING PLEA FOR IMPROVEMENTS

June 7, 2022

SUMMARY

The current 2021-2022 Kings County Grand Jury is following up on the prior year's Grand Jury report regarding pedestrian safety within the Kettleman City Community Services District (KCCSD). The current Kings County Grand Jury wanted to see what the status is of the recommendations that were made by the previous Grand Jury.

BACKGROUND

The Kings County Board of Supervisors is the governing body for the unincorporated community of Kettleman City. The Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) is an independent local government agency operating within the County and oversees the organization and transportation planning for the Kings County region. The Kings County Community Development Agency (KCCDA) is a County Department responsible to the Kings County Board of Supervisors and has the responsibility for managing zoning permits, land divisions, and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs. Federal CDBG programs are an important source of funds for developing communities. They have actively participated in securing grant funds for studies and plans for the Kettleman City community. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the owner and operator of State Route 41 (SR41) thru Kettleman City so they must give approval of any changes or improvements to the roadway.

Working documents that were generated by these agencies over the last 16 years (2005 to 2021), were reviewed by last year's Grand Jury. During this time, there was much discussion about the safety of Pedestrians crossing SR41. Specifically, the children, walking to and from school.

METHODOLOGY

The 2021-2022 Grand Jury conducted interviews to see whether the Grand Jury's recommendations were being followed.

The recommendations from the 2020-2021 Grand Jury were as follows:

- 1) The Kings County Board of Supervisors should direct the Kings County Department of Public Works and Kings County Community Development Agency to submit their recommendations for the next step to be taken by Kings County toward making a tangible improvement in the danger faced daily by pedestrians, particularly school children, in Kettleman City.

- 2) The Kings County Department of Public Works should strongly advocate for any and all pedestrian warning signage, including solar-powered flashing beacons, used by Caltrans on the state highway system to be installed along the northbound and southbound approaches to the residential area and crosswalk on SR 41 at General Petroleum Avenue.
- 3) The Kings County Board of Supervisors should direct relevant County departments and agencies to actively seek funding from all potential funding sources identified in the noted studies and plans to support the construction of a pedestrian bridge in Kettleman City.

DISCUSSION

The 2021-2022 Kings County Grand Jury Local Government Committee interviewed a member of the Kings County Board of Supervisors, the Superintendent of Reef Sunset School District, the Director of Public Works for Kings County, a member of the Assembly Ethics Committee and Caltrans (District 6).

When the current Grand Jury interviewed a member of the Kings County Board of Supervisors on February 25, 2022, he was extremely interested in seeing a pedestrian crossing bridge located at SR 41 and General Petroleum Avenue become a reality. He was not, however, interested in short term measures such as flashing lights or a HAWK (High Intensity Activated Crosswalk) system as it might lessen the pressure to build a pedestrian crossing bridge. A HAWK signal system is a special type of beacon used to warn and control motorists at marked, un-signalized crosswalks to assist pedestrians crossing a street or highway.

The Grand Jury interviewed the Superintendent of Reef Sunset Unified School District on February 18, 2022. He is still genuinely concerned about his students having to cross SR41. The school district is willing to help in any way possible to make their students safe while walking to and from school. Crossing guards were mentioned by the Superintendent, as well as the need for flashing lights. He felt that a pedestrian bridge would be a promising idea if the students would use it.

The County Public Works Director for Kings County was interviewed on March 11, 2022, and again on April 22, 2022. He shared that there are other short-term measures that could be taken until a pedestrian bridge could be built or that could be put in place instead of a bridge such as a HAWK system or a version of a roundabout. The building of a bridge could take many years and is not always used as frequently as one would think.

Kings County has secured and earmarked two million dollars to the bridge project. This money would be used for the planning and design of the bridge. Further moneys would need to be secured for the actual construction costs. The County's Director of Public Works guesstimated that the total cost of the bridge might cost about 10 to 12 million dollars. If funding is secured, it would likely take another five plus years to be built.

