



2024-2025  
VENTURA COUNTY  
CIVIL GRAND JURY

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# CONSOLIDATED FINAL REPORT



# 2024 – 2025



**COUNTY *of* VENTURA**  
Civil Grand Jury

## **Consolidated Final Report**

The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury is an independent investigative body that is charged with investigating or inquiring into Ventura County matters of civil concern. This includes looking into issues affecting County agencies, cities, special districts and joint power authorities to ensure that the best interests of County residents are being served.

Investigations may be based on confidential complaints received from the public. They may also be based on internal inquiries into matters brought to the Civil Grand Jury's attention during agency briefings, protocol visits, monitoring meetings of the Board of Supervisors and observing local events.

California Penal Code Section 933 directs the Civil Grand Jury to prepare and issue a final report. California Penal Code Section 916 requires that all problems identified in the final report be accompanied by recommendations for resolution, including financial where applicable.

On the Cover  
**Springtime in East Ventura County**  
*Photograph courtesy of Grand Juror Kevin Kolberg*



## COUNTY of VENTURA

### Civil Grand Jury

800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009  
Tel (805) 477-1600  
Fax (805) 658-4523  
grandjury.countyofventura.org

June 30, 2025

The Honorable Matthew P. Guasco  
Presiding Judge  
Super Court, State of California  
County of Ventura

Dear Judge Guasco,

On behalf of the 2024-2025 Ventura County Civil Grand Jury and in compliance with **Penal Code Section 933(a)**, it is my honor to present to the Superior Court as well as to the residents of Ventura County, our Consolidated Final Report. The Civil Grand Jury is charged with examining complaints brought by the public as well as those brought by members of the jury. This final report is the culmination of thorough research performed by each of the investigative committees.

Per **California Penal Code Section 888**, the Ventura County Civil Grand Jury is comprised of 19 individuals who are residents of Ventura County. The 2024-2025 panel represents a wide variety of backgrounds, experience, and knowledge. A significant portion of the year was spent in developing collegiality within our group so that the knowledge and talents that each member brought to the table was utilized to produce the very best result possible.

The work of the Civil Grand Jury would not be possible without the cooperation and support of the officials and staff of the County of Ventura, the cities within, and the Special Districts. We would like to specifically thank you, Judge Guasco and County Counsel, Tiffany North, for your time, support and accessibility. We would also like to extend our appreciation to the staff of the Office of Jury Services, specifically, Inez Robles and Tania Magdaleno for their assistance throughout the year. We would like to thank Carla Alvara, Administrative Officer for the County Executive Office; Choly Asawesna, Senior Accountant and Angel Guerra, Senior Accounting Technician, of Fiscal Services. We could not have accomplished what we did without the support of Information Technology Services, specifically, Michael Vidal, Office System Support Analyst; and Glen Sahagun, Applications Architect/Supervisor. Finally, we would like to extend our appreciation for Matt Kreiger, Creative Services Supervisor for his patience and support in the publishing of our Consolidated Final Report. The assistance provided to us by all departments, agencies and government officials was truly remarkable and greatly appreciated.

Becoming a member of the Ventura County Civil Grand Jury has awarded each of us the opportunity to gain enormous understanding of and appreciation for the operation of local government. We leave our term with the satisfaction of having performed the charge put before us one year ago today and the realization that we are indeed fortunate to be residents of the County of Ventura. On behalf of the entire jury, I thank you for entrusting us with this opportunity. We sincerely hope that our work proves to be helpful to those entities that we addressed. I personally would like to thank the Court for the honor and privilege of serving as the Foreperson of this term. I am profoundly humbled at the experience.

Respectfully,

*Barbara Rush*

Barbara Rush  
Foreperson  
Ventura County Civil Grand Jury (2024-2025)

**Judge Matthew P. Guasco**  
**Presiding Judge of the Superior Court**



**Judge Ryan Wright**  
**Assistant Presiding Judge of the Superior Court**







## COUNTY of VENTURA

### Civil Grand Jury

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June 30, 2025

To the Residents of Ventura County,

The history of grand juries in the United States of America is rich and storied. The first colony to establish a formal grand jury was Massachusetts in 1635. Grand juries in some form were established in all the colonies by 1683. Early records include some of the first indictments by a grand jury were made in 1651 for such violations as holding a disorderly meeting and in 1683 for witchcraft. A variety of public iniquities as well as suggested specific public improvements were called to attention by a Pennsylvania jury in 1685. The Ventura County Grand Jury issued its first report to the public in 1873.

California Penal Code mandates that the Civil Grand Jury investigate and report on at least one county office, department, or function during its term. The Civil Grand Jury is mandated to inquire into the condition and management of detention facilities within the county as well as inquire into the willful or corrupt misconduct of public officers. The Civil Grand Jury decides as a body the topics to investigate either from complaints submitted by the public to the grand jury for consideration or from internal proposals initiated from within the body. The investigations are conducted by committees within the panel of 19 jurors. The investigations are kept highly confidential and include research and interviews to verify all evidence. At the end of the jury's term, final reports are published which include the verified statements of fact, the relevant findings based on the documented evidence, and recommendations for resolving them addressed to the entities designated. The Consolidated Final Report is the compilation of each report along with the findings of the inquiries made into the detention facilities within the county. This work also includes information regarding how the Civil Grand Jury is structured and its operating principles.

Each year, the Ventura County Superior Court invites its residents to consider becoming part of this remarkable tradition. Applications are submitted to the court beginning in January and concluding in April. The term of each Civil Grand Jury is from July through June. California Penal Code requires that each applicant be a citizen of the United States; has resided within Ventura County for at least one year; be at least 18 years of age; be of ordinary intelligence, sound judgement, and fair character; and have sufficient knowledge of the English language in order to conduct Civil Grand Jury business. Basic computer skills are also an important element of a successful experience.

The 2024-2025 Ventura County Civil Grand Jury is proud to present to you this Consolidated Final Report, dated June 30, 2025. It has been our honor and privilege to serve the residents of Ventura County. We sincerely hope that you find the reports to be of interest and that you will consider taking the step to join the work of future grand juries. For more information about the Civil Grand Jury, please visit the Ventura County Grand Jury website at <https://www.ventura.org/grandjury/>.

Sincerely,

*Barbara Rush*

Barbara Rush  
Foreperson  
Ventura County Civil Grand Jury (2024-2025)



## Ventura County Civil Grand Jury 2024-2025

*Standing in the back (L-R):* Lewis Nelson, Douglas Yellin, Gary Steiner, David Woodward, Brian Landers, Brenda Holmes, Ann Kindberg, Cyndy Taschman, Richard Green, Rick Gutierrez, Kevin Kolberg, Danny Ghinghis, James Taylor

*Seated in the front (L-R):* Laura E. S. López, Claudia D. Gomez, Barbara Rush, Ahmad Razavi, Kathleen Garcia

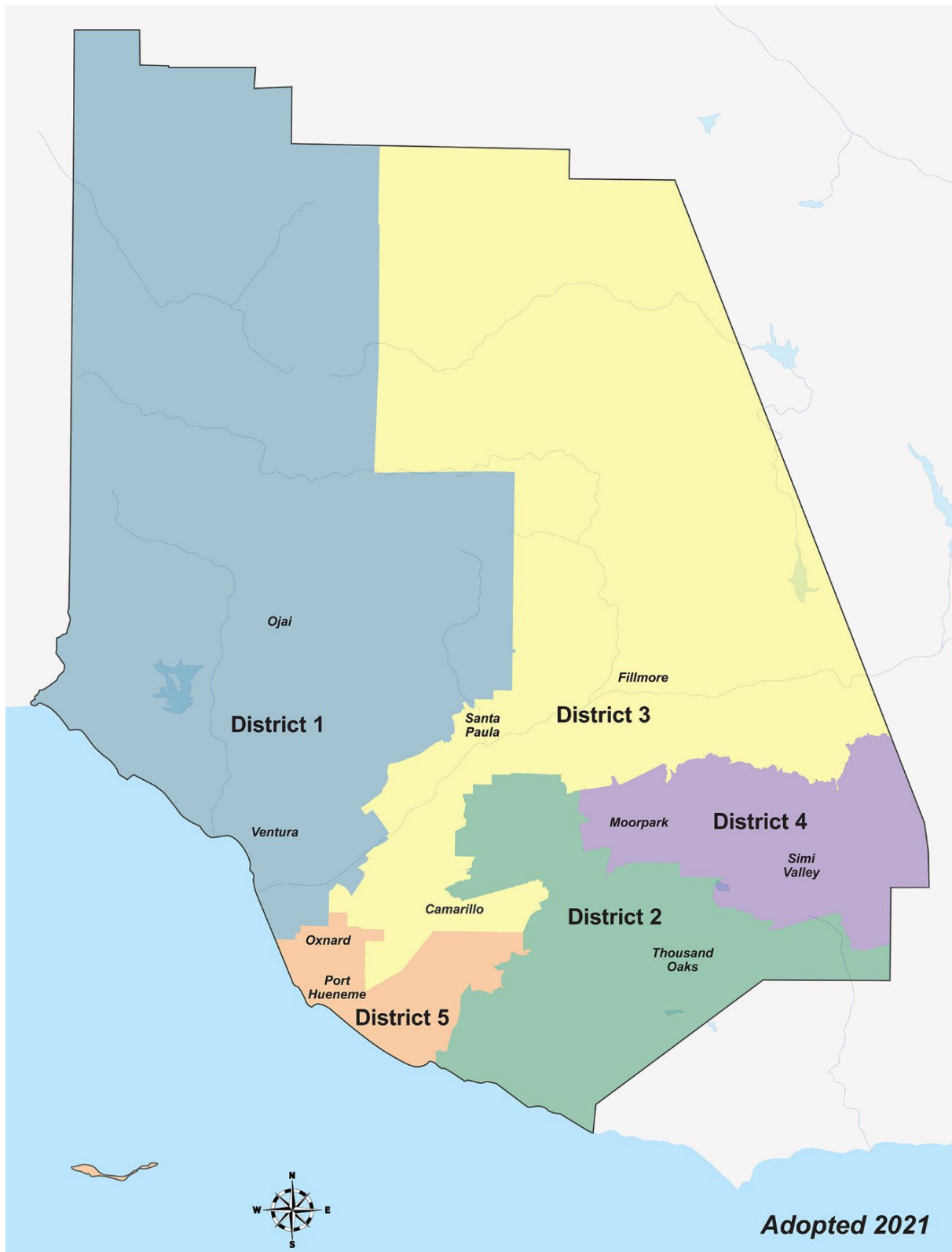
*Not pictured:* Jonathan Oswaks



## 2024-2025 Grand Jurors

Name	Residence	District
Kathleen Garcia	Santa Paula	3
Danny Ghinghis	Simi Valley	4
Claudia Gomez	Camarillo	2
Richard Green	Thousand Oaks	2
Rick Gutierrez	Oxnard	5
Brenda Holmes	Oxnard	5
Ann Kindberg	Ojai	1
Kevin Kolberg	Ventura	1
Brian Landers	Oxnard	3
Lewis Nelson	Camarillo	3
Jonathan Oswaks	Thousand Oaks	2
Ahmad Razavi	Camarillo	3
Barbara Rush	Oxnard	5
Laura E. S. López	Camarillo	3
Gary Steiner	Newbury Park	2
Cyndy Taschman	Oxnard	5
James Taylor	Newbury Park	2
David Woodward	Ventura	1
Douglas Yellin	Ventura	1

## County of Ventura Supervisory Districts







## **Compliance Review: Casitas Municipal Water District**

Each year, a new Ventura County Civil Grand Jury is empaneled to investigate complaints and concerns raised by the residents of Ventura County regarding potential noncompliance by city and county governments, special districts, local law enforcement agencies, and specific non-profit organizations to ensure their functions are lawful, economical, and efficient.

Based on their investigations, the Civil Grand Jury produces reports outlining findings and recommendations for the entities investigated, which are also made available to the public.

The reports require responses from entities identified in the report, per California Penal Code 933.c.

The California Penal Code mandates specific language in the response to Findings and Recommendations.

For each Finding directed to a respondent, the respondent must state one of the following:

- 1) The respondent agrees with the finding; or
- 2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response must specify the disputed portion and provide an explanation.

To each Recommendation directed to the respondent, the respondent must indicate one of the following:

- 1) The recommendation and summary of the actions have been implemented;
- 2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be in the future, including a time frame for implementation;
- 3) The recommendation requires further analysis, along with an explanation of the study's scope and a response timeframe of up to six months from the report's release;
- 4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable, with an explanation.

The 2022 – 2023 Ventura County Civil Grand Jury published a report titled “Water Availability for Wildfires in Ventura County.” All responses to the report's findings complied with the Penal Code requirements; however, Casitas Municipal Water District indicated that one recommendation had not been implemented but would be in the future. (Ref-01)



**Recommendation #02 states:**

**(R-02):** The Grand Jury recommends that water purveyors have emergency power on site for all critical water infrastructure, including Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems.

**Casitas Municipal Water District responded as follows:**

**Response:** *“Has not yet been fully implemented but will in the future. Casitas has permanent generators at all vital SCADA facilities and some of the most critical infrastructure. With financial assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Casitas is working to install a permanent generator.*

*“Seasonal portable generators are rented and stored on-site ahead of the fire season to provide additional backup power. Relationships with equipment rental companies will be used if extra resources are required.” (Ref-02)*

The report did not include a summary indicating the timeframe for implementation.

In February 2025, the Civil Grand Jury followed up with the Casitas Municipal Water District to assess the status of the on-site emergency power and whether the recommendation had been implemented.

We are pleased to report that the recommendation has been implemented. The Water District collaborated with FEMA to obtain a 1.3-megawatt, 600 HP generator at the District’s Rincon Pumping Plant near the base of Casitas Dam. The generator cost approximately \$3 million, of which the District contributed 25%. The generator was installed in the summer of 2024. The transformer allowing the generator to connect to the electrical grid is expected to be installed and operational by the end of May 2025. (Att-01, Att-02)

Additionally, a 300-kilowatt mid-size portable generator was purchased and is now in place and stored at one of the District’s pumping plants in Ojai. This portable generator can be moved as needed. (Att-03)

The 2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury has closed its review of the 2022-2023 Final Report on Water Availability for Wildfires in Ventura County related to the Casitas Municipal Water District.

**REFERENCES**

- Ref-01.** Ventura County Civil Grand Jury Report. (2022-2023). *Water Availability for Wildfires in Ventura County*. Retrieved on March 26, 2025, from [https://vcportal.ventura.org/GDJ/docs/reports/2022-23/GJ-Report\\_2022-23\\_WaterAvailabilityForWildfiresInVenturaCounty.pdf](https://vcportal.ventura.org/GDJ/docs/reports/2022-23/GJ-Report_2022-23_WaterAvailabilityForWildfiresInVenturaCounty.pdf)
- Ref-02.** Ventura County Civil Grand Jury Report. (2022-2023). *Casitas Municipal Water District Response to 2023-2023 Ventura County Grand Jury Report Form (CA Penal Code 933.05)*. Retrieved on March 26, 2025, from [https://vcportal.ventura.org/GDJ/docs/reports/2022-23/responses/GJ-Report\\_2022-23\\_WaterAvailabilityForWildfiresInVC\\_response-CasitasMWD.pdf](https://vcportal.ventura.org/GDJ/docs/reports/2022-23/responses/GJ-Report_2022-23_WaterAvailabilityForWildfiresInVC_response-CasitasMWD.pdf)

## ATTACHMENTS



### **Att-01**

**Exterior photo - 1.3 megawatt, 600 HP generator  
located at the District's Rincon Pumping Plant near the base of Casitas Dam**  
(Provided by Casitas Municipal Water District on February 7, 2025)



## ATTACHMENTS – continued



**Att-02**

**Interior photo - 1.3 megawatt, 600 HP generator  
located at the District's Rincon Pumping Plant near the base of Casitas Dam  
(Provided by Casitas Municipal Water District on February 7, 2025)**

## ATTACHMENTS – continued



### Att-03

**300-kilowatt mid-size portable generator is stored  
at one of the District's pumping plants in Ojai**  
(Provided by Casitas Municipal Water District on February 7, 2025)





## **List of Reports**

### **2024-2025 Ventura County Civil Grand Jury**

1. Addressing Refund Delays in the Property Tax Assessment and Collection System
2. Prioritizing Best Practice Street Maintenance
3. Ventura County Animal Services Commission
4. Water Rates for the City of Ventura and the Underground Dam in Foster Park

These reports, as well as previous years' reports and responses, can be accessed on the Ventura County Civil Grand Jury website: <https://www.ventura.org/grand-jury/>.





**2024 – 2025**



**COUNTY *of* VENTURA**  
Civil Grand Jury

**Consolidated  
Final Report**

**Addressing Refund Delays  
In the Property Tax Assessment  
And Collection System**

**May 2, 2025**

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# **Addressing Refund Delays in the Property Tax Assessment and Collection System**

## **SUMMARY**

The Ventura County Property Tax Assessment and Collection System is highly complex and interdependent. The Assessor's department utilizes Oasis software to identify, track, and assess the value of property. Pertinent data are integrated with the Orbit system, which is used by the Auditor-Controller and Treasurer-Tax Collector departments. These departments use Orbit software to determine tax rates, calculate property taxes, prepare the tax bills, apply payments, and distribute funds to over 400 government agencies.

The primary processes of assessment, property tax calculation, invoicing, payment application, and revenue distribution are working well. However, there is work remaining to be done regarding property tax refunds. The Property Tax Assessment and Collection System software is not consistently handling the various recurring circumstances in which a property tax refund is warranted. Refund processing remains problematic due to software limitations, inadequate interdepartmental communication, and the absence of transparent monitoring mechanisms. There is a lack of internal metrics to categorize, quantify, and report on the status of potential refunds. Furthermore, no metrics are available to the public that would provide assurance that the delays in property tax refunds are being vigorously addressed.

The absence of formal procedures and metrics for tracking negative supplemental assessments exacerbates delays in refunds, leading to taxpayer frustration, dissatisfaction, and diminished trust in government efficiency. This Civil Grand Jury report highlights the progress that has been made, as well as the remaining challenges to address regarding the processing of property tax refunds.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury received a public complaint concerning a property tax refund that had not been received after a lengthy lapse of time from the original notification that a refund was pending. An Investigative Committee was formed and began its research process. Online research began with a study of the websites for the Offices of the Assessor, the Auditor-Controller, and the Treasurer-Tax Collector. The committee identified specific department leaders and staff to be interviewed. These interviews provided clear explanations of each department's responsibilities in preparing property tax assessments and bills. The members then reviewed the information and identified particular facts relevant to this investigation. Follow-up questionnaires were sent to interviewees for further clarification as needed. The Ventura County website provided county-specific documentation. Multiple presentations to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors (VCBOS) spanning 2016-2024 were reviewed. The documents included project justifications, budgets, timelines, and vendor contracts, all related to the entirely new computer programs implemented by each of the mentioned departments.