The Grand Jury reached out to interview the Kings County Assemblyman who is responsible for the Kettleman City area multiple times during the months of February 2022 through April 2022 to see if he could confirm that funding for the project was available or if it had been denied. The first person the Grand Jury spoke with in his office did not seem to know about the project and would not connect us to

the Assemblyman. Eventually, the Grand Jury was passed on to another person in his office and this person could not get the Grand Jury connected with our Assemblyman either. The Grand Jury then received a call from the Assembly Ethics Committee. After several attempts the Grand Jury connected with the Assembly Ethics Committee. He was willing to see if he could get answers for us regarding whether the funding had been approved in the Governor's budget. He stated that yes, our Assemblyman submitted Senate Bill 119 which was signed off by the governor, thus funding of two million dollars was earmarked for the planning and design of the Kettleman City Bridge.

The Grand Jury interviewed the California Department of Transportation District 6 Maintenance and Operations Deputy District Director on April 8, 2022. Projects such as this bridge are brought to Caltrans by the individual County, which is then responsible to obtain funding and permits, etc. Caltrans may decide on an individual basis to help secure funds or leave it to the County.

Current secured seed money of two million dollars would be used for planning, engineering, and design. Construction costs have not been determined or secured at this time.

In the Caltrans Deputy District 6 Director's opinion and experience, a pedestrian bridge going over a two-way highway may not be used. Pedestrians tend not to go out of their way when they can go in a straight line and cross a street. He explained other alternatives to a pedestrian bridge such as many diverse types of flashing lights, roundabouts, etc. Roundabouts slow traffic down and prevent fatalities while keeping the traffic flow going. Signals are not used as they impede the flow of traffic on a highway. Flashing lighted crosswalks are expensive and have high maintenance costs because they are imbedded in the pavement. The other options mentioned such as a variety of flashing lights or roundabout, are also less expensive compared to a bridge that may or may not be used.

FINDINGS

Finding #1

The Kings County Department of Public Works has made recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

Finding #2

Caltrans and Kings County have agreed to install a rectangular flashing beacon at General Petroleum Avenue.

Finding #3

Two million dollars has been designated and is being held by Caltrans for planning, engineering, and design of a pedestrian bridge at General Petroleum Avenue over SR 41 in Kettleman City. The total cost for the pedestrian bridge is estimated to be 10 to 12 million dollars.

Finding #4

The Kings County Department of Public Works and Caltrans has advocated for solutions such as a rectangular flashing beacon, the HAWK signal system, or a roundabout instead of a Pedestrian Bridge.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1

The Kings County Board of Supervisors should consider the use of less expensive solutions that could be quickly implemented.

Recommendation #2

The Kings County Public Works Department should install a rectangular flashing beacon as soon as possible. The Kings County Public Works Department should also continue working with Caltrans to install more cost-effective solutions far enough down SR41 to slow down traffic as they approach the crosswalk at General Petroleum Avenue.

Recommendation #3

The Kings County Board of Supervisors should revisit the probable non usage of a Pedestrian Bridge, the astronomical cost of 10 to 12 million dollars for such a project, while keeping in mind that there are many other worthy projects in Kings County that could use funding.

Recommendation #4

Considering the maintenance that a pedestrian bridge would require, and the probable non usage of such a bridge, the Board of Supervisors should not go forward with the Kettleman City Pedestrian Bridge. Other options should be installed such as the HAWK signal system, lighted crosswalk, roundabouts, or extra flashing lights.

Required Responses

Kings County Board of Supervisors
Kings County Department of Public Works
Caltrans
Reef Sunset Unified School District

LETTERS

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Law & Public Safety Visits, Meet & Greets, Letters Sent

CITY			Date
Avenal	Martin Gamboa	Acting Warden, Avenal State Prison	11/17/2021
Corcoran	Ken Clark	Warden Corcoran State Prison	4/5/2022
	Theresa Cisneros	Warden CA Substance Abuse Tr Facility/St Prison	5/10/2022
Hanford	Steve Pendergrass	Chief Hanford Fire Department	3/23/2022
	Parker Sever	Chief Hanford Police Department	5/3/2022
Lemoore	Michael Kendall	Chief Lemoore Police Department	12/14/2021
	Bruce German	Chief Lemoore Volunteer Fire Department	3/1/2022
COUNTY			
Kings County	Ben Wiele	Operations Manager-American Ambulance	10/12/2021
	Chrystal Thomas	Captain Kings County Jail	11/24/2021
	Wayne Brabant	Kings County Chief Deputy Coroner	5/3/2022
	Dan Luttrell	Deputy Chief Probation Officer	6/7/2022

Health and Safety Visits, Meet & Greets, Letters Sent

CITY			Date
Armona	Veronica Pelayo-Morales	Principal Armona Elementary	5/2/2022
Corcoran	Antonia Ramirez	Principal Corcoran High School	4/5/2022
	Dr. Guadalupe Solis	Interim Superintendent Corcoran Unified	4/5/2022
Hanford	Dr. Scott Pickle	Principal Hanford High School	4/5/2022
	Cindi Marshall	Superintendent/Principal Lakeside Elementary	4/5/2022
	Katy V. Culver	Hanford West High School	6/6/2022
COUNTY			
Kings County	Dr. Lisa Lewis	Kings County Behavioral Health	4/5/2022

County Government Visits, Meet & Greets, Letters Sent

CITY			Date
Corcoran	Greg Gatzka	Corcoran City Manager	5/19/2022
Hanford	Lance Lippincott	Economic and Workforce Development Director	2/17/2022
COUNTY			
Kings County	Lupe Villa	Registrar of Voters	11/4/2021
	Mr. James Erb	Director of Finance	1/6/2022
	Jeff Garner	Executive Director Kings Comm Action Org	2/17/2022
	Jeff Garner	Executive Director Kings Comm Action Org	5/19/2022
	Sonja Bugay, Director	Kings County Director Human Services	3/11/2022

Local Government Visits, Meet & Greets, Letters Sent

CITY			Date
Avenal	Anthony Lopez	City Manager	12/16/2021
	Kaonou Yang	Community Development	9/10/2021
	Pat Sanchez	Superintendent Reef-Sunset School District	2/18/2022
	Austin Rodrigues	Senior Officer Avenal Police Department	5/13/2022
	Rob Williams	Public Works Director	5/13/2022
	Ronald Brumley	Utilities Supervisor	5/13/2022
	Corcoran	Kevin Tromborg	Corcoran Community Development Director
Greg Gatzka		Corcoran City Manager	11/19/2021
Hanford	Gabriel De Silva Myers	Hanford Planning Commission	9/10/2021
	Johnathan Doyel	Hanford Public Works Director	10/14/2021
	Mario Cifuentez	Hanford City Manager	12/10/2021
	Johnathan Doyel	Hanford Public Works Director	2/18/2022
	Jason Rodrigues	Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager	2/18/2022
	Mario Cifuentez	Hanford City Manager	2/25/2022
	City Council Members	Hanford City Council	2/25/2022
	Mario Cifuentez	Hanford City Manager	4/14/2022
Lemoore	Frank Rivera	Lemoore Public Works	10/14/2021
	Nathan Olson	Lemoore City Manager	10/29/2021
CITY			
COUNTY			
Kings County	Chuck Kinney	Kings County Community Development Director	10/14/2021
	Richard Valle	County Supervisor District 1	2/25/2022
	Dominic Tyburski	Kings County Department of Public Works	3/11/2022
	Keith Fagundes	Kings County District Attorney	5/27/2022

STATE

Cal Trans
State of
California

John Liu
Rudy Salas

Deputy District Director
Assemblyman

4/15/2022
5/27/2022

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RESPONSES TO 2020-2021
FINAL REPORT

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COUNTY OF KINGS
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

GOVERNMENT CENTER HANFORD, CALIFORNIA 93230 (559) 852-2362
Catherine Venturella, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

AGENDA ITEM
August 17, 2021

SUBMITTED BY: Administration –Larry Spikes/ Matthew Boyett

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT ENTITLED “PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IN KETTLEMAN CITY: A COMMUNITY’S LONG-STANDING PLEA FOR IMPROVEMENTS”

SUMMARY:

Overview:

Pursuant to Section 933 of the California Penal Code, the Board is required to respond to the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury report, titled *Pedestrian Safety in Kettleman City: A Community’s Long-Standing Plea for Improvements*. An initial response was drafted for consideration using the other required response from the Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) and brought forward for approval as the Board’s official response on August 3, 2021. However, the Board decided to table the item and directed staff to work on crafting a more in depth response.

Recommendation:

Approve the response for the Grand Jury report, titled *Pedestrian Safety in Kettleman City: A Community’s Long-Standing Plea for Improvements*.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact.