## BACKGROUND

In March 2016, the VCBOS was presented with a revised plan to replace the outdated Property Tax Assessment and Collection System (PTACS) with a new state-of-the-art fully integrated software solution. It took three years, from 2013 to 2016, to find a vendor to implement an integrated PTACS system. When the selected vendor proved to be unable to provide a viable solution, a decision was made to develop a custom system. The revised plan was to pursue an in-house solution to update existing county technology and provide integrated functionality. The revised proposal had the unanimous support of the county's Information Technology department and the Financial Committee. A detailed letter was presented to the VCBOS in March 2016 specifying a custom software development process, required internal and external resources, a timeline, and the breakdown of the \$13.3 million dollar budget. The letter was signed by Dan Goodwin, Assessor, Jeffery Burgh, Auditor-Controller, Steven Hintz, Treasurer-Tax Collector, and Mike Pettit, Chief Information Officer. (Ref-01)

The legacy property tax process was running on an outdated IBM mainframe system utilizing thirty-plus year-old programming language. The process was supported by approximately forty main programs and an estimated five hundred newer, supplemental property tax system applications that were built using client/server and web-based technologies. Some of the county's core business functions were being supported by manual and spreadsheet solutions. Over 90% of the General Fund, including General Purpose Revenue and at least four hundred government entities, was supported by the legacy system. Annually, over \$1.4 billion dollars of revenue were collected and distributed via the legacy process. Current annual property tax revenue has grown to approximately \$2.0 billion dollars. (Ref-02, Ref-03)

Research for the new technology proposal included a review of various California counties' tax solutions, analysis of current market options, as well as contracted research by the consulting firms Gartner Inc. and Forrester Research. Ventura County was not alone in the pursuit of next generation software options; Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Clara counties were also pursuing fully integrated property tax solutions. (Ref-04)

After identifying and resolving multiple issues, the PTACS system became operational in two phases. The Assessor's department became operational in October of 2021, utilizing the Oasis program. The Auditor-Controller and Treasurer-Tax Collector's departments became operational in July of 2023 utilizing the Orbit program. The process of identifying and resolving multiple issues pushed the proposed cost from \$13.3 million dollars to \$18.8 million dollars and the integrated go-live date from 2019 to 2023. (Ref-05, Ref-06)

## DISCUSSION

The Ventura County PTACS is a highly complex and integrated system. It must have the capacity to scale as the county grows and to be flexible enough to accommodate changing tax laws and voter-approved bond measures. (Ref-07)

The Assessor's office uses Oasis software to track at least 250,000 property parcels annually. Oasis integrates pertinent data, including owner, valuation, and location, with the Orbit software utilized by the Auditor-Controller's office and the Treasurer-Tax Collector's office. (Ref-03)

The Auditor-Controller's office utilizes Orbit to maintain the various tax rates applied to the assessed value of a parcel. It also uses Orbit to ensure proper apportionment of collected

revenues to the appropriate government agencies. Orbit tracks the Tax Rate Area (TRA) that each parcel belongs to in order to enable the apportionment process. A TRA is a geographic area within the jurisdiction of a unique combination of revenue districts, including local agencies and school districts. Each TRA is assigned a five-digit numeric identifier, referred to as a TRA number. TRAs are used to calculate tax rates in accordance with the California State Constitution. It also tracks the multiple subsidiary funds that are in the TRA. A typical TRA will have the County General Fund and may have several additional subsidiary funds to support school bond measures, water districts, and any other voter-approved bond measures. Each of these subsidiary funds may have a unique tax rate. The overall tax rate for a TRA is applied to the assessed value of each property. The accuracy of the tax rates maintained in Orbit is a crucial key to the successful apportionment of property tax revenue. (Ref-08)

The Treasurer-Tax Collector's office utilizes Orbit to generate property tax invoices in order to collect and process property tax payments. Over 400 government entities rely upon PTACS for timely and accurate distribution of property tax revenue. (Ref-02)

Although the complex cycle of assessment through invoicing, collection, and apportionment is functional, there is an area that has proven to be extremely difficult to automate completely. The process of refunding property tax payments continues to be problematic.

Assessment Roll Changes (ARCs) process all changes to the secured, unsecured, and supplemental rolls, provide mandated notices to property owners, and notify the Auditor-Controller and the Tax Collector of needed corrections to the tax bills. ARCs are typically triggered by a change in ownership or new construction. Inaccurate or missing information, or clerical errors can result in supplemental taxes. The supplementals can require an additional tax bill or a refund. The Assessor's office may initiate an ARC for multiple reasons. Typically, the sale of property triggers an updated assessment, which usually results in an increase in property taxes. Also, major additions to houses trigger new assessments and drive additional property tax invoices. PTACS has recently begun to handle the majority of these cases well. Orbit has been successfully generating batches of 1,000 supplemental invoices. (Ref-09)

ARCs can also result in negative supplementals, which may result in tax refunds. Various events, such as fires, floods, and earthquakes may reduce property values. Less severe causes include changes in market conditions or the timing of a specific property sale. When an ARC results in a decrease in assessed value, certain facts need to be determined before a refund is authorized. (Ref-09)

Facts to be determined may include but are not limited to:

- Are there any outstanding property taxes due?
- What is the effective date of the assessment?
- What were the effective property tax rates at the time of invoicing?
- Is all the pertinent information in the current PTACS?
- Is any of the required information only in the legacy system?
- Who is the owner of record for the time period?

The process of answering these basic questions can instigate much manual cross-departmental communication if all the information is not in the system. It is not clear if any formal manual procedures have been created to address these needs efficiently. In many cases in which facts have been determined and a refund is required, the system does not have the ability to create

the refund. Although leadership, the operational departments, and the software programmers are aware of these issues, and are attempting to address them, progress is slow. Despite heightened awareness of the problems impacting refunds, management does not have an internal dashboard to monitor, categorize, and report on the status of negative supplementals in an efficient manner. They have not developed an outward-facing portal that the public can access to track the status of their refund.

## FINDINGS

**F-01.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that the complexity of fully integrating the Ventura County Property Tax Assessment and Collection System was more than most property tax software vendors were prepared to accommodate.

**F-02.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that the decision to take the Ventura County Property Tax Assessment and Collection System project in-house to build a custom program was a bold and forward-thinking solution that could accommodate Ventura County's current and growing needs into the foreseeable future. However, the challenge of completely automating the tax supplementals still remains.

**F-03.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that the current programming is not successfully automating negative supplemental property tax refunds in a timely fashion.

**F-04.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that taxpayer dissatisfaction is rooted in delays and lack of clarity regarding the supplemental process.

**F-05.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that current oversight mechanisms are not effective in facilitating interdepartmental communications, and this can impair fluid implementation of policies and procedures.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**R-01.** The Civil Grand Jury recommends that by October 2025, the Ventura County's Information Technology Services Department, in collaboration with the Assessor, the Auditor-Controller, and the Treasurer-Tax Collector, create a weekly internal dashboard to ensure efficient monitoring, categorization, and reporting on the status of reduced assessments. The data driving the dashboard must include enough specific information to track in an accurate fashion the progress of individual potential property tax refunds.

**R-02.** The Civil Grand Jury recommends that by October 2025, the Ventura County's Information Technology Services Department, in collaboration with the Assessor, the Auditor-Controller, and the Treasurer-Tax Collector, create a monthly public facing portal, based upon the data driving management's internal dashboard, that tracks the status of refunds. Care should be taken to maintain required confidentiality.

**R-03.** The Civil Grand Jury recommends that by October 2025, the Assessor, the Auditor-Controller, and the Treasurer-Tax Collector work together with Information Technology Services Department to ensure that internal and external resources are regularly allocated to the Oasis and Orbit platforms so as to allow property tax refunds to be processed and sent without delay.



**R-04.** The Civil Grand Jury recommends that by October 2025, the Auditor-Controller and Treasurer-Tax Collector collaborate to develop manual processes that will document, calculate, confirm, and then authorize property tax refunds that cannot be automated.

## RESPONSES

### Responses invited from:

**The following officers serving at the discretion of the County Executive Officer within 60 days:**

Chief Information Officer (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04)

### Responses required from:

**The following elected officers within 60 days:**

Assessor (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04)

Auditor-Controller (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04)

Treasurer-Tax Collector (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04)

**The following governing body within 90 days:**

Board of Supervisors (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04)

## COMMENDATIONS

The Ventura County Assessor's Office, Auditor-Controller's Office, Information Technology Services Department, Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office, and the Board of Supervisors are to be commended for having the vision to take on this essential yet daunting project.

## REFERENCES

- Ref-01.** Goodwin, D., Burgh, J., Hintz, S., and Petit, M. (2016, May 15). *Request for Approval of the Property Tax Assessment and Collection System Project and financing for the project not to exceed \$13,257,410.* (pp. 1-11). County of Ventura Board of Supervisors Meeting (Item 22).  
<https://ventura.primegov.com/portal/viewer?id=148422&type=2>
- Ref-02.** Goodwin, D., Burgh, J., Hintz, S., and Petit, M. (2016, May 15). *Request for Approval of the Property Tax Assessment and Collection System Project and financing for the project not to exceed \$13,257,410.* (p. 6). County of Ventura Board of Supervisors Meeting (Item 22).  
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- Ref-03.** Office of the Ventura County Treasurer – Tax Collector. (2025). *Operations Summary.* Retrieved on February 28, 2025, from:  
<https://www.ventura.org/ttc/organization-operations-summary/>
- Ref-04.** Property Tax Project Update (2020, July 20). *STATE OF PROPERTY TAX SYSTEMS.* (Slides 10-11). County of Ventura Board of Supervisors Meeting (Item 48).  
<https://ventura.primegov.com/portal/viewer?id=284704&type=2>
- Ref-05.** Taylor, K., Burgh, J., Horgan, S., and Terrence, T. (2023, May 25). *Request for Approval for the overall Integrated Property Tax Assessment and Collection System (PTACS) Project budget of \$247,500; for a total revised PTACS project cost of \$18,798,008.* (pp. 1-3). County of Ventura Board of Supervisors Meeting (Item 48).  
<https://ventura.primegov.com/portal/viewer?id=332317&type=2>
- Ref-06.** Taylor, K., Burgh, J., Horgan, S., and Terrence, T. (2024, May 21). *Request for Approval for the Purchasing Agent to sign, Amendment No. 6 to the Brainsharp, extending the Contract End Date from April 24, 2024, to December 31, 2024.* County of Ventura Board of Supervisors Meeting (Item 20).  
<https://ventura.primegov.com/portal/viewer?id=357866&type=2>
- Ref-07.** Ventura County Assessor. (2025). *The Property Tax System Organizational Chart.* Retrieved on March 3, 2025, from:  
<https://assessor.venturacounty.gov/property-information/homeowners/property-tax-system/>
- Ref-08.** Ventura County Assessor (2023-2024). *Apportionment Tax Rate Data Report*  
<https://vcportal.ventura.org/auditor/docs/property-tax-reports/tax-rates/2023-2024/7.%2023-24%20TRAs%2003000-03999%20Oxnard.pdf>
- Ref-09.** Ventura County Assessor. (2025). *Supplemental Assessments.* Retrieved on March 3, 2025, from:  
<https://assessor.venturacounty.gov/property-information/homeowners/supplemental/>

## GLOSSARY

### TERM

### DEFINITION

**Apportionment:** The process of calculating how much property tax revenue is allocated to each of the 400+ government agencies authorized to receive the funds.

**Assessment Roll Changes (ARCs):** The revision of the value of a previously assessed property.

**Bonds:** The items approved by the voting public prior to appearing on your tax bill. For information regarding any of your bonds, contact the taxing district at the telephone number provided next to the bond name on your tax bill. The Ventura County Treasurer-Tax Collector has no jurisdiction regarding the bonds listed on your bill.

**Centralized Communication Platform:** A unified system for managing interagency workflows.

**Dashboard:** A quantitative visual interface displaying key metrics to track performance.

**Oasis:** The software used by the Assessor's office to identify, track and assess the value of property.

**Orbit:** The software used by the Auditor-Controller and Treasurer-Tax Collector departments to determine tax rates, calculate property taxes, prepare the tax bills, apply payments and apportion funds.

**Negative Supplemental:** A reduction in assessed value that may result in a property tax refund.

**Parcel or ID Number:** This number is used to identify the property. This numbering system is utilized by the Assessor's Office and includes the map book, page number, the block on the page and the parcel.

**Property Tax Assessment and Collection System (PTACS):** Software to integrate and automate the property tax cycle from identifying taxable property and assessing its value all the way through to billing, collecting, and apportioning the revenue.

**Prop 13 Maximum 1% Tax:** Regulated by the Revenue and Taxation Code for the State of California, the amount calculated on this line is equal to 1% of the Net Total of the assessed net value of the owner's property.

**Secured Supplemental Property Tax:** On July 1, 1983, California State Law was changed to require the reassessment of property as of the first day of the month following an ownership change or the completion of new construction. In most cases, this reassessment results in one or possibly two secured supplemental tax bills being sent to the property owner in addition to the annual secured property tax bill. The Assessor first determines the new value of the property based on current market values. The Assessor then calculates the difference between the new value (set at the time of purchase or completion of new construction) and the old value (set on January 1 of the previous fiscal year). The result is the supplemental assessed value. Once the new assessed value of the property has been determined, the Assessor will send the owner a notification.

**Subsidiary Funds:** Defined Tax Rate Area (TRA) specific voter approved projects, special districts, or county wide general funding that compose the overall property tax rate applied to a parcel.

**Supplemental:** A secondary invoice as the result of a change in assessed value. It can be a positive or negative adjustment.

**Supplemental Assessments:** The supplemental roll provides a mechanism for placing property subject to Proposition 13 reappraisals due to change in ownership or completed new construction into immediate effect.

**Tax Rate Area (TRA):** The geographical area in which a property is located. Special districts, schools, cities, and water districts are collecting money for voter-approved bonds and special assessments. Because not all the bond rates are the same, the owner pays taxes according to which bonds were approved in the area where the property is located.





**2024 – 2025**



**COUNTY *of* VENTURA**  
Civil Grand Jury

**Consolidated  
Final Report**

**Prioritizing Best Practice  
Street Maintenance**

**June 4, 2025**

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# Prioritizing Best Practice Street Maintenance

## SUMMARY

Streets are a vital part of a city's infrastructure, enabling commerce, emergency services, and recreation. They often make up the bulk of a city's assets and are costly to maintain. Streets not kept in a best practice condition are costlier to maintain. Neglected streets also cause extra wear on the vehicles that use them.

The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury investigated the pavement conditions in the cities of Camarillo, Oxnard, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, and Ventura. Although these cities have established improvement goals, none has a specific target to achieve and maintain best practice pavement conditions.

The Civil Grand Jury recommends that each city set a goal to achieve best practice street conditions and create a plan to reach that goal.

## METHODOLOGY

The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury received complaints about road conditions in several cities within Ventura County and chose to investigate Camarillo, Oxnard, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, and Ventura due to the differing street conditions present. City pavement management plans, budgets, and financial statements were examined. Interviews were held with city officials. City Council meetings were reviewed. Additionally, online research was conducted. Data was downloaded for analysis from the California State Controller for city and city street revenue. (Ref-01, Ref-02, Ref-03, Ref-04, Ref-05, Ref-06, Ref-07, Ref-08, Ref-09, Ref-10, Ref-11, Ref-12, Ref-13, Att-01, Att-02)

## BACKGROUND

Streets are essential for a functioning city; they provide access for fire, police, and ambulance services. They facilitate commerce, commuting, delivery, and leisure travel while supporting public transit, biking, and walking.

### Best Practice Pavement Conditions

Since 2008, a coalition of cities, counties, and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) has partnered to educate policymakers and the public about the necessity of investing in transportation infrastructure. The group, **SaveCaliforniaStreets**, presents several points in its biannual report, which is compiled using data submitted by cities and counties, with the most recent release in May 2023. (Ref-14)

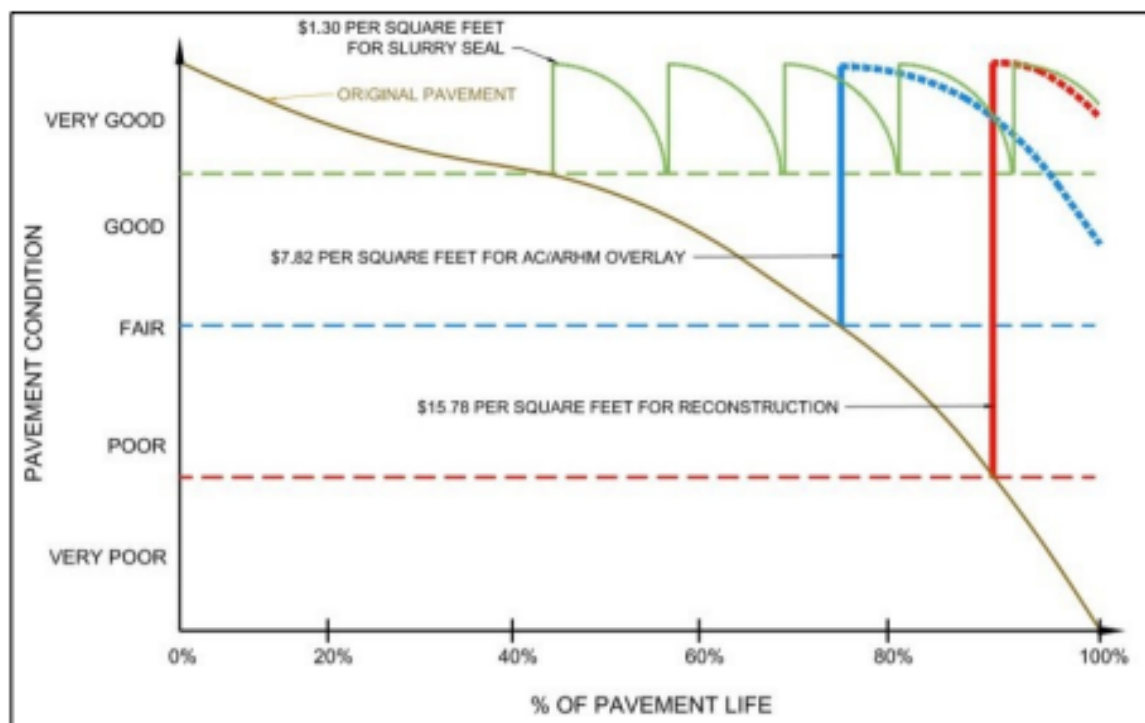
- The Pavement Condition Index (PCI) is a rating system that ranges from 0 (failed) to 100 (excellent).
- Best practices call for a PCI in the 80s.
- A PCI rating ranging from 60 to 70 is classified as "at risk".



- Reconstructing a street in poor condition (PCI < 49) can cost up to 14 times more than maintaining pavement in good condition (PCI 71 to 85).
- Maintaining a street with a PCI of 50 to 70 can cost as much as four times more than maintaining pavement conditions in the 80s.