BACKGROUND:

The 2020-2021 Grand Jury investigated pedestrian crossing safety concerns in Kettleman City at General Petroleum Avenue (Ave.) and State Route (SR) 41. The findings in the report include identification of evidence supporting needed improvements for pedestrian crossing at SR 41 and General Petroleum Ave., lack of warning signage for motorists approaching the crosswalk, and proposing a pedestrian bridge be constructed for long-term safety for the residents of Kettleman City, particularly schoolchildren.

(Cont’d)

FEB 08 2022

RECEIVED

BOARD ACTION:

APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED: OTHER:

ROLL CALL: VALLE, VERBOON, NEVES, FAGUNDES, PEDERSEN – AYE

I hereby certify that the above order was passed
and adopted on August 17, 2021.

CATHERINE VENTURELLA, Clerk of the Board

By *Catherine Venturella* Deputy.

Agenda Item

**RESPONSE TO GRAND JURTY REPORT ENTITLED "PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IN
KETTLEMAN CITY: A COMMUNITY'S LONG-STANDING PLEA FOR IMPROVEMENTS"**

August 17, 2021

Page 2 of 2

On August 3, 2021, a recommendation was brought before the Board to review and approve KCAG's response as the Board's required response. During the Board meeting, direction from the Board was for Administration to work with Public Works to craft a more in depth response for Board consideration. Administration worked with Public works and developed a separate response rather than using KCAG's response as the Board's official response.

Attached is the revised response to the Grand Jury report titled *Pedestrian Safety in Kettleman City: A Community's Long-Standing Plea for Improvements*.

RECEIVED

FEB 08 2022



Kings County **COPY**
Association of Governments

339 W. D Street, Suite B
Lemoore, CA 93245
Tel. (559) 852-2654
Fax (559) 924-6632
www.kingscog.org

Member Agencies: Cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford and Lemoore, County of Kings

August 16, 2021

RECEIVED

JAN 23 2022

The Honorable Shane Burns, Presiding Judge
Kings County Superior Court
1640 Kings Court Drive
Hanford, CA 93230

SUBJECT: Grand Jury Report, Dated April 23, 2021
Response to "Pedestrian Safety in Kettleman City: A Community's Long Standing
Plea for Improvements"

Dear Judge Burns:

The Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Kings County Grand Jury's report dated April 23, 2021 "Pedestrian Safety in Kettleman City: A Community's Long Standing Plea for Improvements" received on May 19, 2021. The Grand Jury has identified KCAG as a "Required Response". As such, this response is being submitted as required by California Penal Code Section 933.

The KCAG Commission would like to thank the members of the 2020-2021 Grand Jury for their participation and effort in preparing their Reports, and their participation in the Grand Jury process.

Respectfully submitted,

KINGS COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Terri King, Executive Director

General Comments

KCAG is the state designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) and the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Kings County region. Some of KCAG's responsibilities as an RTPA/MPO is to prepare the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP), and other documents such as the Regional Active Transportation Plan.

The KCAG Commission has seven members including one city council representative from each city within the county and two Board of Supervisor representatives from the County of Kings. The KCAG Commission has oversight responsibility of the work performed by KCAG, the agency.

Regional transportation planning is the largest single function of KCAG. KCAG provides a coordinated planning and policy development forum between the needs of the KCAG local government members and the State of California (Caltrans). KCAG is not involved with the internal decisions of each local government member, but develops policy statements and recommendations for the improvement of the state highway system, public transportation needs, regional routes, and coordination with other regions and the state.

The Grand Jury's report states "KCAG carries out planning responsibilities for the Kettleman City area and works to secure funds from federal, state, and local source for projects." Although KCAG does assist local agencies in securing funds for projects, it is the County of Kings Community Development Agency that has the planning responsibilities for the Kettleman City area.

Although KCAG prepares various transportation planning and programming documents that include financially constrained priority transportation projects proposed by our member agencies, KCAG does not implement transportation construction projects, as that is the responsibility of local agencies or owners of those facilities on which improvements would be made.

Response to Findings and Recommendations

Finding #1 – Over the past 16 years, the discussions, studies, and resulting documents addressing Kettleman City have produced few tangible improvements toward reducing the danger faced daily by pedestrians of all ages crossing SR 41 in Kettleman City.

KCAG Response: Partially agree.