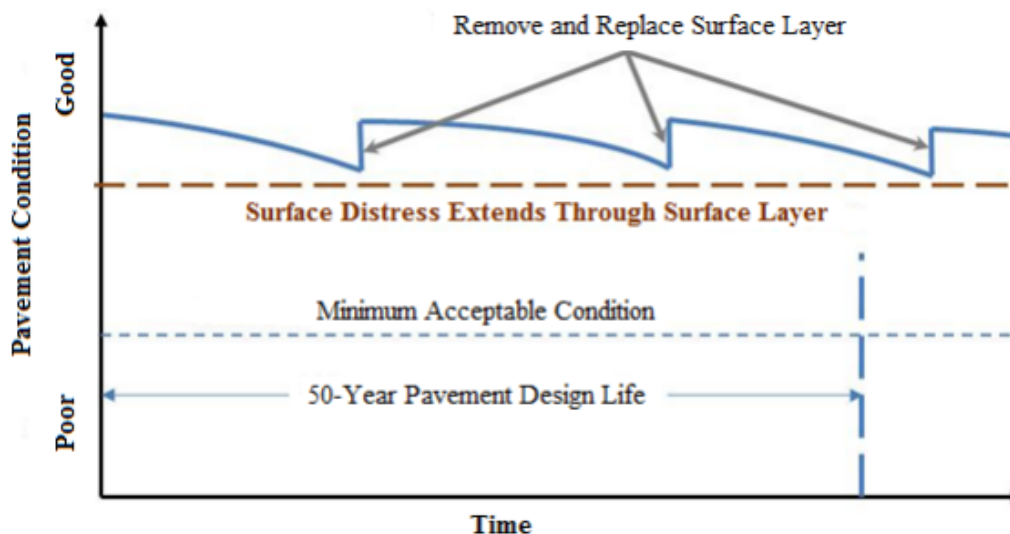
There are two relevant concepts in best practice pavement management: lifecycle cost analysis and the perpetual pavement design concept. These concepts are presented by the United States Department of Transportation's "Life-Cycle Cost Analysis Primer" in 2003 and "Reformulated Pavement Remaining Service Life Framework" in 2013. (Ref-15, Ref-16)

Lifecycle cost analysis advocates for finding the best, lowest cost way to accomplish a project using discounted cash flows. It considers both the project costs incurred by a city and user costs, including vehicle operating costs, travel time costs, and crash costs. (Ref-15)



*Exhibit C - Pavement Deterioration Curve and Maintenance Costs*

Figure 1



**Figure 6. Graph. Perpetual pavement design concept based on construction of a pavement where distresses occur in the pavement surface layer.**

## Figure 2

Perpetual pavement design promotes maintaining streets in such a condition that distress does not occur at levels below the surface layer. In other words, perform less costly preventative maintenance more often so that more costly maintenance or reconstruction is not needed. (Figure 1, Ref-11, Figure 2, Ref-16)

Attachment 03 presents a simplified overview of applying both concepts to two different alternatives. User costs, disruption during construction, and vehicle wear should be considered, but for simplification purposes, they are assumed to be equivalent between the alternatives. Alternative A assumes a street service life of 30 years and a reconstruction cost of \$84 per square yard. Alternative B assumes preventive maintenance every six years at \$7 per square yard for a total of \$35 over those 30 years. Both cost estimates (in 2022 dollars) and the preventive maintenance frequency are sourced from SaveCaliforniaStreets. Assuming a discount rate of 4%, the present value of \$84 is \$26. The present value of \$7 spent every six years, starting in year six, is \$18. Results indicate that performing preventative maintenance costs about 30% less than reconstructing a street every 30 years. (Ref-14, Ref-15, Att-03)

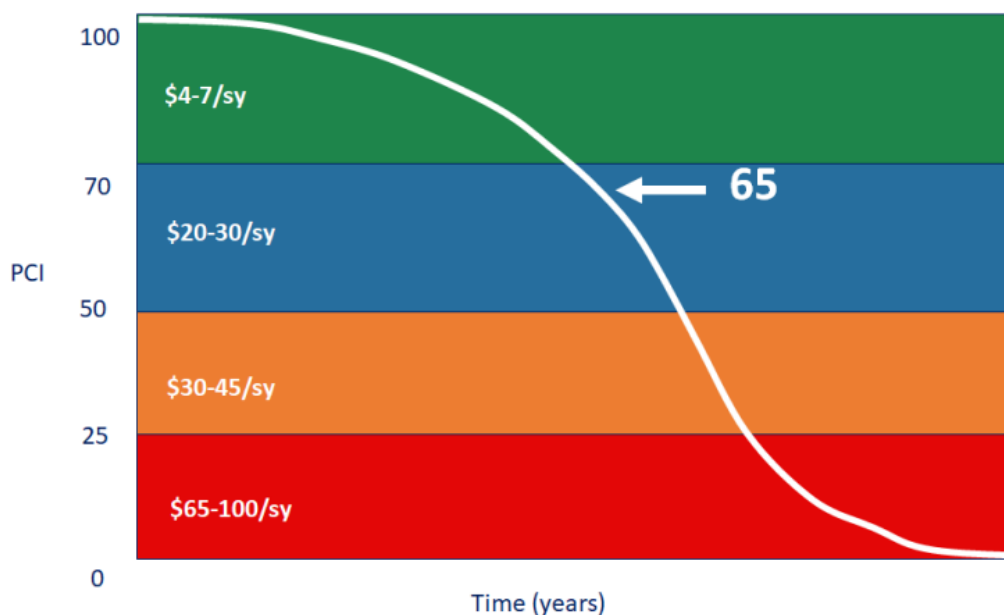
Essentially, a higher PCI provides the opportunity to reduce costs for street maintenance. Allowing pavement conditions to fall below best practices leads to increased expenses. If a city sets a goal of 70, taxpayers may end up paying four times more to maintain streets that do not advance beyond that level. The sooner a city can achieve a PCI in the 80s, the better.

### Costlier Deferred Maintenance

A software program known as **StreetSaver** is frequently used for pavement management in California. The StreetSaver program does the following:

- Tracks pavement conditions and estimates their degradation over time
- Makes estimates of future funding requirements to achieve a specific PCI goal within one to ten years
- Assists in planning by recommending which streets to prioritize within a limited budget.

(Ref-17)



**Figure 3**

StreetSaver's estimate of future funding requirements considers the costs for all streets with PCIs ranging from 0 to 100. For asphalt streets with a PCI rating above 70, SaveCaliforniaStreets estimates the cost, in 2022 dollars, to be \$4 to \$7 per square yard. For streets with a PCI between 50 and 70, the cost increases to between \$20 and \$30 per square yard. Deferring maintenance until a street's PCI falls between 70 and 50 is costlier by the difference between these two ranges, totaling \$16 to \$23 per square yard. This costlier deferred maintenance could be avoided if street conditions were maintained using best practices, a PCI in the 80s. (**Figure 3**, Ref-14)

Although it is not as precise as StreetSaver, the following calculation provides a rough estimate of costlier deferred maintenance: (Lane miles) × (Additional Cost per Square Yard) × (Average Lane Width) × (Yards per Mile). A city with 1,000 lane miles of streets to maintain with a PCI of 67 incurs an additional cost of \$16 to \$23 per square yard. Assuming an average lane width of 5 yards and 1,760 yards per mile, the additional cost requirement would range from \$140 million to \$200 million, likely closer to \$140 million since the PCI is nearer to 70 than to 50.  $(1,000) \times (\$16 \text{ to } \$23) \times (5) \times (1,760) = \$140,000,000 \text{ to } \$200,000,000$ .

If a city spends enough to increase its average PCI, it can reduce the amount of this costlier deferred maintenance. In contrast, if a city does not spend sufficiently to maintain the same pavement conditions, the opposite occurs. Even if a city's pavement condition remains unchanged, the costlier deferred maintenance amount will escalate by four to seven percent annually due to inflation in paving construction costs, according to SaveCaliforniaStreets. (Ref-14)

### **The Hidden Cost**

In 2024, **Trip**, a national transportation research nonprofit, estimated that Californians lost \$22.9 billion per year in additional vehicle wear due to poor streets. This estimate corresponds with a statewide PCI of 65 reported by SaveCaliforniaStreets in 2022. It encompasses vehicle depreciation, repair costs, increased fuel consumption, and additional tire wear caused by inadequate streets. However, it does not consider the extra time lost due to congestion, delays from detours, the noise and dust from construction, or restricted access for commerce, fire, police, and ambulance services. Assuming a population of 39 million and an average of 16 out of 35 miles driven daily on local streets, this totals approximately \$270 per resident annually for driving on subpar local roads. Residents of a city with a population of 100,000 and a PCI of 65 collectively incur \$27 million per year for this hidden cost. Like deferred maintenance, this amount is dependent on the average PCI. It is zero at a PCI of 100 and increases to over \$270 at a PCI of less than 65. (Ref-18, Ref-19)

### **Funding Sources**

There are two main types of funding: those dedicated to street maintenance, which cannot be used for other purposes, and those that contribute to a city's general fund and can be allocated for any purpose at the discretion of the city council. State sources constitute the majority of dedicated funding, while city sources account for most discretionary funding. It is important to note that not all street funding is spent on pavement maintenance. Expenditures also cover bridges, traffic signals, sidewalks, wheelchair ramps, gutters, storm drains, engineering, bike paths, signage, and more.

State funds dedicated to street maintenance primarily come from the gas tax (Highway Users Tax Account) and SB1 (The Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017). Since SB1 funds and gas taxes are indexed for inflation, these resources are increasing despite lower gas consumption. The future growth rate of these funds is anticipated to decline under current regulations as electric vehicles represent a larger share of the vehicles on the road. The state is conducting several studies to modify these regulations, such as implementing a tax based on miles driven rather than gas consumption. Federal and State funding sources are insufficient to cover routine street maintenance, let alone the funding required to achieve best practice street conditions. (Ref-20, Ref-21, Ref-14)

City sources for street maintenance funds come from property tax and sales tax, which make up the majority of a city's general fund. Finding alternative local funding sources is limited, particularly due to Proposition 218 (The Right to Vote on Taxes Act, passed in 1996).



Funding options that require a two-thirds vote:

- Special property tax assessment
- Sales tax for dedicated services, such as street maintenance
- Municipal bonds.

Funding options that require only a 50% vote:

- Sales tax allocated to the general fund.

(Ref-22, Ref-23)

Sales tax is limited to an additional 2% over the base rate of 7.25%, unless a special exception law is passed by the California legislature. These exceptions are typically introduced by a local state representative and have been successfully enacted by 91 cities. (Ref-24)

There are several other potential funding sources, some of which are listed below; however, they are less likely to significantly increase available funds and may vary in consistency from year to year.

- Increase transient occupancy tax (voter approval required)
- Developer impact fees
- Federal and state grants.

To increase local funding, most cities have chosen to use the lower 50% voter threshold to implement a general sales tax that contributes to a city's general fund. Voters should understand that these funds are discretionary. The priorities of both voters and city councils approving a general sales tax measure can evolve over time.

## DISCUSSION

City Councils for the cities in this report have taken positive steps to improve street conditions.

- Camarillo has achieved best practice street conditions and has a goal to continue to seek improvement on local travel issues. (Ref-02)
- Oxnard has resumed a regular pavement cycle and set a goal to achieve a pavement condition rating of 70. (Ref-25, Ref-05)
- Santa Paula is completing the first cycle of a twenty-year pavement management plan, which consists of four five-year cycles. It has an objective to work to maximize funding going to streets. Additionally, a new funding source was established by proposing and passing Measure R in 2024, a 1% sales tax, with 60% of the vote. (Ref-07, Ref-26, Ref-27)
- Simi Valley has made it a capital improvement plan priority to resurface major and minor streets and has requested bids to update the pavement management program, with a deadline of January 2025. (Ref-08, Ref-28)
- Ventura has contracted to update its pavement management plan in 2025 and has a goal to improve conditions across the city for maintenance of roads. (Ref-29, Ref-10)

While cities have established goals to improve pavement conditions, no city has a specific goal to achieve and maintain best practice pavement conditions, a PCI in the 80s.

### City Staff

All the cities in this report:

- Have experienced, skilled, and passionate leadership
- Have skilled engineers and maintenance staff
- Use the pavement management program StreetSaver to help optimize fund allocation
- Inspect and rate street conditions on a five-year or shorter cycle
- Use internal staff to fill in potholes
- Implement systems for accepting and addressing residents' pothole reports and complaints
- Engage external contractors for specialized expertise and significant street maintenance projects
- Develop multi-year comprehensive pavement management and capital improvement plans
- Create maps or plans that allow residents to see when specific streets will undergo maintenance
- Prioritize arterials, which are streets that carry the most traffic and heavy loads
- Prioritize preventive maintenance.

(Ref-01, Ref-03, Ref-05, Ref-07, Ref-09, Ref-11)

Each city faces problems and challenges, yet it is clear that city staff can resolve these issues, tackle the challenges, and effectively utilize the funds designated for street maintenance. However, it would be prudent for a plan intended to achieve best practice pavement conditions to include technical design and construction quality assurance metrics that are regularly reported to the public on the quality of work done by staff and contractors. (Ref-30)

### Costlier Deferred Maintenance

Below is an estimate of costlier deferred maintenance, based on the 2022 maintenance costs estimated by SaveCaliforniaStreets. Camarillo currently has no costlier deferred maintenance amount, as their PCI meets best practices. For the other cities, these amounts are not insignificant; they represent many times the average annual cost those cities have spent on street maintenance over the past few years. (**Figure 3**, Ref-14)

Costlier Deferred Maintenance Estimate								
City	Average Pavement Condition Index (PCI)	Lane Miles of Pavement to Maintain	Average Width of a Lane in Yards	Yards per Mile	Additional Cost Range to Maintain Streets at Current PCI per Square Yard		Costlier Deferred Maintenance	
					Low	High	Low	High
Camarillo	82	470	5	1760	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Oxnard	67	1037	5	1760	\$16	\$23	\$146,009,600	\$209,888,800
Santa Paula	58	180	5	1760	\$16	\$23	\$25,344,000	\$36,432,000
Simi Valley	69	812	5	1760	\$16	\$23	\$114,329,600	\$164,348,800
Ventura	63	736	5	1760	\$16	\$23	\$103,628,800	\$148,966,400

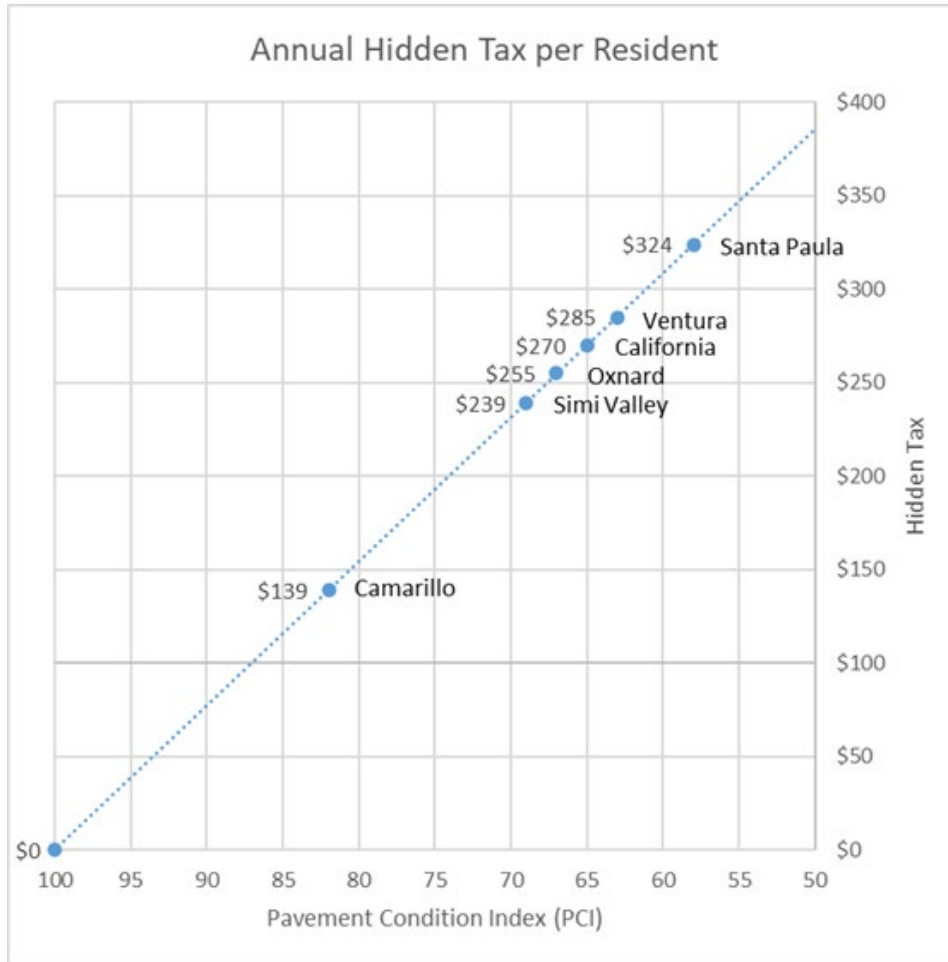
$(\text{Lane miles}) \times (\text{Average Lane Width}) \times (\text{Yards per Mile}) \times (\text{Additional Cost per Square Yard})$

(Ref-01, Ref-03, Ref-05, Ref-07, Ref-09, Ref-11, Ref-14)

For Oxnard and Simi Valley, the costlier deferred maintenance amounts are roughly equivalent to the lower estimate, as their PCIs are around 70. For Santa Paula and Ventura, the costlier deferred maintenance amounts are closer to the midpoint of the range.

### The Hidden Cost

Below is an estimate of the hidden cost borne by residents each year. This burden is not shared equally. Households without vehicles incur no hidden cost, while those with more than one vehicle or those who drive more than the average number of miles on local streets bear a higher percentage of the hidden cost. Residents make this hidden cost clear to city officials through complaints about pavement conditions. (Ref-01)



Assuming the hidden cost changes linearly with PCI, the hidden cost is \$139 for Camarillo, \$255 for Oxnard, \$324 for Santa Paula, \$239 for Simi Valley, and \$285 for Ventura. (Ref-18, Ref-19, Ref-31)

Estimated Hidden Tax per Year						
City	Population	Average Pavement Condition Index (PCI)	Average Local Miles Driven per Day	Average Total Miles Driven per Day	Cost of Vehicle Wear per resident per year	Hidden Tax per year
Camarillo	69,514	82	16	35	\$139	\$4,417,118
Oxnard	198,488	67	16	35	\$255	\$23,138,030
Santa Paula	31,792	58	16	35	\$324	\$4,708,849
Simi Valley	125,113	69	16	35	\$239	\$13,669,489
Ventura	109,058	63	16	35	\$285	\$14,208,699

$(\text{Population}) \times (\text{Average Local Miles}) \div (\text{Average Total Miles}) \times (\text{Cost of Vehicle Wear})$

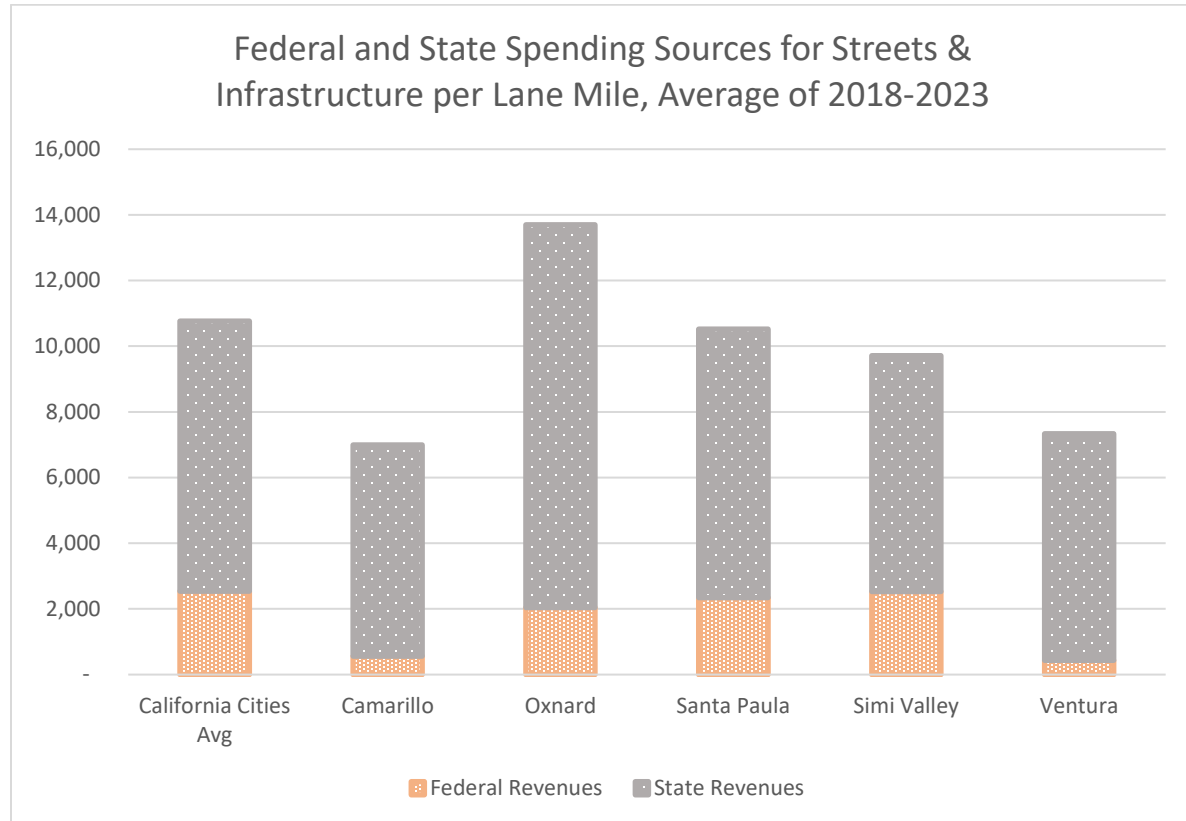


## Funding Sources

The cities in this report have employed various strategies to fund street maintenance.