The Kettleman City Safety and Community Study undertaken by KCAG in 2010 identified design concept drawings for pedestrian improvements on General Petroleum Avenue and SR 41 from 25th Avenue to the proposed North Street. This and other studies noted have led to funds being awarded by Caltrans to two County of Kings applications for projects to construct pedestrian and bicycle improvements on General Petroleum Avenue and on SR 41. KCAG staff supported a statewide coalition effort to submit a budget proposal to the Governor's administration for a \$2 billion one-time augmentation for the Active Transportation Program (ATP) from the state's significant unanticipated General Fund surplus. This proposal could have funded the County of Kings' ATP 2021 Cycle 5 application for the Becky Pease Street Sidewalk Improvements intended to address the pedestrian concerns in Kettleman City. Unfortunately the Governor's FY 2021-22 May Revise Budget did not include sufficient funding to be able to award this project as it did not score high enough by the State to meet the funding threshold.

Finding #2 – The signage along SR 41 approaching the Kettleman City residential area is inadequate to alert drivers to a crosswalk ahead.

KCAG Response: Partially agree.

KCAG believes that any improvement in signage would be a significant benefit to improve the safety of pedestrians. Signage along SR 41 is Caltrans' responsibility to determine what is considered adequate signage in accordance with the State standards and guidance as Caltrans is the owner and operator of the state highway facility.

Finding # 3 – The safest, long-term solution to reducing the danger for pedestrians, particularly schoolchildren, in Kettleman City is the construction of a pedestrian bridge spanning SR 41.

KCAG Response: Agree; however, as with any transportation improvement plan, the cost of the improvement is always a factor for the local agencies.

Recommendation #1 – The Kings County Board of Supervisors should direct the Kings County Department of Public Works and Kings County Community Development Agency to submit their recommendations for the next step to be taken by the County of Kings toward making a tangible improvement in the danger faced daily by pedestrians, particularly schoolchildren, in Kettleman City.

KCAG Response: Agree.

KCAG would be supportive of the Kings County Department of Public Works and Kings County Community Development Agency efforts in seeking recommendations for next steps to be taken to make pedestrian improvements in Kettleman City. KCAG would be pleased to submit letters of support for any grant application the County of Kings chooses to submit to construct pedestrian improvements in Kettleman City. KCAG recommends that the County of Kings meet with Caltrans staff to discuss the issue to determine the process that is to be undertaken in order to construct improvements on a state highway facility.

Recommendation #2 – The Kings County Department of Public Works should strongly advocate for any and all pedestrian warning signage, including solar-powered flashing beacons, used by Caltrans on the state highway system to be installed along the northbound and southbound approaches to the residential area and crosswalk on SR 41 at General Petroleum Avenue.

KCAG Response: Agree.

KCAG would be supportive of the Kings County Department of Public Works efforts to advocate for any and all pedestrian warning signage. KCAG staff meets with Caltrans staff on a quarterly basis to discuss currently programmed projects on the State Highway system and provides comments on other transportation related issues. KCAG routinely invites local agency Public Works Department staff to attend these meetings, where they can advocate for improvements under consideration.

Recommendation #3 – The Kings County Board of Supervisors should direct relevant County departments and agencies to actively seek funding from all potential funding sources identified in the noted studies and plans to support the construction of a pedestrian bridge in Kettleman City.

KCAG Response: Agree.

KCAG is here to and will assist County departments in seeking funding from various sources to construct pedestrian improvements. KCAG would be pleased to submit letters of support for any grant application the County of Kings chooses to submit to construct pedestrian improvements in Kettleman City.

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RESPONSES TO 2021-2022
FINAL REPORT

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SPECIAL DISTRICT

April 5, 2022

RECEIVED

MAY 24 2022

Shane Burns, Presiding Judge
Kings County Superior Court
1640 Kings Court Drive
Hanford, CA 93230

Judge Burns,

The Corcoran Cemetery District Board of Directors has received and reviewed the report of the 2021-2022 Kings County Grand Jury. The report was generated after the grand jury received two complaints about the cemetery in July of 2020; however there was not enough time left in their tenure to adequately investigate, so the complaints were passed on to the current grand jury.

Since the grand jury was not able to visit the cemetery until some time after the complaints were received, the browning grass caused by failure of the cemetery's water well had been addressed. We continue to diligently work on the facility's grounds and other issues that arise, despite an almost three-fold increase in burials over the past two years, many pandemic-related.

As to the grand jury's finding and recommendations, the cemetery district board and management are addressing them as follows:

#1—Management is developing a grounds' maintenance schedule for staff.

#2—We have in place a specific schedule for "cemetery clean-up," which includes removal of flowers and other items from gravesites twice a year. These clean-up weeks are posted at the cemetery and advertised in the local newspaper. They are planned for two times a year.

#3—We are currently working with McMarketing Company on development of a new web page, which will be accompanied by a new brochure. The web page will be updated as needed and will include price lists and additional information. The brochure will be available at our office, as well as the chamber of commerce office.

#4—Management is working on the maintenance schedule, We have an adopted policies and procedures manual that will be available.

#5—A plan is already in place to raise sunken headstones back to ground level. This is an ongoing process.

#6—Website creation is underway. The brochure will be produced by the same company and will be available in our office, as well as at the chamber of commerce and newspaper office.

We appreciate the grand jury's visit, as well as the as its findings and recommendations. We are all devoted to making our cemetery a facility of which the community can be proud to have as the last resting place of their loved ones. If we can be of any further help, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Sincerely,

Troy VanVelson
President, Corcoran Cemetery District
Board of Directors

cc: Kings County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 1562
Hanford, CA 93232



JOE NEVES – DISTRICT 1
LEMOORE & STRATFORD

RICHARD VALLE – DISTRICT 2
AVENAL, CORCORAN, HOME GARDEN
& KETTLEMAN CITY

DOUG VERBOON – DISTRICT 3
NORTH HANFORD, ISLAND DISTRICT
& NORTH LEMOORE

CRAIG PEDERSEN – DISTRICT 4
ARMONA & HANFORD

RICHARD FAGUNDES – DISTRICT 5
HANFORD & BURRIS PARK

COUNTY OF KINGS BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MAILING ADDRESS: KINGS COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER, HANFORD, CA 93230
OFFICES AT: 1400 W. LACEY BLVD., ADMINISTRATION BUILDING # 1, HANFORD
(559) 852-2362, FAX: (559) 585-8047
Web Site: <http://www.countyofkings.com>

March 8, 2022

The Honorable Shane Burns, Presiding Judge
Kings County Superior Court
1640 Kings Court Drive
Hanford, CA 93230

SUBJECT: Grand Jury Report, Dated December 9, 2021
Response to: Kings County Elections Department

Dear Judge Burns:

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors and in accordance with section 933 of the California Penal Code, the following is the Board's response to the Kings County Grand Jury's report dated December 9, 2021, "Kings County Elections Department," and received on January 21, 2022. The Grand Jury has identified the Elections Department as a "Required and Invited Response." As such, this response is being submitted as required by California Penal Code section 933.

The Kings County Board of Supervisors would like to thank the members of the 2021-2022 Grand Jury for their participation and effort in preparing their report and for their participation in the Grand Jury process.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Neves, Chairman
Kings County Board of Supervisors



**COUNTY OF KINGS
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

GOVERNMENT CENTER HANFORD, CALIFORNIA 93230 (559) 852-2362
Catherine Venturella, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

**AGENDA ITEM
March 8, 2022**

SUBMITTED BY: Elections Department- Lupe Villa
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT TITLED "KINGS COUNTY ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT"

SUMMARY:

Overview:

Pursuant to Section 933 of the California Penal Code, the Board is required to respond to the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury report titled Kings County Elections Department dated December 9, 2021. The response to the Grand Jury report has been prepared by the Registrar of Voters for Board review and consideration as a response.

Recommendation:

Approve the Kings County Elections Department response to the Kings County Grand Jury report dated December 9, 2021.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact.

BACKGROUND:

On October 21, 2021, The Kings County Registrar of Voters met with the 2021-2022 Kings County Grand Jury regarding the Elections Department. As a result of the meeting the Grand Jury prepared and delivered their Investigated Grand Jury Report to the Registrar of Voters on January 21, 2022. The Registrar of Voters prepared a response to each of the five findings and recommendations noted in the Grand Jury Report.

Attached is the proposed response to the Grand Jury Report titled "Kings County Elections Department", and the 2021-2022 Grand Jury Report dated December 9, 2021.

BOARD ACTION:

APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED: OTHER:

ROLL CALL: VALLE, VERBOON, PEDERSEN, FAGUNDES, NEVES - AYE

I hereby certify that the above order was passed
and adopted on March 8, 2022.