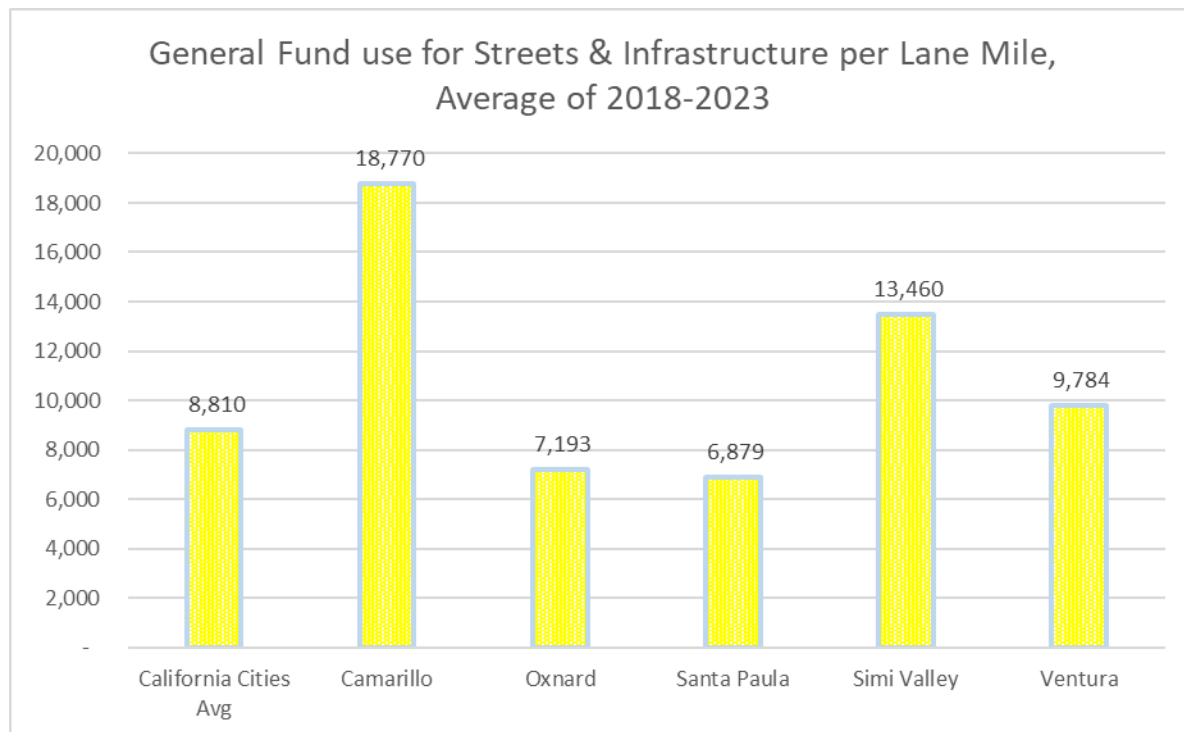
### Federal and State Funds for Street Maintenance

From 2018 to 2023, Oxnard received more federal and state funding per lane mile than the average city in California. Santa Paula received about the same amount, while Camarillo, Simi Valley, and Ventura received less. (Ref-12, Att-01)



### General Funds Spent on Streets

As noted above, cities in this report are working to improve pavement conditions. To compensate for reduced federal and state funding, Camarillo, Simi Valley, and Ventura are allocating more of their discretionary general funds to street maintenance than the average city in California. (Ref-12, Att-01)



The graph presented above averages data over a six-year period to smooth out year-to-year changes in street maintenance spending. Year-to-year spending can vary greatly since revenue is saved one year to fund a large project in another year, making it difficult to identify trends.

The table below illustrates how local spending on street maintenance was prioritized relative to each city's general fund, averaged over the period from 2018 to 2023. Non-discretionary funding sources include developer impact fees, facilities assessment districts, and the transportation development act, among others. (Ref-12, Att-01, Att-04)

Prioritization of Local Revenue to Street Maintenance 2018-2023					
City	General/ Discretionary Fund Revenue	Discretionary \$ Allocated to Streets	Discretionary % Allocated to Streets	Non- discretionary \$ Allocated to Streets	Non- discretionary % Allocated to Streets
Camarillo	\$46,577,657	\$8,822,073	18.9%	\$8,675,158	18.6%
Oxnard	\$182,683,887	\$7,459,313	4.1%	\$7,422,502	4.1%
Santa Paula	\$17,071,198	\$1,238,263	7.3%	\$1,269,496	7.4%
Simi Valley	\$78,394,698	\$10,929,698	13.9%	\$991,063	1.3%
Ventura	\$143,787,571	\$7,200,677	5.0%	\$11,242,194	7.8%

### Sales Tax Measures

Camarillo has achieved best practice pavement conditions without increasing the sales tax.

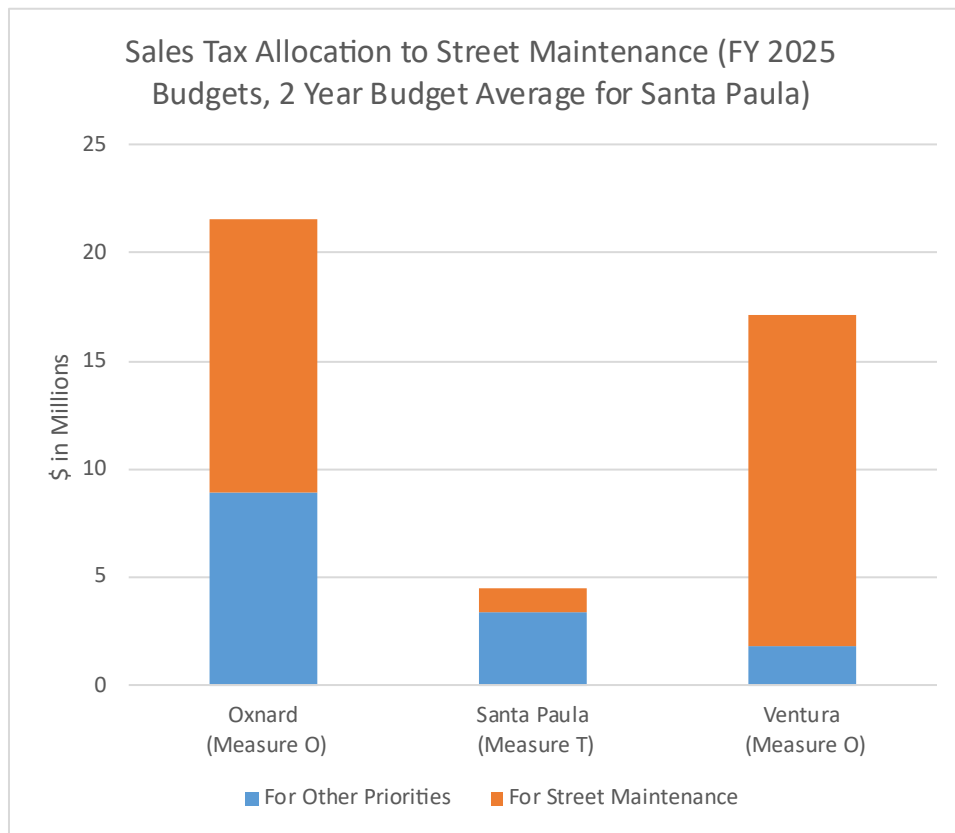
Oxnard has passed two measures: Measure O, a ½% general sales tax introduced in 2008 that expires in 2029, and Measure E, a 1 ½% general sales tax enacted in 2020 with no expiration date. Measure O promises some funds will be used for street maintenance. It generates approximately \$22.1 million annually, but there are efforts underway to reduce reliance on this

funding since it expires in 2029. About 48% of Measure O funds are budgeted for street maintenance in 2025. Measure E makes no promises and is not accounted for separately from the general fund. (Ref-04)

Santa Paula has also passed two measures: Measure T, a 1% general sales tax enacted in 2016 that expires in 2036, and Measure R, a 1% general sales tax enacted in 2024 with no expiration date. Each measure is expected to generate approximately \$4.5 million per year. About 26% of Measure T funds are allocated for street maintenance in the latest two-year budget ending in 2025. It is generating more revenue than originally projected, and its advisory committee has directed most of this extra revenue toward street maintenance. Since Measure R was recently passed, it is not included in the 2025 budget. (Ref-06)

Simi Valley has not attempted to pass a local sales tax measure.

Ventura has passed Measure O, a 1/2% general sales tax implemented in 2016 that will expire in 2041. This measure is expected to generate approximately \$17 million per year. Measure O promises some portion of funds for streets, with nearly 90% budgeted for street maintenance in 2025, representing a substantial increase compared to 2023 and earlier years. The majority of the 2025 Measure O street maintenance budget is earmarked for traffic signal upgrades and sidewalk maintenance. (Ref-10)



No city in this report has attempted to pass a sales tax measure dedicated to street maintenance, likely due to the two-thirds voter requirement. However, the city of El Cerrito demonstrates that it is possible. It passed a 1/2% sales tax in 2008 and documented an

improvement in PCI from 52 to 85, completing a five-year plan in just three years. Municipal bonds in the form of sales tax revenue bonds were sold to significantly accelerate street maintenance, with the sales tax revenue pledged to pay bond interest and principal over 20 years. This measure has no expiration date and has generated some controversy regarding whether the city is still using the funds for their intended purpose. (Ref-32, Ref-33, Ref-34, Ref-35)

### **Other Sources**

Each city in this report has utilized federal and state grants, employed developer impact fees, and implemented a transient occupancy tax. (Ref-13)

Each city has maintenance assessment districts that serve as a dedicated funding source for street upkeep, yet they provide less than 20% of the funding used for street maintenance. No city has attempted to ask voters to pass a special property tax assessment dedicated to street maintenance, other than community facilities districts that some developers choose for new developments.

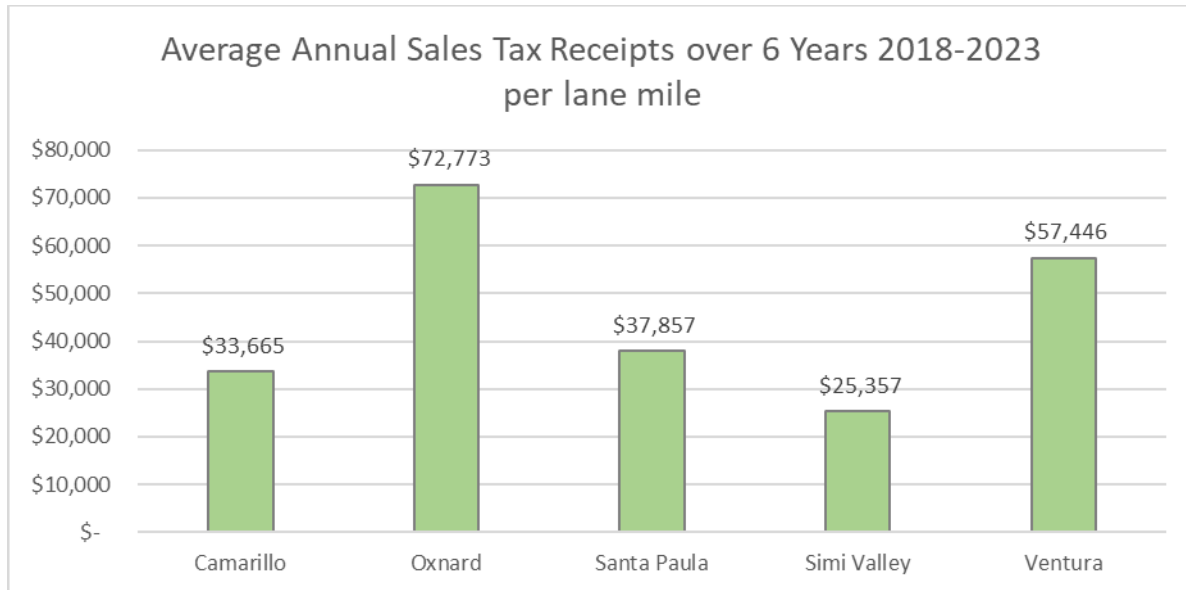
Only Oxnard has utilized municipal bonds for street maintenance. Lease revenue bonds, originating from at least 2003, were refunded for \$21 million in 2014 and use Measure O funds to cover the interest and principal. In 2007, Oxnard issued \$28 million in Certificates of Participation and uses its Gas Tax Fund to cover the interest and principal. It appears the state did not raise objections to this issue in a timely manner, allowing Oxnard to bypass the normally required 2/3 vote. A state audit in 2018 recommended that Oxnard adhere to the rules in the future. (Ref-36)

County-wide, the Ventura County Transportation Commission can provide funds to cities through grants and public transit money. Cities with a population under 100,000 that meet certain public transit requirements can use any extra funds from the commission for street maintenance. A 2016 county-wide effort by the commission to implement a 1/2% sales tax failed to gain voter approval, denying cities in Ventura County access to matching funds available to those in counties that have passed the 1/2% sales tax. (Ref-37, Ref-38, Ref-39)

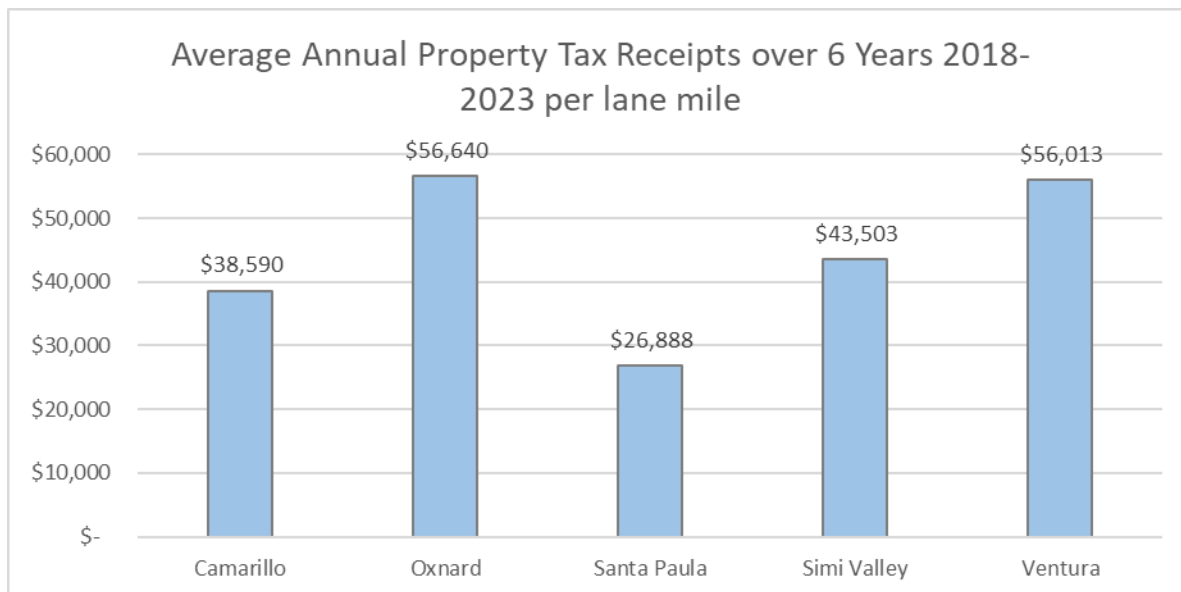
### **Differing Circumstances**

Each city in this report is unique in its ability to fund street maintenance and in the condition of its streets. Oxnard, Santa Paula, and Ventura are older cities with road bases that do not meet current standards, resulting in a higher percentage of streets requiring costly reconstruction. Oxnard faces an additional challenge of replacing aging, under-street cast iron water pipes. Santa Paula has had to contend with sinkholes related to adverse weather. (Ref-01)

Sales tax and property tax generally make up the majority of a city's discretionary funding sources. Camarillo is viewed as having an advantage in sales tax revenue due to its outlet mall. However, this does not appear to be the case when considering sales tax revenue per lane mile. Simi Valley has recognized its lower sales tax revenue compared to other cities. (Ref-01, Ref-13)



Here is how property tax revenue compares per lane mile. Santa Paula has recognized its lower property values compared to other cities. (Ref-01, Ref-13, Att-02)



### Choices

The advantages and disadvantages of different funding sources for achieving best practice pavement condition.

- Use existing general fund sources without raising taxes:
  - Pros
    - Does not require voter approval for increased taxes



- Once best practice pavement conditions are achieved, more funds can be allocated to other priorities.
- Cons
  - Postpone spending on other priorities until best practice pavement conditions are achieved
  - Might not be able to significantly reduce funding for other priorities to improve street conditions
  - This might take longer than other approaches, prolonging the hidden cost.
- Increase the sales tax for the general fund:
  - Pros
    - There is no need to alter existing priorities.
  - Cons
    - Requires approval from 50% of voters
    - Residents are subject to a higher sales tax
    - Priorities can change over time.
- Increase the sales tax designated for street maintenance:
  - Pros
    - Only applicable for street maintenance
    - Can be limited to the time needed to achieve best practice pavement conditions
    - There is no need to change the current priorities
    - Facilitate bond sales to reduce the time required to achieve best practice pavement conditions and decrease the hidden cost.
  - Cons
    - Requires the approval of two-thirds of voters
    - Residents are subject to a higher sales tax.

Certainly, the current efforts of the cities in this report to make slow progress toward improving pavement conditions are a worthy option. Such efforts chip away at both future street maintenance needs and the costlier deferred maintenance amounts that have built up little by little over prior decades. However, it doesn't quickly solve the problem of the hidden cost from vehicle wear or reduce residents' complaints about pavement quality. Perhaps it is time to try a different approach.

## FINDINGS

- F-01.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that Oxnard does not maintain its streets in a best practice condition resulting in costlier deferred maintenance on streets and a hidden cost on residents due to extra vehicle wear.
- F-02.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that Santa Paula does not maintain its streets in a best practice condition resulting in costlier deferred maintenance on streets and a hidden cost on residents due to extra vehicle wear.
- F-03.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that Simi Valley does not maintain its streets in a best practice condition resulting in costlier deferred maintenance on streets and a hidden cost on residents due to extra vehicle wear.
- F-04.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that Ventura does not maintain its streets in a best practice condition resulting in costlier deferred maintenance on streets and a hidden cost on residents due to extra vehicle wear.
- F-05.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that Camarillo, with its dedicated and knowledgeable staff, effectively utilizes the funds spent on street maintenance, however, has not set a goal to maintain its streets in a best practice condition.
- F-06.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that Oxnard, with its dedicated and knowledgeable staff, would make effective use of the funds allocated for street maintenance.
- F-07.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that Santa Paula, with its dedicated and knowledgeable staff, would make effective use of the funds allocated for street maintenance.
- F-08.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that Simi Valley, with its dedicated and knowledgeable staff, would make effective use of the funds allocated for street maintenance.
- F-09.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that Ventura, with its dedicated and knowledgeable staff, would make effective use of the funds allocated for street maintenance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- R-01.** The Civil Grand Jury recommends that Camarillo set a goal to maintain best practice pavement conditions by December 2025. (F-05)
- R-02.** The Civil Grand Jury recommends that Oxnard set a goal to achieve best practice pavement conditions within 10 years and create a plan to accomplish that goal by December 2025. (F-01, F-06)
- R-03.** The Civil Grand Jury recommends that Santa Paula set a goal to reach best practice pavement conditions within 10 years and create a plan to accomplish that goal by December 2025. (F-02, F-07)
- R-04.** The Civil Grand Jury recommends that Simi Valley set a goal to reach best practice pavement conditions within 10 years and create a plan to accomplish that goal by December 2025. (F-03, F-08)
- R-05.** The Civil Grand Jury recommends that Ventura set a goal to reach best practice pavement conditions within 10 years and create a plan to accomplish that goal by December 2025. (F-04, F-09)

## RESPONSES

Responses required from the following governing bodies within 90 days:

Camarillo City Council (F-05, R-01)

Oxnard City Council (F-01, F-06, R-02)

Santa Paula City Council (F-02, F-07, R-03)

Simi Valley City Council (F-03, F-08, R-04)

Ventura City Council (F-04, F-09, R-05)

## COMMENDATIONS

The Civil Grand Jury commends Camarillo for maintaining its streets in a best practice condition, which lowers future maintenance costs and the hidden cost from vehicle wear.

The Civil Grand Jury commends Santa Paula for its positive actions in improving street conditions by passing two sales tax measures that prioritize street maintenance.