CATHERINE VENTURELLA, Clerk of the Board

By *Catherine Ventrella* Deputy.

General Comments

The Kings County Elections Department is responsible to conduct Federal, State, local, and special district elections with the highest level of integrity and transparency and within the laws and regulations applicable to elections. The Elections Department is responsible to educate the general public, central committees, political parties, and any other interested party in the function and processes of an election and to promote fair, legal, and transparent elections. The Elections Department processes voter registration, maintains records regarding voter registration for Kings County, and maintains current records with the Statewide Voter Registration system (VoteCal) and of the local Election Management System (DIMS).

The Elections Department is responsible for conducting ADA survey reviews of current and future polling locations to ensure compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition, the Registrar of Voters assists candidates with questions pertaining to election processes, candidacy and nomination filings, and FPPC regulations and deadlines. The Elections Department maintains voter and campaign records as governed by retention regulations. The Elections Department administers the laws regarding campaign financing and elections, and prepares indices and statistics as required by Federal, State, and Local election laws.

Kings County currently has 61,239 registered voters in the following political party categories:

Republican Party	23,979
Democratic Party	20,599
No Party Preference	12,313
Other	4,348

Response to Findings and Recommendations

Finding #1

There is urgent need to help establish credibility for the Elections Department which could be provided by a Policy and Procedure Manual.

Recommendation #1

Complete the work on a Policy and Procedure Manual before the next election.

Response #1

The Kings County Elections Department is actively working in developing and implementing policy and procedures for the areas of responsibility that require a policy or a procedure. A review of the need for policy and procedure is done throughout the year and the development of the needed procedures are done during the off election year to allow for adequate review and implementation.

California Counties are required to submit various procedures to the California Secretary of State prior to each election. The Kings County Elections Department has met the required filings of procedures to the California Secretary of State. The procedures requiring update and development are internal task procedures.

Finding #2

There is a vacancy in the department.

Recommendation #2

Fill the vacant position as soon as possible but before the next election.

Response #2

The vacant Election Specialist position was filled effective Monday, February 7, 2022.

Finding #3

Penetration testing has been done.

Recommendation #3

Do penetration testing more frequently.

Response #3

Penetration testing is not a required function by the State, however the penetration test is a function that qualifies for reimbursement under the Cybersecurity funds. The Kings County Elections Department has exhausted the existing Cybersecurity funding and is seeking additional Cybersecurity funds from the California Secretary of State to perform additional penetration test. The Kings County Elections Department supports the conduct of additional penetration test and will continue to seek funding in collaboration with the Kings County Information Technology Department to identify funding sources available to assist with conducting a penetration test at each election cycle.

Finding #4

Verifying signatures is of utmost importance to establish credibility.

Recommendation #4

Explore using some American Recovery Act moneys to invest in new equipment that will date stamp, verify signatures and open envelopes with a single machine.

Response #4

Kings County will explore if ARPA funds may be used for the purchase of election equipment and technology. The Elections Department continues to seek funding for election equipment and technology that will assist with ballot preparation.

Finding #5

Only 50% of registered voters voted in the last election.

Recommendation #5

Conduct additional community outreach to encourage more citizens to vote.

Response #5

On February 8, 2022, the Kings County Board of Supervisors approved the transition and implementation of the Voter's Choice Act for Kings County. The implementation and transition to VCA requires outreach and communication efforts to promote the new election model and voter participation. The Kings County Elections Department continues to promote voter participation and will engage with community members to promote the importance of voting; additionally the implementation to VCA will allow our voters more ways and more days to vote with the hopes of improving voter participation in Kings County.

Noted Inaccuracies

After review of the Elections Department Grand Jury report dated December 9, 2021, an inaccurate statement was found in the 3rd paragraph under "Background." The report states, "[a]n additional piece of equipment which helps verify signatures, date stamp, and open envelopes is located in the elections office." The statement provided to the Grand Jury was that the Elections Department currently has equipment that opens envelopes and would explore the purchase of a multi-functioning equipment that would include signature verification. Additionally, the statement cited in the 3rd paragraph contradicts the 4th finding and recommendation.

Also noted, the last sentence in the "Discussion" section, states, "[t]his process also decertifies an election." A court ordered forensic audit will not decertify an election, but it may decertify the election equipment; therefore the statement should read: "This process may decertify the election equipment."

Cc: Kings County Grand Jury