## REFERENCES

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## ATTACHMENTS

- Att-01.** California State Controller. City Street Revenue. (Ref-12)
- Att-02.** California State Controller. City Revenue. (Ref-13)
- Att-03.** Maintenance Alternative A & B Discounted Cash Flow.
- Att-04.** Discretionary Revenue – General Fund + Sales Tax Measure Funds.

## GLOSSARY

### TERM

### DEFINITION

**PCI:** Pavement Condition Index. A street condition rating system from 0 (failed) to 100 (excellent).

## Attachment-01

## California State Controller. City Street Revenue

Colors below correspond to associated bar graph or table colors.

Sum of value	Column Labels							Annual	Per	
Row Labels	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Grand Total	Average	Lane Miles	Lane Mile
<b>Camarillo</b>	25,572,818	30,057,951	16,262,036	17,468,200	16,729,537	18,635,292	124,715,834	20,785,972	470	44,225
<b>City and Local Revenues</b>	21,850,502	27,238,539	13,405,134	13,908,071	13,546,985	15,034,152	104,983,383	17,487,231	470	37,228
All Other Sources Discretionary	9,764,211	13,668,551	6,941,351	6,450,316	7,302,190	8,805,816	52,932,435	8,822,073	470	18,770
All Other Sources Non-Discretionary	9,698,877	11,066,448	3,791,972	5,055,340	3,940,598	4,205,437	37,758,672	6,293,279	470	13,360
Section 99234, Public Utilities Code	10,235	9,365	9,271	6,443	8,446	11,957	55,517	9,253	470	20
Section 99400a, Public Utilities Code	2,377,179	2,494,375	2,662,540	2,394,972	2,295,751	2,010,942	14,235,759	2,372,627	470	5,048
Federal Revenues	534,000	20,352	21,177	693,890	120,172	204,146	1,593,537	265,590	470	565
State Revenues	3,188,316	2,799,260	2,835,725	2,856,239	3,062,380	3,396,994	18,138,914	3,023,152	470	6,432
<b>Oxnard</b>	19,307,948	24,297,584	39,860,822	24,632,829	23,071,969	43,338,631	174,509,773	29,084,962	1037	28,047
<b>City and Local Revenues</b>	11,576,702	13,573,366	8,059,218	15,395,862	13,946,027	26,739,717	89,290,892	14,881,815	1037	14,351
All Other Sources Discretionary	8,211,641	8,067,706	4,407,401	8,097,476	8,855,334	7,116,321	44,755,879	7,459,313	1037	7,193
All Other Sources Non-Discretionary	3,332,928	5,468,751	3,592,589	7,286,750	5,078,008	18,173,459	42,932,465	7,155,414	1037	6,900
Section 99234, Public Utilities Code	10,315	14,770	22,722	8,367	9,964	(401,959)	(335,821)	(55,970)	1037	(54)
Section 99400a, Public Utilities Code	21,818	22,139	36,506	3,269	2,721	1,851,896	1,938,349	323,058	1037	312
Federal Revenues	1,397,701	2,407,126	3,404,963	210,483	128,637	5,141,253	12,690,163	2,115,027	1037	2,040
State Revenues	6,333,546	8,317,092	28,396,641	9,026,484	8,997,295	11,467,661	72,528,718	12,088,120	1037	11,657
<b>San Buenaventura</b>	14,604,848	20,629,690	17,184,135	37,224,275	31,697,701	21,704,384	143,046,033	23,840,839	736	32,392
<b>City and Local Revenues</b>	10,878,681	15,530,035	12,105,069	32,308,437	24,913,333	14,921,673	110,657,228	18,442,871	736	25,098
All Other Sources Discretionary	6,741,945	7,548,259	6,538,459	6,064,177	7,156,176	9,155,047	43,204,063	7,200,677	736	9,784
All Other Sources Non-Discretionary	4,072,567	7,913,965	5,506,326	26,193,389	17,694,472	5,395,815	66,778,534	11,129,922	736	15,122
Section 99234, Public Utilities Code	64,169	67,811	60,284	47,871	62,685	90,469	393,289	65,548	736	89
Section 99400a, Public Utilities Code						280,342	280,342	46,724	736	63
Federal Revenues	69,032	642,294	601,162	476,835	136,129	9,817	1,935,269	322,545	736	438
State Revenues	3,657,135	4,467,361	4,477,904	4,439,003	6,648,239	6,772,894	30,462,536	5,075,423	736	6,896
<b>Santa Paula</b>	5,355,015	2,571,011	4,384,639	4,808,646	3,566,440	5,789,649	26,405,399	4,400,900	180	24,449
<b>City and Local Revenues</b>	2,072,273	1,057,665	2,266,201	3,557,909	2,132,015	3,960,501	15,046,564	2,507,759	180	13,932
All Other Sources Discretionary	1,177,607	275,087	1,423,899	2,201,420	1,166,226	1,185,340	7,429,579	1,238,263	180	6,879
All Other Sources Non-Discretionary	84,747	9,745	167,868	314,297	185,668	135,356	897,701	149,617	180	831
Section 99234, Public Utilities Code	273,970	10,378	(15,803)	2,664	3,426	1,510,481	1,785,116	297,519	180	1,653
Section 99400a, Public Utilities Code	535,949	762,445	690,217	1,039,528	776,685	1,129,324	4,934,158	822,360	180	4,569
Federal Revenues	2,302,797	77,265		(432)	35,919	114,256	2,529,805	421,634	180	2,342
State Revenues	979,946	1,436,091	2,118,438	1,251,168	1,396,506	1,644,892	8,829,040	1,471,507	180	8,175
<b>Simi Valley</b>	16,825,919	19,468,271	22,504,164	16,778,537	17,486,441	25,769,513	118,832,845	19,805,474	812	24,391
<b>City and Local Revenues</b>	11,907,469	12,908,939	11,053,123	11,076,200	11,365,833	13,212,009	71,524,563	11,920,761	812	14,681
All Other Sources Discretionary	10,943,669	11,740,555	10,112,536	10,063,340	10,442,664	12,275,392	65,578,186	10,929,698	812	13,460
All Other Sources Non-Discretionary	934,734	976,422	906,257	882,705	895,817	896,866	5,502,801	917,134	812	1,129
Section 99234, Public Utilities Code	29,026	182,962	34,330	120,155	27,352	39,751	443,576	73,929	812	91
Federal Revenues	1,634,078	1,375,560	6,306,443	628,791	599,463	1,764,733	12,309,068	2,051,511	812	2,526
State Revenues	3,284,382	5,182,772	5,144,598	5,073,546	5,521,145	10,792,771	34,999,214	5,833,202	812	7,184

Sum of value	Column Labels							Annual	Per	
Row Labels	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Grand Total	Average	Lane Miles	Lane Mile
<b>City and Local Revenues</b>	4099398375	4356979252	4528446482	4207745903	4626112525	5064857415	26883539962	4480589992	193391	23169
All Other Sources Discretionary	1706743825	1676387504	1788094465	1473210203	1717560729	1858191706	10222188432	1703698072	193391	8810
All Other Sources Non-Discretionary	2297133884	2594158772	2649626770	2639774317	2807446934	3090411089	16078551766	2679758628	193391	13857
County Road Fund Contributions	4998863	1961188	3405025	3215591	2550948	160745	16292360	2715393	193391	14
Section 99234, Public Utilities Code	18297396	11675982	18180284	12725465	15602189	17570241	94051557	15675260	193391	81
Section 99400a, Public Utilities Code	72224407	70796806	69139938	78820327	82951725	98523634	472455837	78742640	193391	407
Federal Revenues	561636940	514438808	522176533	509812552	432578755	402299588	2942943176	490490529	193391	2536
State Revenues	1096722921	1537305938	1677433659	169899537	1688870858	1844373669	9543606582	1590601097	193391	8225

## Attachment-02

California State Controller. City Revenue.

Colors below correspond to associated bar graph or table colors.

Sum of value	Column Labels							Annual	Per
Row Labels	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Grand Total	Average	Lane Miles
<b>Camartillo</b>	46172051	50916841	47681422	46885338	48129731	58190313	297975696	49,662,616	4.70
Fines and Forfeitures and Revenue from Use of Money and Property	1374527	4034813	3265769				8675109	1,445,852	4.70
Fines, Forfeitures, Penalties, and Revenue from Use of Money and Property				1723957	-2540881	3941855	2524931	420,822	4.70
Licenses and Permits	2110041	1459176	1130799	1440413	1477050	1278609	8896088	1,482,681	4.70
Miscellaneous Revenues	3232682	3702021	3599119	489646	813387	2306874	12153729	2,025,622	4.70
Taxes	39454801	41720831	41685735	43221322	48380175	51262975	265725839	44,287,640	4.70
Functional Revenues	2357797	2391084	2538798	2401402	2359308	1966768	14075157	2,345,860	4.70
Transportation Taxes à€ Nontransit Functional Revenues	2367797	2391084	2538798	2401402	2359308	1966768	14075157	2,345,860	4.70
General Revenues	37087004	39329747	39066937	40819920	46020867	49296207	251650682	41,941,780	4.70
Business License Taxes, General Revenues	1387616	1409557	1379562	1438562	1474693	1619684	8703054	1,450,509	4.70
Franchises, General Revenues	2778800	2888269	2944821	2965923	3138244	3176949	17522114	2,987,019	4.70
Other Property Taxes, General Revenues	67219					3414045	3481264	580,211	4.70
Pass-through Property Taxes (ABX1.26), General Revenues		143306	178228				327533	54,589	4.70
Property Tax In-Lieu of Vehicle License Fees, General Revenues	6134455	6416377	6751459	7006474	7288383	7522423	41519671	6,919,929	4.70
Property Taxes à€ Prior, General Revenues	15472						15472	2,579	4.70
Real Property Transfer Taxes, General Revenues	638100	518826	597215	947367	961392	527572	4080462	680,077	4.70
Residual Property Taxes (ABX1.26), General Revenues					337726	482903	820628	136,771	4.70
Sales and Use Taxes, General Revenues	13980438	15283516	13331297	14841167	18246729	19252211	94634358	15,822,393	4.70
Secured and Unsecured Property Taxes, General Revenues	9408646	9680062	11456884	10961367	11211232	9863669	62006399	10,348,440	4.70
Supplemental Rolt Secured and Unsecured Property Taxes, General Revenues	276224	358281	188280	479413	200499	231613	1734310	289,062	4.70
Transient Occupancy Taxes, General Revenues	2610097	2688664	2947801	2149677	3172970	3300038	18021277	2,970,213	4.70
<b>Oxnard</b>	142751394	164679693	149214587	179047369	216995553	242118439	1094809445	182,468,074	1037
Fines and Forfeitures and Revenue from Use of Money and Property	4484291	8726902	6431028				19642221	3,273,704	1037
Fines, Forfeitures, Penalties, and Revenue from Use of Money and Property				2892770	3682664	5078905	11654339	1,942,390	1037
Licenses and Permits	3306324	4057972	3852280	5019520	3702771	4764488	24703955	4,117,226	1037
Miscellaneous Revenues	6312371	16931836	5615546	6580337	-3991686	6627377	40075780	6,679,297	1037
Taxes	122648408	134962984	133316143	164554742	213602804	225647669	998732750	166,455,458	1037
Functional Revenues	112894704	119776253	118964420	134592062	137682296	149779869	773674604	128,945,767	1037
Residual Property Taxes (ABX1.26), Functional Revenues	13903522	13763857	14259379	20092235	35339032	17417214	94775299	15,795,873	1037
Transportation Taxes à€ Nontransit Functional Revenues							2442670	407,112	1037
Voter-Approved Indebtedness Property Taxes, Functional Revenues							434032	72,339	1037
General Revenues	13903522	13763857	14259379	17649666	16339032	16833182	91898637	15,316,423	1037
Business License Taxes, General Revenues	98991182	106013396	104659041	114489827	122343264	132258655	678899365	113,149,894	1037
Franchises, General Revenues	5570488	6187475	6087060	5964716	6537611	6719802	37047152	6,174,525	1037
Property Tax In-Lieu of Vehicle License Fees, General Revenues	3926374	3887252	3972958	4287264	4567215	5407476	26037528	4,339,588	1037
Property Taxes à€ Prior, General Revenues	18140883	18986136	19841762	20644997	21620613	23339641	122674011	20,429,002	1037
Real Property Transfer Taxes, General Revenues	338022	202284	5722	34389	54607	638024	105,837	1037	102
Sales and Use Taxes, General Revenues	818322	628685	673842	910334	978170	679670	4763623	792,264	1037
Secured and Unsecured Property Taxes, General Revenues	29665172	33330919	31968862	37960703	42163000	52662031	227740617	37,965,753	1037
Supplemental Rolt Secured and Unsecured Property Taxes, General Revenues	34114311	36681012	37453282	39768191	40628963	37627656	226973404	37,662,234	1037
Transient Occupancy Taxes, General Revenues	660688	586164	419222	661180	788866	751353	3872853	645,476	1037
Other Taxes à€ Other (Specify), General Revenues	5749572	5557470	4302481	4267483	5172299	5271128	30265353	5,044,226	1037
Taxes à€ Other	13763704	15187731	14361723	29962680	76920508	75871800	225068146	37,509,691	1037
General Revenues	13763704	15187731	14361723	29962680	76920508	75871800	225068146	37,509,691	1037
Other Taxes à€ Other (Specify), General Revenues	13763704	15187731	14361723	29962680	76920508	75871800	225068146	37,509,691	1037
<b>San Buenaventura</b>	111899609	119326435	121245801	125031117	127619759	139244749	744367470	124,061,245	736
Fines and Forfeitures and Revenue from Use of Money and Property	5738247	7430237	6058509				19226993	3,204,499	736
Fines, Forfeitures, Penalties, and Revenue from Use of Money and Property				3909400	-8587	5822752	9723565	1,620,594	736
Licenses and Permits	4328592	5643707	3951585	4351162	4571157	4804956	27451159	4,575,193	736
Miscellaneous Revenues	5203895	6560864	9679484	10423939	4011075	4764712	40643969	6,773,996	736
Taxes	96628876	99691627	101556223	106546616	119046114	123852329	647321784	107,886,964	736
Functional Revenues	94561498	97624823	100128732	106471473	118168589	106749065	622698186	103,783,031	736
Transportation Taxes à€ Nontransit Functional Revenues			264165	277978	251454	278264	1071861	178,644	736
General Revenues	94561498	97624823	99864567	106193501	117915135	105466801	621626325	103,604,388	736
Business License Taxes, General Revenues	1790688	1893877	2278532	1669120	1864627	2150306	11647049	1,941,175	736
Franchises, General Revenues	4817978	4856151	4627968	5082727	5668982	6218874	31481680	5,246,947	736
Interest, Penalties, and Delinquent Taxes, General Revenues	58726	52127	46969	54023	74471	64172	360487	58,415	736
Property Tax In-Lieu of Vehicle License Fees, General Revenues	9933813	10419417	110650073	11641494	12101539	13007446	68222781	11,370,464	736
Property Taxes à€ Prior, General Revenues		530					530	88	736
Real Property Transfer Taxes, General Revenues	588959	602601	540230	864871	833743	577396	4008740	668,123	736
Sales and Use Taxes, General Revenues	36612173	38941358	39307100	43140072	48064817	30608689	236574209	39,429,036	736
Secured and Unsecured Property Taxes, General Revenues	25332826	26546851	28167061	30409696	31613940	33783365	178852738	29,308,790	736
Supplemental Rolt Secured and Unsecured Property Taxes, General Revenues	503236	433608	478969	408831	717070	674576	3275489	545,915	736
Transient Occupancy Taxes, General Revenues	6675907	6201655	5361114	5021768	8343067	8461827	40065238	6,677,540	736
Utility Users Taxes, General Revenues	8186453	7618848	7697861	7891700	8732879	10020153	50147384	8,367,897	736
Taxes à€ Other	2067377	2066904	1427481	75137	879525	18107264	24623598	4,103,933	736
Functional Revenues	2067377	2066904	1427481	75137	879525	999275	7515609	1,262,602	736
Other Taxes à€ Other (Specify), Functional Revenues	2067377	2066904	1427481	75137	879525	999275	7515609	1,262,602	736
General Revenues							17107989	2,851,332	736
Other Taxes à€ Other (Specify), General Revenues							17107989	2,851,332	736

## Attachment-02 - continued

Sum of value	Column Labels						Annual	Per		
Row Labels	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 Grand Total	Average	Lane Miles	Lane Mile	
☐ Santa Paula	15212076	12553079	14272650	18539528	20586009	20637327	107806659	16,966,778	180	94,260
☐ Fines and Forfeitures and Revenue from Use of Money and Property	462901	617448	571824				1652173	2,75,362	180	1,530
☐ Fines, Forfeitures, Penalties, and Revenue from Use of Money and Property				432312	544761	1471472	2448545	408,091	180	2,267
☐ Licenses and Permits	428906	886295	1154192	1870858	1511780	474787	6326758	1,054,460	180	5,958
☐ Miscellaneous Revenues	743910	96150	1755086	2755378	3745819	4016130	13111873	2,185,312	180	12,141
☐ Taxes	13576959	10953246	10791548	13480980	14783649	14674938	78261320	13,043,553	180	72,464
☐ Taxes	13576959	10953246	10791548	13480980	14783649	14674938	78261320	13,043,553	180	72,464
☐ General Revenues	13576959	10953246	10791548	13480980	14783649	14674938	78261320	13,043,553	180	72,464
Business License Taxes, General Revenues	126403	119324	127230	127146	161422	150884	812408	135,401	180	752
Construction Development Taxes, General Revenues	10610	10160	10458	10719	4647	10611	57205	9,534	180	53
Franchises, General Revenues	883380	788990	726157	812000	891133	1159604	5266264	877,711	180	4,876
Other Property Taxes, General Revenues	62442	57109	74602	33999	78995	62382	369529	61,588	180	342
Property Tax In-Use of Vehicle License Fees, General Revenues	2690744	2829236	2961256	3160485	3400543	3783163	18825766	3,137,628	180	17,431
Property Taxes à€ Prior, General Revenues	15222						15222	2,537	180	14
Real Property Transfer Taxes, General Revenues	70097	78956	127129	192656	237457	119585	825400	137,582	180	764
Residual Property Taxes (ABX1 26), General Revenues	238097	44415	130530	122261	133915		669218	111,536	180	620
Sales and Use Taxes, General Revenues	5939539	6145940	5853239	6912273	7893049	8141512	40885652	6,814,269	180	37,857
Secured and Unsecured Property Taxes, General Revenues	3263943	701743	646596	1982564	1821178	1107704	9622817	1,587,136	180	8,817
Supplemental Roll Secured and Unsecured Property Taxes, General Revenues	150854	74443	36483	42671	17212		321663	53,611	180	298
Transient Occupancy Taxes, General Revenues	119528	103020	99730	84317	144098	139453	690186	115,031	180	639
☐ Simi Valley	72742485	79545339	79724736	83728926	88925554	94478149	498612889	83,102,032	812	102,342
☐ Fines and Forfeitures and Revenue from Use of Money and Property	2630306	4081234	3380722				10077262	1,678,710	812	2,067
☐ Fines, Forfeitures, Penalties, and Revenue from Use of Money and Property				2179777	884577	4516211	7580565	1,263,428	812	1,566
☐ Licenses and Permits	2491465	2618558	2703377	3829208	5116843	3606782	20366293	3,394,372	812	4,180
☐ Miscellaneous Revenues	3686515	4950921	2893464	3228428	3359988	2951551	21070867	3,511,811	812	4,325
☐ Taxes	63874199	67894626	70827173	74491513	79031146	83403605	439522262	73,263,710	812	90,214
☐ Taxes	63874199	67894626	70827173	74491513	79031146	83403605	439522262	73,263,710	812	90,214
☐ Functional Revenues	4586327	5094299	4219275	5283567	5180307	6204920	30608635	5,084,773	812	6,262
Construction Development Taxes, Functional Revenues	264252	384197	147659	889479	956590	128885	2771062	461,844	812	569
Transportation Taxes à€ Nontransit Functional Revenues	4322075	4650042	4071616	4394089	4223717	6076035	27737573	4,522,929	812	5,693
☐ General Revenues	59287872	62860387	66607898	69207946	73850639	77198685	409013627	68,168,938	812	83,952
Business License Taxes, General Revenues	1967065	2106344	2112049	2241422	2343050	2436816	13206746	2,201,124	812	2,711
Franchises, General Revenues	4651610	5262854	5150817	5466422	5877300	6364203	32473216	5,412,203	812	6,665
Interest, Penalties, and Delinquent Taxes, General Revenues	39746	52478	73130	39461	4075	44094	262984	42,164	812	52
Other Property Taxes, General Revenues		23370	14028				37938	6,333	812	8
Property Tax In-Use of Vehicle License Fees, General Revenues	11691521	12204301	12732002	13295005	13777734	14869604	78526167	13,087,695	812	16,118
Property Taxes à€ Prior, General Revenues	15566						15566	2,594	812	3
Real Property Transfer Taxes, General Revenues	779098	779952	716882	1082653	1283133	723140	5364868	894,145	812	1,101
Residual Property Taxes (ABX1 26), General Revenues	1504304	1549715	1411927	1921038	2091347	2714963	11193294	1,865,549	812	2,297
Sales and Use Taxes, General Revenues	17857830	18961367	18319232	21372380	23631522	23388289	123540620	20,590,103	812	25,357
Secured and Unsecured Property Taxes, General Revenues	18663904	19455442	24127586	22079108	22556746	24195767	130677863	21,829,642	812	26,884
Supplemental Roll Secured and Unsecured Property Taxes, General Revenues	393460	394191	378005	414051	464537	369817	2404051	400,677	812	493
Transient Occupancy Taxes, General Revenues	1924468	2069753	1572240	1335406	2026395	2091922	11020254	1,836,709	812	2,262



**Attachment-03**

## Maintenance Alternative A &amp; B Discounted Cash Flow

Discount Rate	4%	
Present Value	(\$25.90)	(\$18.25)
Year	A	B
1	-	-
2	-	-
3	-	-
4	-	-
5	-	-
6	-	(\$7.00)
7	-	-
8	-	-
9	-	-
10	-	-
11	-	-
12	-	(\$7.00)
13	-	-
14	-	-
15	-	-
16	-	-
17	-	-
18	-	(\$7.00)
19	-	-
20	-	-
21	-	-
22	-	-
23	-	-
24	-	(\$7.00)
25	-	-
26	-	-
27	-	-
28	-	-
29	-	-
30	(\$84.00)	(\$7.00)

## Attachment-04

## Discretionary Revenue – General Fund + Sales Tax Measure Funds

General Fund Revenue including Sales Tax Measure Funds							
City	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average
Camarillo	\$40,323,798	\$44,979,468	\$43,120,245	\$44,336,443	\$49,222,075	\$57,483,911	\$46,577,657
Oxnard	\$142,467,538	\$159,475,918	\$155,188,643	\$177,690,368	\$220,742,082	\$240,538,773	\$182,683,887
Santa Paula	\$18,190,147	\$15,500,329	\$16,263,030	\$16,867,158	\$17,930,576	\$17,675,947	\$17,071,198
Simi Valley	\$65,302,859	\$71,254,132	\$73,835,043	\$85,711,653	\$88,752,789	\$85,511,711	\$78,394,698
Ventura	\$128,230,564	\$132,118,277	\$138,291,982	\$154,982,894	\$154,668,659	\$154,433,049	\$143,787,571

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**2024 – 2025**



**COUNTY *of* VENTURA**  
Civil Grand Jury

**Consolidated  
Final Report**

**Ventura County  
Animal Services Commission**

**June 17, 2025**



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# Ventura County Animal Services Commission

## SUMMARY

The Ventura County Animal Services Commission is an advisory board empowered to facilitate communication and collaboration between the Ventura County Board of Supervisors and the eight incorporated cities that contract with Ventura County Animal Services to provide animal welfare, control, shelter facilities, and field services.

The 2024-2025 Ventura County Civil Grand Jury identified concerns regarding the Ventura County Animal Services Commission's adherence to its bylaws, inconsistent meeting schedules, and ineffective communication. These and other issues have weakened the Ventura County Animal Commission's core mission: to advise, guide, support, and collaborate with Ventura County Animal Services.

The 2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Ventura County Animal Services Commission, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, and Ventura County Animal Services reinvigorate the scope, focus, function and effectiveness of the Ventura County Animal Services Commission.

## METHODOLOGY

The 2024-2025 Ventura County Civil Grand Jury conducted interviews with Ventura County Animal Services Commission members, county and city officials, and Ventura County Animal Services management and staff; reviewed commission meeting records, analyzed budget reports, evaluated year-by-year data, made several site visits, studied academic research, surveyed social media, explored news reports, and examined contractual agreements between Ventura County Animal Services and eight contracting cities.

## BACKGROUND

The 2024-2025 Ventura County Civil Grand Jury identified the Ventura County Animal Services Commission (Commission) as the strategic cornerstone for animal welfare, animal control, animal shelter, and animal field services provided by Ventura County Animal Services (VCAS) to the eight incorporated cities of Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Simi Valley, and Ventura (Contract Cities), and all unincorporated areas of Ventura County.

The following provides historical context for the Commission:

- The Animal Regulation Committee was created in 1978 by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors (VCBOS) as an ad hoc committee "...for the purpose of providing input to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors with respect to bringing about a self-supporting budget for Animal Regulation and to find ways to fund a new central facility as well as possible satellite animal regulation facilities." (Att-01)
- By 1980, the Animal Regulation ad hoc committee evolved into what would become the Commission, creating by-laws defining the Commission's purpose: "To serve as a policy level Commission to the cities of Ventura County, and the Ventura County Board of Supervisors in matters pertaining to Ventura County's Animal Regulation Program in planning for Animal Regulation programs, resources or legislation to meet the needs of

the County and cities; in formulating plans for a cooperative effort of Animal Regulation resources within the County and among State, Federal and other agencies.” (Att-02)

- The targeted goal of the Commission was to establish a forum to facilitate a dynamic working partnership between the county and Contract Cities’ municipal government entities responsible for funding, operation, policy, programs, and oversight of animal welfare in Ventura County.
- Between 1979 and 2012, the Commission fulfilled the core advisory mission of collaboration and communication, coordinating service agreements with the Contract Cities for animal services, supporting funding for shelter facilities, regulation enforcement, and other animal control requirements. (Ref-01)
- The Commission currently has nine voting members, one elected representative from each of the eight Contract Cities, and one elected member from the VCBOS. (Ref-02)
- The cities of Thousand Oaks and Santa Paula currently do not contract with VCAS for animal services. (Ref-01, Ref-03)

Between 1978 and 2012, the Commission fulfilled its mandated duties effectively and in compliance with their established by-laws. However, starting in 2012, the subsequent 12 years were a time of systemic transformation in industry-wide best practices (Best Practices), leading to a fundamental life-affirming change in animal welfare, control, and shelter operations. (Ref-01, Ref-04, Ref-05, Att-02)

Prior to 2012, like most government funded municipal shelters at the time, VCAS operated the Camarillo facility with no commitment to live-release. Animals brought to VCAS, unless reunited, adopted, or rescued, would be euthanized in a very short time for medical issues, behavioral concerns, or primarily to maintain limits on the animal population at the shelter. (Ref-01)

In 2012, the Commission prompted and supported by public input, advocated to VCBOS that VCAS should commit to becoming an open admission 90% live-release no-kill shelter (Open Admission). The VCBOS responded to growing public advocacy and supported VCAS in making the transition to become certified as an Open Admission shelter. (Ref-01, Ref-04, Att-03)

VCAS initiated the transition to an Open Admission model, and in 2014 achieved the industry’s best practices threshold of a 90% live-release rate. The implementation of this life-saving Open Admission policy led directly to increased financial pressures on both the county and Contract Cities. This change also resulted in several unforeseen consequences that had a negative impact on shelter capacity and operations at VCAS. (Ref-01, Ref-05, Att-04)

The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury found between 2015 and 2024, the Commission’s advisory role faded. Commission by-laws were not followed. Scheduled Commission meetings were cancelled. Contract Cities focused primarily on reducing their own contract costs. Communication and collaboration between the Commission and VCAS declined. By 2024, the Commission’s ability to carry out its mission had been undermined and weakened. (Ref-01, Ref-06).

## DISCUSSION

By 1980, the VCBOS established the advisory Commission to collaborate directly with VCAS. The Commission was charged with working side by side, hand in hand with the VCAS Director. (Ref-01, Att-02)

The VCAS office and main shelter complex are in Camarillo. The buildings and facilities date back to 1985, show their age, and are in dire need of updating to accommodate animal shelter 2025 Best Practices. (Ref-01, Att-05)

In 1984, the Commission facilitated service contracts between the Contract Cities and VCAS. These Animal Service Agreements (ASA) itemized the scale, scope and cost of animal welfare, animal control, animal shelter services, and field services provided by VCAS to each of the incorporated Contract Cities. (Ref-01, Ref-03)

VCBOS sets the budget for VCAS to provide welfare, control, shelter, and field services to the unincorporated areas of Ventura County. The total amount of the ASA contracts is included each year in the VCAS annual budget as a revenue line item. Any budget shortfall between the ASA service contract amounts and actual costs of services provided is an overage covered solely in the county budget approved by VCBOS. (Ref-01, Ref-07, Ref-08)

By 2014, VCAS achieved the Open Admission threshold, and the financial impact was immediate. The number of animals being housed and their length of stay at the shelter increased under the new Open Admission policy. The costs for services provided to Contract Cities and budget shortfalls increased. Simultaneously, the 40+ year advisory role and collaborative relationship between VCAS and the Commission began to fray and erode as financial pressures increased. (Ref-01, Att-4)

In 2019, VCAS worked directly with the Contract Cities, revising the ASAs to include more accurate budget projections giving each of the Contract Cities an accounting mechanism and formulas to afford some cost control over their own contractual requirements and service levels. (Ref-01, Att-05, Att-06, Att-07)

The once cooperative partnership between the Contract Cities and VCAS degraded into a more client-vendor, contractually defined relationship. Costs continued to increase. The Contract Cities became more and more focused on and concerned about their individual, year-by-year, ever-growing fiscal demands, rather than on Best Practice requirements. (Ref-01, Ref-08)

As of the date of this report, all eight Contract Cities are under contract through June 30, 2025, are negotiating with VCAS, and are expected to extend their contracts for an additional year, beginning July 1, 2025, and running through June 30, 2026. The current contracts do not effectively address the ever-rising costs of shelter and field services provided by VCAS, nor the negative ramifications of reduced service levels and growing VCAS budget shortfalls resulting from budget-capped ASA revenue. (Ref-01, Ref-08, Att-05, Att-06, Att-08)

The VCAS Director oversees a staff tasked with providing multi-tiered levels of care and ensuring the safety of a fluctuating population of animals, while meeting the clerical and business responsibilities of a governmental agency. (Ref-01, Ref-08)

It is important to note this agency is the primary daily interface with the residents of Ventura County for animal welfare, animal control, and animal services. Based on the demographics of Ventura County, it is surprising the VCAS website is English-only, as are most, if not all, VCAS documents, enforcement materials, and other written communication with the public. (Ref-01, Ref-08)

An energetic and dedicated crew of over 400 volunteers assists the VCAS staff. The volunteers working at the shelter support and supplement the staff, allowing animal control officers to fulfil ASA contractual obligations, attend to basic needs of the unincorporated areas, and respond to daily emergencies involving the safety of both humans and animals in Ventura County. (Ref-01, Ref-03)

The VCAS Camarillo shelter opened in 1985 and was designed and built as a municipal shelter intended for a short length-of-stay, euthanasia-first model. In 2012, VCAS transitioned to an Open Admission shelter model, and immediately animal intake and length-of-stay increased. Additionally, the buildings were aging, and the facility infrastructure did not have adequate sanitation protections or safeguards to ensure the health and well-being of the animals housed at the shelter. (Ref-01, Att-04)

When VCAS adopted the Open Admission model, the number of animals taken from the VCAS shelter by local rescue groups and foster options reduced dramatically, creating an unexpected consequence. Between 2012 and 2024, the number of animals taken out of the shelter each year by these local groups and individuals dropped from approximately 2,000 per year to only about 200 animals a year. That resulted in an increase of almost 1,800 more animals in the shelter each year. (Ref-01, Ref-06, Att-09)

The ripple effects from over-capacity are significant. The more animals in the shelter, the more it costs; more animals put more strain on out-dated facilities; more animals require more food and supplies; more animals require more veterinary care and medicine; more animals require more staff and volunteers; and of course, more animals crowded together inflict more stress on more animals. (Ref-01, Ref-09, Ref-10, Ref-11)

One industry-accepted method to identify the impact of animal shelter capacity is Capacity for Care (C4C). C4C gauges a shelter's ability to "meet the needs of every animal admitted to the shelter." The C4C metrics include data about staffing, intakes, outcomes, length of stays, and kennel capacity levels, creating a snapshot to identify and evaluate the major stress points at shelters. (Ref-01, Ref-12, Ref-13, Ref-14)

According to the University of California Davis's Koret Shelter Medicine Program, the most reliable ways to improve C4C rates is "increase live outcomes, decrease intake and reduce length of stay." The primary method employed by traditional municipal shelters to reduce animal population is euthanasia. Open Admission shelters, like VCAS, embrace a variety of non-lethal options such as adoptions, rescue groups, foster placements, and spay/neuter programs. (Ref-01, Ref-15)

Spay/neuter ordinances have been passed in many communities, but without rigorous enforcement, spay/neuter ordinances cannot improve C4C ratios nor address the underlying issues. Data and studies show that no-cost or low-cost spay/neuter programs are more effective, use engagement rather than enforcement, and deliver and sustain long-term results. (Ref-01, Ref-16, Ref-17, Ref-18)

As elected city and county leaders, Commission members are responsible for representing their constituencies and supporting VCAS with targeted education and engagement campaigns. The Commission's influence and involvement can function as a dynamic catalyst, encouraging local support within each community, as VCAS establishes no cost or low cost spay/neuter programs and develops other proactive initiatives throughout the county. (Ref-01, Ref-19)

The Commission was created over 40 years ago empowered to provide stewardship for animal welfare, control, and shelter services in Ventura County. The Commission, comprised of elected representatives, offers a public forum for discussion and facilitates debate while also performing a vital advisory function regarding budget, policies, programs, facilities, and overall operations of VCAS. (Ref-01, Ref-05)

As part of this stewardship, the Commission can embrace a leadership role in another important responsibility by focusing on addressing the mental health and wellness of the staff and volunteers who do the day-to-day work at VCAS. Humans who care for animals are usually motivated by a pure love and deep empathy for all living creatures. This often leads to compassion fatigue. (Ref-01, Ref-20, Ref-21, Ref-22)

Compassion fatigue has long been identified within the animal welfare community as a major mental health and wellness issue that negatively impacts staff and volunteers exposed to the never-ending cycle of trauma and emotional stress at shelters. The 2011-2012 Civil Grand Jury report identified compassion fatigue as a systemic problem at the Ventura County animal shelter. Through interviews with management and staff, the 2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury reconfirmed compassion fatigue remains an issue at VCAS. (Ref-01, Ref-20, Ref-21, Ref-22, Ref-23)

The Commission is well-positioned to encourage significant and positive changes by taking proactive measures to bolster existing mental health programs, and support new ones, and to undertake wellness initiatives focused on combating the damaging impact of compassion fatigue on the humans and animals at VCAS. (Ref-01, Ref-21, Ref-22, Ref-23)

As a result of the November 2024 county-wide elections, the 2025 Commission has a mix of new and returning members. A new VCAS Director took the helm in late 2024 and has implemented some initiatives and engagement programs with successful results. A much-needed updated shelter facility design, budget, and schedule are in the final phases prior to construction. (Ref-01, Ref-05, Att-10)

This lays the foundation for the Commission to take a proactive leadership role, rebuild a symbiotic relationship with the VCAS Director and staff, and strengthen engagement, education, and outreach programs in support of the VCAS mission to provide 2025 Best Practices animal welfare, animal control, animal shelter and animal field services to Ventura County. (Ref-01)

## FINDINGS

**F-01.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that the Ventura County Animal Services Commission's core mission to advise, guide, support, and collaborate with Ventura County Animal Services has been undermined due to issues such as non-adherence to its bylaws, inconsistent meeting schedules, and ineffective communication.

**F-02.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that between 2015 and 2024, the Ventura County Animal Services Commission's advisory role, communication purpose, and collaboration process diminished replaced by a narrow focus on limiting or reducing contract costs.

**F-03.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that the transition to an Open Admission shelter in 2014 increased financial pressure on both the county and Contract Cities, forcing Ventura County Animal Services to place budget considerations ahead of Best Practices for animal control, shelter care and field services.

**F-04.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that the cooperative partnership between the eight Contract Cities and Ventura County Animal Services evolved from a collaborative partnership into a client-vendor relationship, leading to splintered purposes, conflicting priorities, and a decline in unified commitment.

**F-05.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that the current Animal Services Agreements do not adequately address rising costs of shelter and field services, requiring Ventura County Animal Services to use funding, staffing, supply, and facility workarounds to compensate for budget shortfalls.

**F-06.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that the Ventura County Animal Services Camarillo shelter, which opened in 1985, is aging, outdated, and consistently over-crowded with animals, as Ventura County Animal Services maintains its mission to be an Open Admission, 90% live-release model.

**F-07.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that there has been a significant decrease in the number of animals being taken out of the shelter by local rescue groups and foster options, adding another stress factor to the consistent over-capacity of the Camarillo shelter population.

**F-08.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that academic research deems spay/neuter ordinances insufficient without effective enforcement. In contrast, no-cost or low-cost spay/neuter programs have proven far more effective and successful as a long-term solution.

**F-09.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that compassion fatigue negatively impacts human animal welfare workers, and the consequences of compassion fatigue on the mental health and wellness of Ventura County Animal Services staff and volunteers are not being adequately identified nor sufficiently addressed.

**F-10.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that Thousand Oaks and Santa Paula are the only incorporated cities in Ventura County that do not contract with Ventura County Animal Services, leading to confusion and frustration for the public trying to determine which agency is responsible for their animal services.

**F-11.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that the English-only Ventura County Animal Services website, written materials, and other communication with the public do not foster, and can be a deterrent to, engagement with the non-English-speaking population of Ventura County.

**F-12.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that an antiquated sanitation system, lack of necessary air-filtration systems, and the inability to quarantine contribute to viral medical issues. These conditions interfere with the safety and welfare of the population at the outdated shelter.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

**R-01.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Ventura County Animal Services Commission review, reevaluate, and revise Commission by-laws to facilitate better communication and nurture stronger collaboration between the Commission, Ventura County Board of Supervisors, and Ventura County Animal Services. This needs to be completed by December 31, 2025. (F-01, F-02, F-04)

**R-02.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Ventura County Animal Services Commission enhance accountability by establishing a transparent process and structured procedure to fulfill its core advisory role with the Ventura County Board of Supervisors. This needs to be completed by December 31, 2025. (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04)

**R-03.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Ventura County Animal Services Commission support Ventura County Animals Services in developing proactive strategies and implementing community-targeted spay/neuter, licensing, and micro-chipping programs. This needs to be completed by December 31, 2025. (F-06, F-07, F-08)

**R-04.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Ventura County Animal Services Commission support Ventura County Animal Services' re-engagement with local rescue and foster groups and other effective and proven methods that lead to long-term decreases in shelter population. This needs to be completed by December 31, 2025. (F-06, F-07, F-08)

**R-05.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, Ventura County Animal Services Commission, and Ventura County Animal Services review, re-evaluate, and revise the Contract City Animal Services Agreements to better conform to 2025 Best Practices for animal welfare, control, shelter, and field services. This needs to be completed by December 31, 2025. (F-03, F-04, F-05)

**R-06.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Ventura County Board of Supervisors and Ventura County Animal Services implement mental health programs specifically targeted to address the effects of compassion fatigue on the staff and volunteers working at Ventura County Animal Services. This needs to be completed by December 31, 2025. (F-09)

**R-07.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Ventura County Board of Supervisors and Ventura County Animal Services open a dialogue with the cities of Santa Paula and Thousand Oaks regarding contracting with Ventura County Animal Services for potential cost saving and uniformity of service for residents of Ventura County. This needs to be completed by December 31, 2025. (F-10)

**R-08.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Ventura County Animal Services Commission assist Ventura County Animal Services in securing grants for special care, education, and training programs not covered in the Ventura County Animal Services annual budget. This needs to be completed by December 31, 2025. (F-03, F-05)

## RESPONSES

Responses invited from:

**The following appointed officials within 60 days:**

Director of Ventura County Animal Services (F-01, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08, F-09, F-10, F-11, F-12, R-01, R-03, R-04, R-05, R-06, R-07, R-08)

Ventura County Animal Services Commission (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-09, F-11, R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04, R-05)

Responses required from:

**The following governing bodies within 90 days:**

Ventura County Board of Supervisors (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-05, F-06, F-08, F-09, F-10, F-11, F-12, R-01, R-02, R-05, R-06, R-07)

## COMMENDATIONS

The Civil Grand Jury commends the Ventura County residents who volunteer to work with Ventura County Animal Services at the Camarillo and Simi Valley shelters, work together with Ventura County Animal Services staff in education and outreach programs, and open their homes and hearts as foster havens for all kinds of animals. These volunteers are involved in daily animal care and companionship, help with medical and well-being support, and assist marketing and fundraising efforts. Ventura County Animal Services would not be able to function successfully without the hundreds of volunteers who give their time, effort, compassion, and love to animals under the care of Ventura County Animal Services.

The Civil Grand Jury also commends the Emergency Volunteer Rescue Team (EVRT), an on-call volunteer group of Ventura County residents activated by Ventura County Animal Services during declared disasters. They assist in the evacuation of livestock and domestic animals to safe, predetermined locations. Most recently, in 2024, during the Mountain Fire, EVRT quickly mobilized and was essential in assisting Ventura County Animal Services rescue hundreds of animals of all kinds and move them quickly and safely out of the danger zone. These volunteers are giving of themselves, through selfless efforts, to provide comfort and care for animals in times of great distress.

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## ATTACHMENTS

### Ventura County Civil Grand Jury Document Library

<https://www.ventura.org/grand-jury/doc-library/>

- Att-01.** VCBOS Letter. (1978). Retrieved on November 15, 2024, from VCAS Archives. [Att. 01 VCBOS Letter 1978.pdf](#)
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## DISCLAIMER

This report is issued by the 2024-2025 Ventura County Civil Grand Jury. Due to a potential conflict of interest, a member of this Civil Grand Jury was excused from participating in any aspect of the investigation or writing of this report.

## GLOSSARY

### TERM

### DEFINITION

**Ad Hoc Committee:** In a government context, an ad hoc committee is a temporary, specialized group formed to address a specific issue or problem.

**Animal Control:** Animal control refers to a government entity or agency responsible for enforcing laws related to animal ownership, responding to incidents involving animals and ensuring the safety and well-being of both humans and animals.

**Animal Welfare:** Animal welfare is about the quality-of-life experienced by, encompassing the physical and mental well-being of animals, focusing on ensuring a “life worth living” through humane and ethical treatment, encompassing aspects such as health, nutrition, environment, behavior, and mental state.

**ASA:** Animal Service Agreements. The ASAs are used by Ventura County Animal Services to provide animal control, shelter facility and field services to eight Contract Cities in Ventura County.

**Best Practices:** In the context of animal shelters, currently recognized by the animal welfare community as the most acceptable methods, proven programs, procedures, and partnerships, designed to enhance animal welfare and increase the likelihood of live-release outcomes and ensure the best possible care, healthy environment and overall well-being animals.

**C4C:** Capacity for Care. The ability of an animal shelter to meet the needs of every animal admitted, considering factors like housing, staffing, resources, and the ability to provide humane care and achieve positive outcomes, such as adoption or transfer.

## GLOSSARY – continued

### TERM

### DEFINITION

**Commission:** Ventura County Animal Services Commission

**Compassion Fatigue:** In the context of animal shelters, the emotional and exhaustion that can result from prolonged exposure to the suffering of animals and the difficulty faced by animal welfare workers, potentially leading to burnout, cynicism, and decreased job satisfaction.

**Contract Cities:** The eight cities in Ventura County that contract with Ventura County Animal Services for animal control, shelter, and field services. These cities are Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Simi Valley, and Ventura.

**Field Services:** In the context of animal control, the out-of-shelter activities and responsibilities of animal control officers, tasks such as responding to complaints; rescuing animals; enforcing lease laws; reuniting lost pets with owners; providing assistance and resources to homeless individuals with pets; responding to and investigating incidents pertaining to animal cruelty and neglect; and enforcing local, state and federal laws and ordinances related to animal care.

**Live Release:** In the context of animal shelters, live release is any outcome in which an animal leaves the shelter alive, rather than being euthanized or dying in the shelter. Types of live release are adoption, return to owner, return to field, transfer out of the shelter to another shelter, group, organization, or individual.

**Open Admission:** An open admission shelter accepts every animal found or surrendered within its jurisdiction, regardless of age, health, breed, or temperament, and can include stray, feral, abandoned, confiscated, or owner-surrendered animals. This report defines the Open Admission model to include the shelter 90 % live-release rate.

**Shelter Capacity:** Animal shelter capacity refers to the number of animals a shelter can care for, considering physical space, staff resources, and the ability to provide humane care. A shelter's capacity for humane care cannot be defined by a static number of animals or a line item in a budget. It is influenced by physical holding capacity, adoption-driven capacity, staff capacity for daily care, and number, size, and habitability of humane housing units.

**Spay/Neuter Programs:** Spay/neuter programs are initiatives that offer free or surgical sterilization for animals (spaying for females and neutering for males), primarily to control pet overpopulation, address feral or stray populations, and improve animal health and well-being.

**VCAS:** Ventura County Animal Services

**VCBOS:** Ventura County Board of Supervisors





**2024 – 2025**



**COUNTY *of* VENTURA**  
Civil Grand Jury

**Consolidated  
Final Report**

**Water Rates for the City of Ventura  
and The Underground Dam  
in Foster Park**

**May 2, 2025**

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# **Water Rates for the City of Ventura and the Underground Dam in Foster Park**

## **SUMMARY**

The City of Ventura supplies water to its residents from three main sources: the Ventura River, Lake Casitas, and three groundwater sources.

In the early 1900s, an underground dam was built across the Ventura River in Foster Park to supply water to the growing city of Ventura. However, construction of the dam was halted about 300 feet short of the design due to the increasing depth of bedrock and rising inflow of groundwater.

A study conducted in 1996 found that approximately 485 acre-feet of groundwater escapes from around the end of the unfinished dam during the driest years and could be recovered by completing the dam.

The consultant who prepared the Water Rate Study in 2021 allocated all available water from the Ventura River to the residential water rate. Water from the Ventura River is the least expensive and of the highest quality among the city's water sources.

Completing the underground dam in Foster Park would add surface flow to the river, provide high-quality, low-cost water to the city's supply, lower residential water rates, and improve fish habitats.

The 2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury recommends completing the underground dam across the Ventura River in Foster Park, if feasible.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The Civil Grand Jury interviewed senior officials of the Ventura City Government. Additionally, they reviewed publicly available information, including newspaper articles, city-commissioned studies, and Ventura Water Commission agendas and minutes presentations.

## **BACKGROUND**

Ventura County Power Company began construction of an underground dam in the early 1900s across the Ventura River at Casitas Narrows in Foster Park. An underground dam is designed to block the flow of water below the surface, redirecting the water to the surface. (Ref-01)

Underground dams have been constructed globally to enhance water supply. (Att-01)

Construction of the Foster Park Dam began on the west side of the river and extended 973 feet across the channel to the east. The structure varied in depth from six feet on the west side to 40 feet, depending on how deep the bedrock was beneath the sand and gravel riverbed. The project was never fully completed due to rising costs and construction challenges related to the deep bedrock. A 300-foot gap remains at the eastern end. The exact date when construction of

the dam ended is not known but is thought to be between 1907 and 1911, based on available sources. (Ref-01, Ref-02)

The Ventura City Engineer prepared a drawing in 1924 that details the eastern end of the underground dam along with dimensions corresponding to existing wells. The Southern Pacific Railroad (S.P.R.R.) right-of-way shown on the drawing is now known as the Ojai Valley Trail. (Att-02)

## DISCUSSION

In December 1996, Fugro West, Inc. conducted a study of the Ventura River for the Ventura Avenue Treatment Plant/Foster Park Master Plan. This study examines the geology of the river channel and provides a history of floods and droughts. The underground dam does not span the entire width of the river channel. Reportedly, the dam was not completed due to construction challenges arising from the increased depth to bedrock, which the engineer at the time estimated could be as deep as 150 feet. Groundwater flows that exceeded pumping capacity also contributed to the construction difficulties. At the time of this study, the crest of the underground dam was exposed above the active channel due to flood erosion. (Ref-03, Att-03, Att-04, Att-05)

Fugro West, Inc. employed geophysical techniques, including pulse-EKKO radar, to define the geometry of the sand and gravel riverbed in the Foster Park area and to assist in assessing subsurface conditions near the unfinished segment of the underground dam. The cross-section of the river canyon at the underground dam revealed that the bedrock extended only to a depth of 50 feet, instead of the projected 150 feet when construction of the dam halted in the early 1900s. This indicates that completing the dam will be easier than anticipated back in 1907. (Ref-03, Att-06)

A computer model of water production from the river under various conditions, developed for the Fugro West, Inc. report in 1996, conducted a simulation to optimize well production during a dry year (specifically 1990) if the underground dam were extended across Foster Park. The simulation showed that an additional 485 acre-feet per year (over 158 million gallons) would be available in the driest years by blocking the groundwater currently flowing around the end of the incomplete dam and directing it to the surface. The simulation assumed that no surface flow from the river occurred throughout the entire modeling period. (Ref-03)

The Fugro West, Inc. study assessed the completion of the underground dam using a grout curtain, with an estimated cost of \$1,000,000 (1996 cost). A grout curtain consists of a series of adjacent vertical columns of concrete grout injected into the sand and gravel of the riverbed to form an underground dam. The report concluded that the additional water supply would not justify the expense of completing the dam at that time. (Ref-03, Att-07)

Modern techniques for creating underground grout curtains, such as jet grouting, utilizing smaller and more widely spaced drill holes, and high-pressure grout injection with air. This method works very well in porous materials like riverbed sand and gravel, producing wide columns. Completing the dam with 10-foot column spacing and a depth of 50 feet to bedrock

would require 1,500 feet of vertical grouting, costing around \$100,000 (in 2013 dollars), which includes transportation and setup. (Ref-03, Att-07)

The upper two feet of the underground dam are exposed due to river flooding, which creates a potential obstacle for fish passage. A grant-funded fish passage notch was built into the top of the dam to facilitate fish movement. Following the 2023 flooding of the Ventura River, the riverbed's elevation in the Upper Ventura River increased by about four feet, due to sediments washed down from the Thomas Fire burn scar. In contrast, the riverbed elevation in the Lower Ventura River decreased by about two feet. Over time, sediment from the upper river will wash down and re-cover the underground dam in Foster Park, restoring unrestricted fish passage. Litigation against the City of Ventura to protect fish habitat led to an agreement to turn off pumps in Foster Park when surface flows in the river drop to a specified level. Completing the underground dam and directing groundwater currently flowing around the dam to the surface will enhance fish habitat. (Ref-04, Att-08)

The Ventura River historically provided a third of Ventura's water supply until flood damage affected wells and the raw water intake in Foster Park in 2005. The Ventura River is the highest quality and lowest-cost option among the three water sources supplying Ventura. The other sources include the Casitas Municipal Water District (Lake Casitas) and three groundwater basins. The decrease in water production from the Ventura River results from drought, flood damage to pumping facilities, and lawsuits that limit production to protect fish habitats. (Ref-05) Based on recent years of water production from the Ventura River, only 1,573 acre-feet were utilized in the 2021 Water Rate Study. (Ref-05, Att-08)

The 2021 Water Rate Design Study allocated all available Ventura River water to the Residential Water Rates, with the remaining residential demand supplied by more expensive sources. This process resulted in the lowest possible Residential Water Rates. (Ref-05)

A comparison of water rates in Ventura County is attached. (Att-09)

Completing the underground dam in Foster Park would increase surface flow to the river, providing the city with more high-quality, low-cost water. This improvement would lower residential water rates and enhance fish habitats. Water rates are determined by a weighted average of various sources and costs of water supplies. The least expensive and highest quality source is the Ventura River. When the available flows from the Ventura River are insufficient to meet demand, the city contracts water from the Casitas Municipal Water District, which incurs a higher cost. Groundwater basins are the most expensive water source and are used to satisfy the remaining water demand. (Ref-03)

## FINDINGS

**F-01.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that the incomplete underground dam in Foster Park has resulted in a 300-foot gap at the east end, allowing a significant amount of groundwater to flow through.

**F-02.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that the amount of water produced from the Ventura River for use in Ventura has decreased from one-third of the total demand before 2004 to only 10% in 2021, due to drought, flood damage to wells and water intake facilities, and litigation aimed at protecting fish habitat.

**F-03.** The Civil Grand Jury finds that the consultant for the 2021 Water Rate Study assigned all available water from the Ventura River to the rate calculation, resulting in the lowest possible water rate. Since dam construction will not be completed for some time and the rate study is currently underway, the improved river water production expected from the completion of the dam, which could benefit the water rate, will not be reflected in the ongoing rate study process.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**R-01.** The Civil Grand Jury recommends that the City of Ventura conduct a feasibility study to complete the final 300 feet of the underground dam in Foster Park by December 31, 2025.

**R-02.** The Civil Grand Jury recommends that the City of Ventura complete construction of the underground dam in Foster Park, if it is determined to be feasible, by December 31, 2026.

**R-03.** The Civil Grand Jury recommends that the City of Ventura repair the flood-damaged wells and water intake facilities in Foster Park by December 31, 2025.

## RESPONSES

Responses are invited from:

**The following appointed officer within 60 days:**

Ventura Water Manager (F-01, F-02, F-03, R-01, R-02, R-03)

Responses are required from:

**The following governing body within 90 days:**

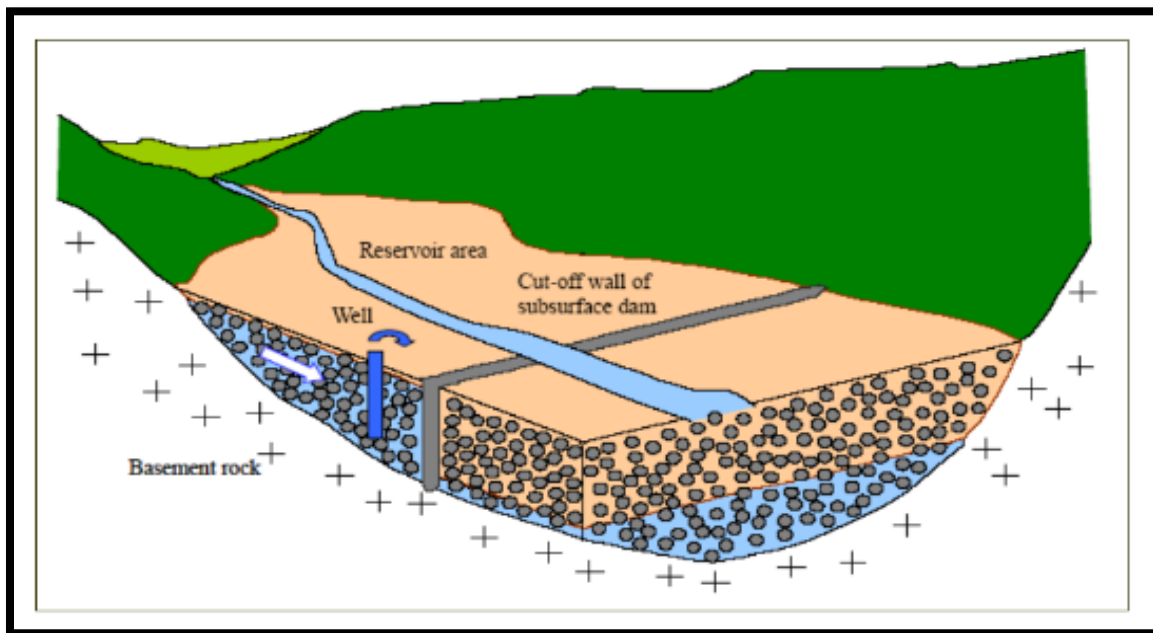
Ventura City Council (F-01, F-02, F-03, R-01, R-02, R-03)



## REFERENCES

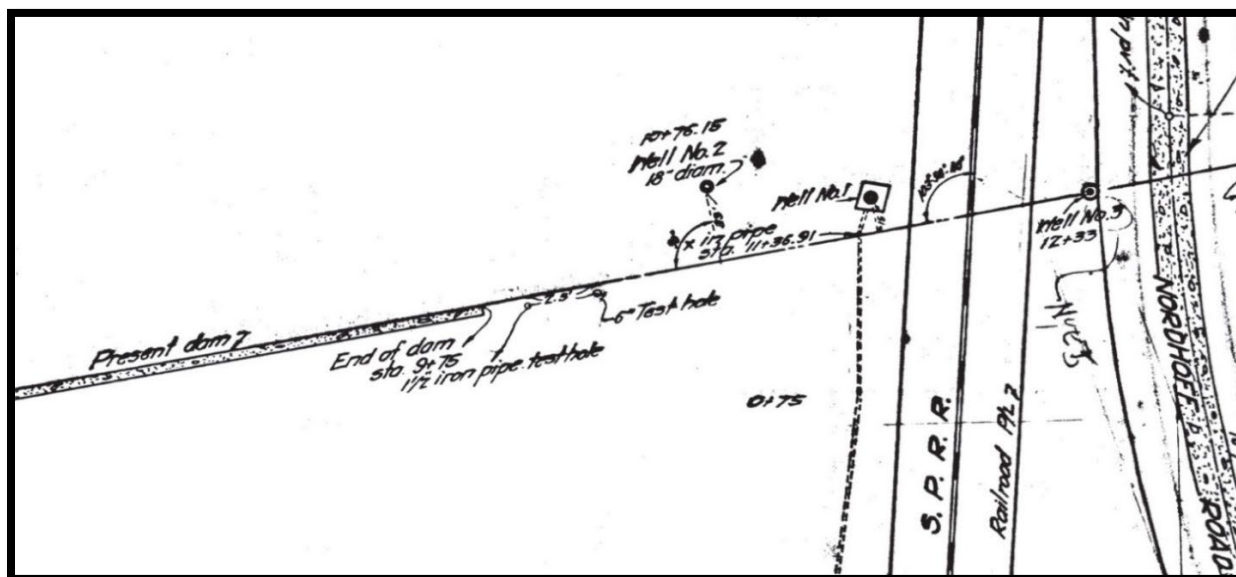
- Ref-01.** Pierce, M.A. (2015). *Documentary History of American Water-Works*. Retrieved on November 12, 2024, from <http://www.waterworkshistory.us/CA/Ventura/>
- Ref-02.** San Buenaventura Research Associates. (2002, Revised 2003). *Historic Resources Evaluation Avenue Water Treatment Plant, Ventura, California*. URS Corporation. *Documentary History of American Water-Works*. Retrieved on March 20, 2025, from <http://www.waterworkshistory.us/CA/Ventura/2002HistoricalSetting.pdf>
- Ref-03.** Fugro West, Inc. (1996, December). *Hydrogeologic Study for the Ventura Avenue Treatment Plant/ Foster Park Master Plan Ventura County, California* (pp. 5, 17, 20, 22). City of San Buenaventura, California. On Behalf of: Kennedy/Jenks Consultants. Retrieved on March 1, 2025, from [1996-Hydrogeologic-Study-for-the-Ventura-Avenue-Treatment-Plant--Foster-Park-Master-Plan-](http://www.waterworkshistory.us/CA/Ventura/2002HistoricalSetting.pdf)
- Ref-04.** Jenkin, P. (2024, July 16). *Riverbed changes after 2023 flood*. Ventura River Ecosystem. Retrieved on November 13, 2024, from <https://www.venturariver.org/2024/07/riverbed-changes-after-2023-flood.html>
- Ref-05.** Raftelis. (2021). *Ventura Water 2021 Water and Wastewater Cost of Service and Rate Design Study* (P.70). Ventura Water. Retrieved on March 20, 2025, from <https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/26850/2021-Cost-of-Service-and-Rate-Design-Study-Report>

## ATTACHMENTS



Att-01

Example of Underground Dams Showing Water Held Back in Riverbed Above Dam



Att-02

Ventura Water: Gap at end of Dam

1924 City Engineer Drawing / Ventura Water Department

## ATTACHMENTS – continued



**Att-03**  
**Underground Dam Location**  
Google Earth Project  
(Retrieved on March 7, 2025)



**Att-04**  
**Exposed portion of Underground Dam with**  
**Fish Bypass in Foster Park**  
Civil Grand Jury Photograph taken on October 31, 2024

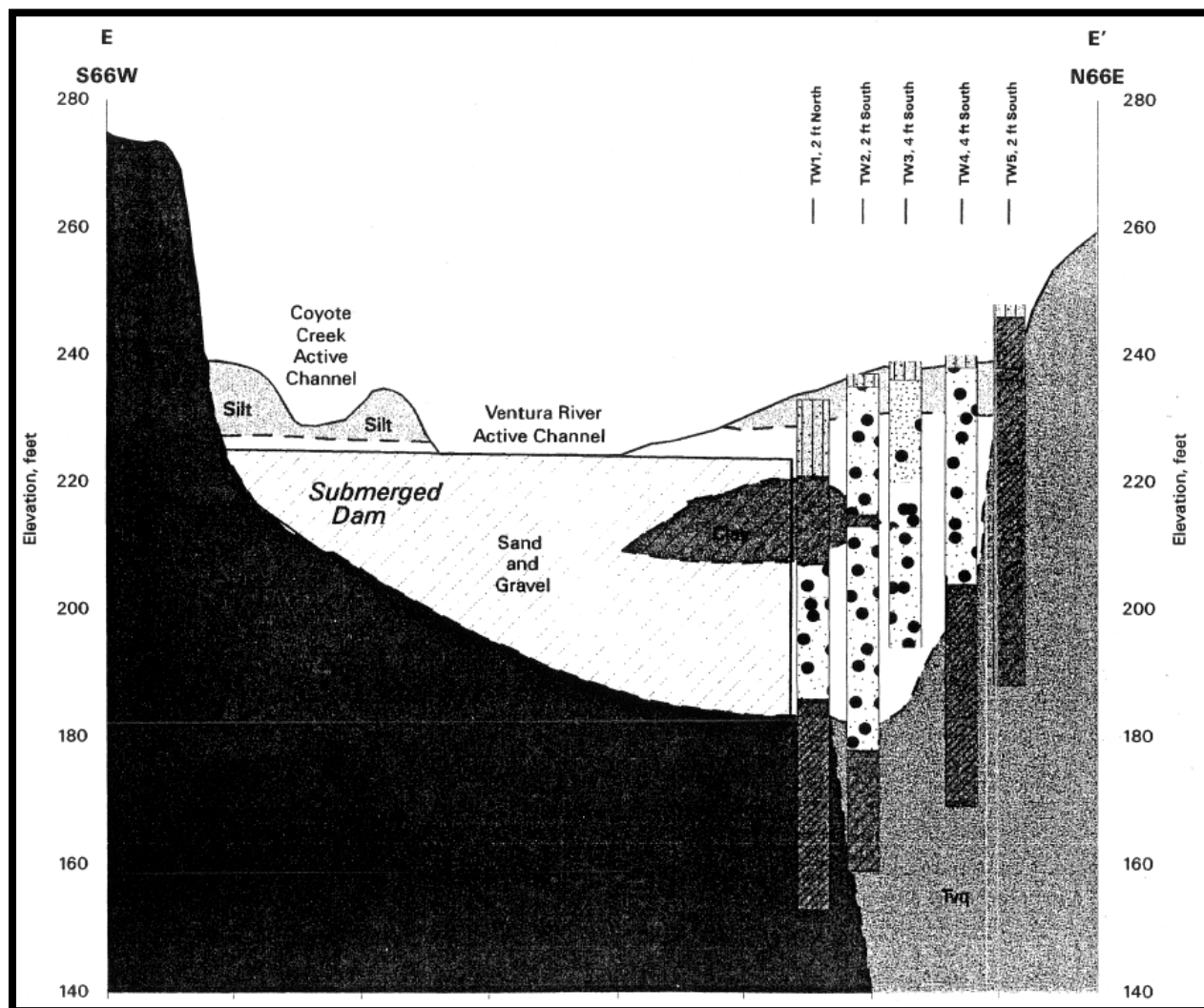


## ATTACHMENTS – continued



**Att-05**  
**Overview of 300-foot Dam Extension**  
Google Earth Project  
(Retrieved on October 31, 2025)

## ATTACHMENTS – continued

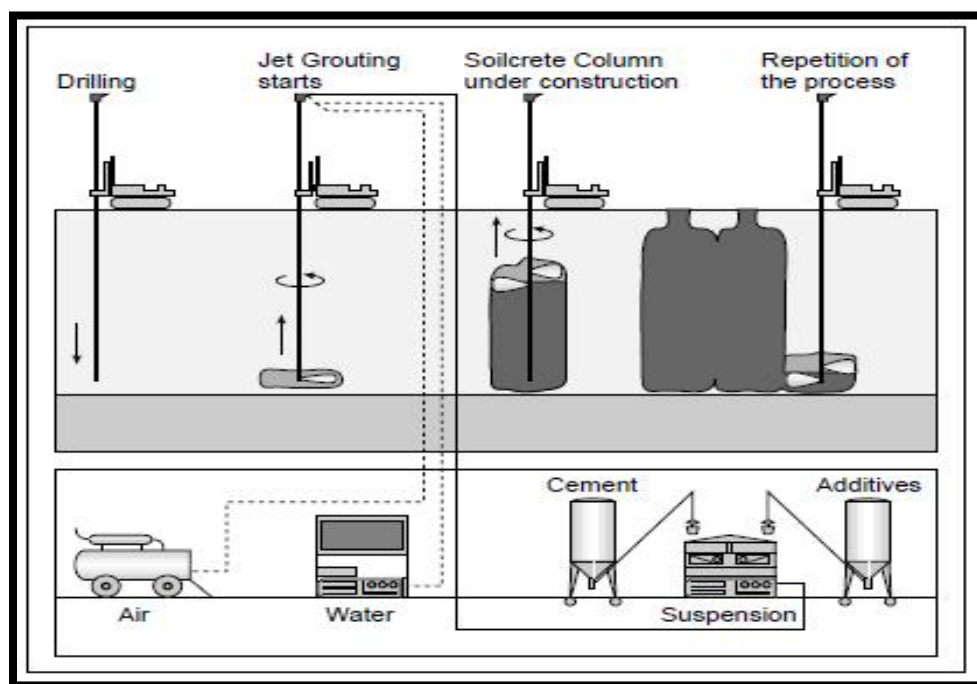
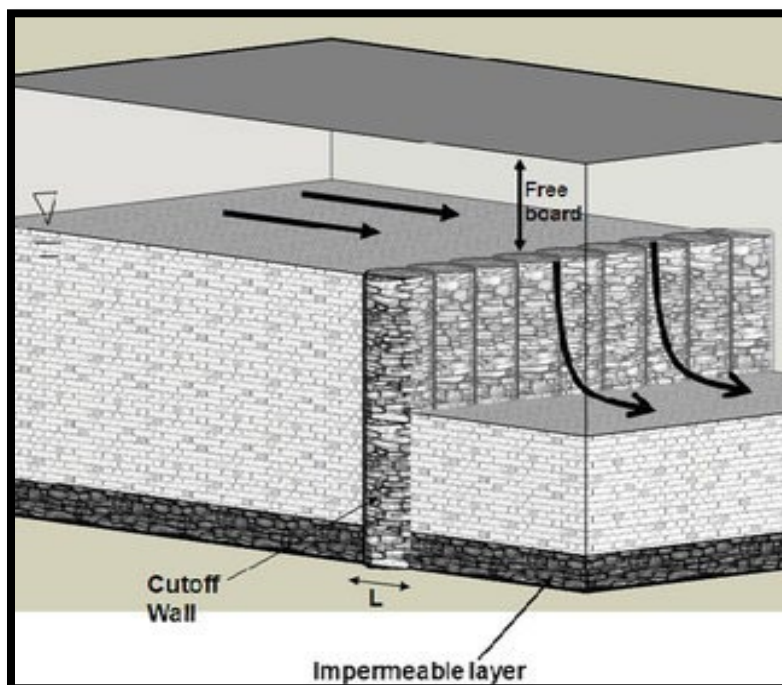


Att-06

**Geological Cross-Section of Submerged Dam at Foster Park**

1996 Fugro West, Inc. Hydrogeologic Study for the  
 Ventura Avenue Treatment Plant/Foster Park Master Plan Plate 8  
 (Retrieved on March 1, 2025)

## ATTACHMENTS – continued



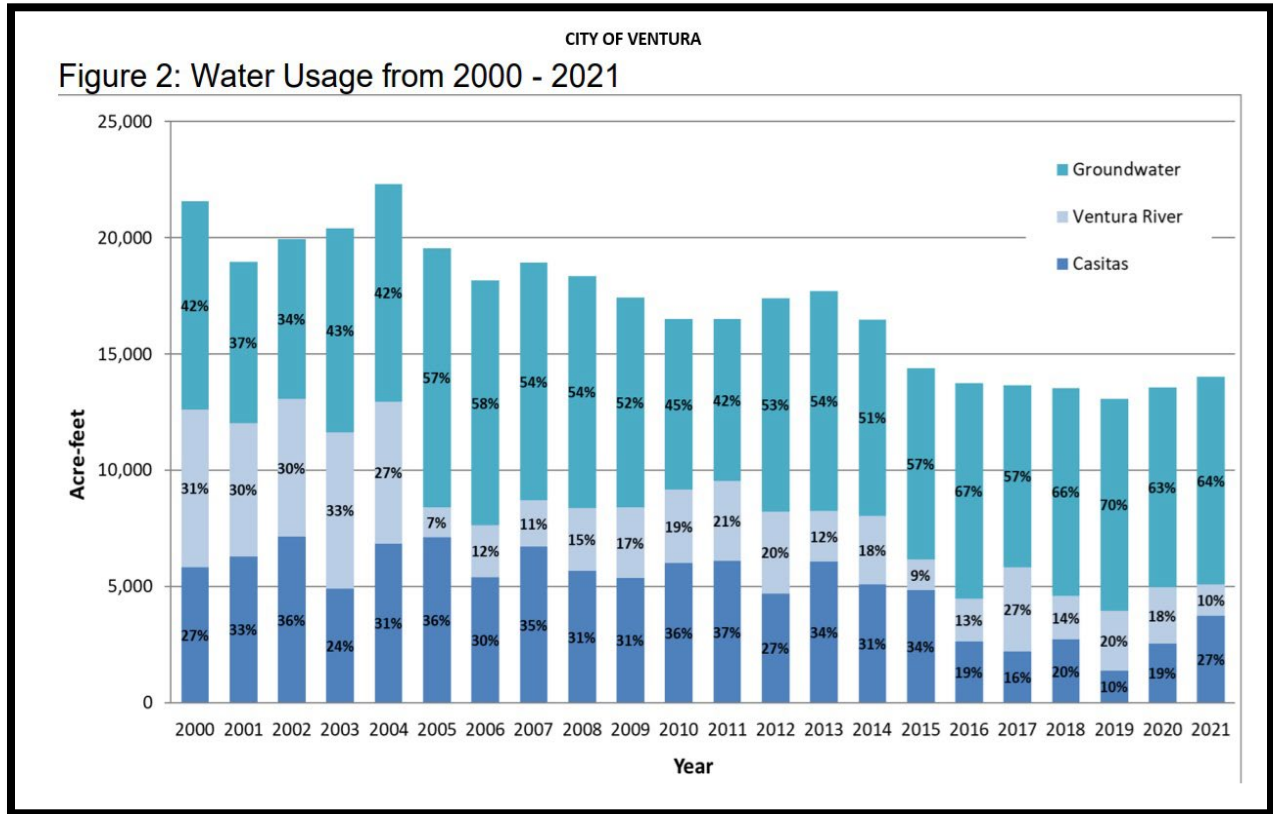
Att-07

## Jet Grout Cutoff Wall

<https://www.geoengineer.org/education/web-class-projects/cee-549-geoenvironmental-engineering-winter-2013/assignments/impermeable-barriers>

International Information Center for Geotechnical Engineers  
(Retrieved on October 31, 2024)

## ATTACHMENTS – continued



Att-08

Ventura Water 2024. Water Supply Update.

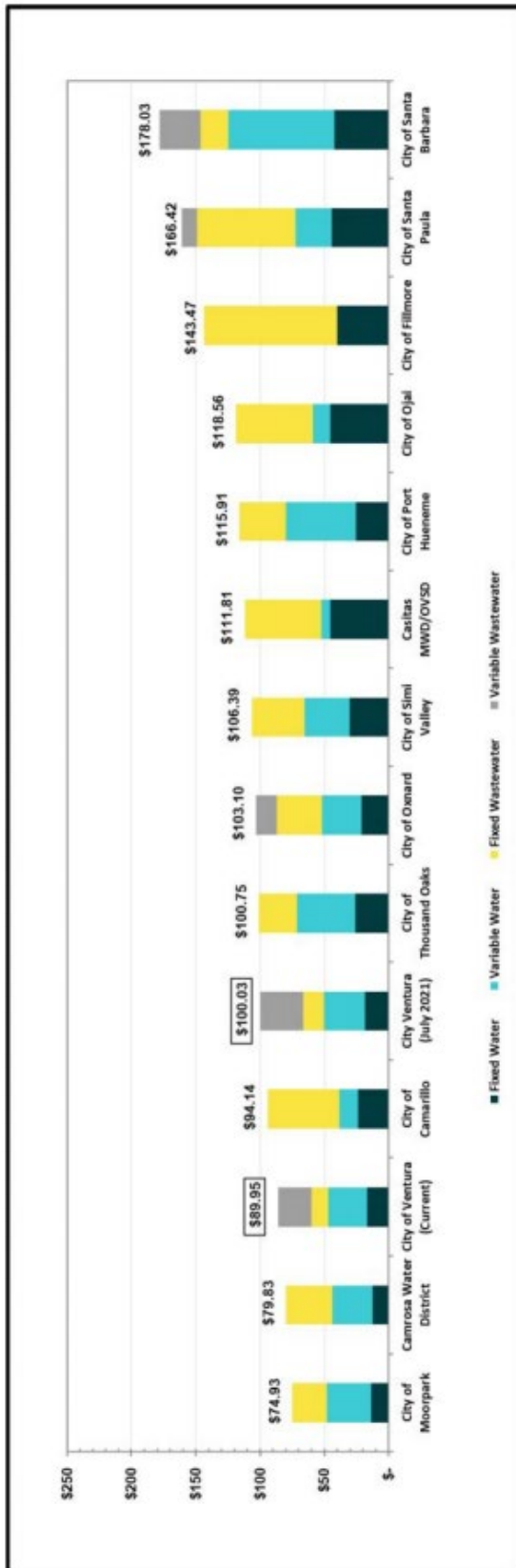
<https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/41635/Agenda-Item-04---Net-Zero-Fee-Repeal-and-Water-Supply-Update>

(Retrieved on October 31, 2024)



ATTACHMENTS – continued

Figure 1-12: Combined Monthly Bill Comparison for Single Family Residential (9 HCF/Month)



Att-09

Ventura Water 2021. Water and Wastewater Cost of Service and Rate Design Study  
Final Report/March 16, 2021. Ventura Water/ Raftelis

<https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/26850/2021-Cost-of-Service-and-Rate-Design-Study-Report>  
(Retrieved on October 31, 2024)



## **Grand Jury Overview**

The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury is a civil investigatory panel of 19 citizens selected by the Ventura County Superior Court who examine local governmental entities in Ventura County, including the county, cities within the county, and Special Districts. The Civil Grand Jury reviews and evaluates procedures and practices of local government entities to determine their efficiency and effectiveness of operations pursuant to California State law and regulations.

The primary function of a Civil Grand Jury is civil oversight. The civil oversight functions are accomplished through on-site or protocol visits, interviews, briefings, investigations and research. The Civil Grand Jury publishes reports on its conclusions from these investigations and makes recommendations. In all cases, the Civil Grand Jury reports serve to inform the public.

To perform its investigative functions, the Civil Grand Jury establishes several investigative committees. Investigations may be the result of citizen complaints that are sent to the Civil Grand Jury or other areas of interest proposed by Grand Jury members.

Administrative committees are formed to handle other Grand Jury activities, such as presenting information about the Civil Grand Jury to the public, organizing internal and external special events, and producing the Consolidated Final Report.

Following general guidelines, each Civil Grand Jury determines its organization and functions for the year. The 2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury formed five general investigative committees and five administrative committees. The Grand Jurors participated in these committees to complete the work of ensuring effective and efficient practices and operations of local government.

## **Grand Jury Structure**

### **Committee Organization and Administrative Functions**

#### **Investigative Committees**

- Audit, Finance and County Administration
- Cities and Joint Powers
- County Services and Special Districts
- Health, Education and Welfare
- Law, Justice and Public Safety

#### **Administrative Committees**

- Community Relations
  - Outreach
  - Social
- Editorial Review
- Executive

#### **Officers**

- Complaint Review Coordinator
- Correspondence Recorder
- Foreperson
- Foreperson Pro Tem
- Grand Jury Recorder
- Librarian/Archivist
- Parliamentarian
- Protocol Officer
- Response Review Coordinator
- Sergeant at Arms
- Technology Specialist
- Treasurer

## **Investigative Committees**

### **Audit, Finance and County Administration**

The Audit, Finance and County Administration Committee investigates administrative and financial practices of county agencies (e.g., the offices of the County Assessor, Auditor-Controller, Treasurer-Tax Collector and the County Executive Officer), cities, special districts, and agencies arising from Joint Powers Agreements.

### **Cities and Joint Powers**

The scope of inquiry of the Cities and Joint Powers Committee includes the government offices and services of all cities located within Ventura County, as well as local entities operating under Joint Powers Agreements.

### **County Services and Special Districts**

The scope of inquiry of the County Services and Special Districts Committee extends to Ventura County government offices and services, as well as to special districts that operate within the county. Examples of special districts include but are not limited to: Water Districts, Sanitation Districts, Harbor Districts, Municipal Improvement Districts, and Transportation Districts.

### **Health, Education and Welfare**

The scope of inquiry of the Health, Education and Welfare Committee extends to all aspects of health care, education and social services operations in the county, cities, and special districts. This includes but is not limited to: Ventura County Health Care Agency, Library Services Agency, Human Services Agency, Ventura County Animal Services, Ventura County Community College District, County Superintendent of Schools, and all school districts within the county.

### **Law, Justice and Public Safety**

The Law, Justice and Public Safety Committee is responsible for investigating and monitoring the operational procedures of all agencies involved in the administration of criminal justice, law enforcement, and public safety. This includes required inquiries into the condition and management of all adult and juvenile detention facilities in Ventura County.

## **Administrative Committees**

### **Community Relations**

The Community Relations Committee informs the public about the history, purpose, and operation of the Civil Grand Jury by making presentations and distributing information to community organizations, colleges, city councils, and prospective jurors in the Jury Assembly Room. The Community Relations Committee also writes and distributes media releases on significant events during the Civil Grand Jury's term, from publishing a report to holding an annual Open House encouraging people to apply for service.

The Community Relations Committee coordinates with two sub-committees to achieve its function:

The Outreach sub-committee reaches out to service organizations and public social enterprises to schedule presentations designed to answer questions about the functions of the Civil Grand Jury with the primary focus being to encourage members to apply for Grand Jury Service.

The Social sub-committee shares responsibility for the annual Open House, which is open to the public and prospective jurors. The Social Committee also organizes internal self-funded events.

### **Editorial Review**

The Editorial Review Committee reviews and edits all publications of Civil Grand Jury documents made available to the public. It establishes guidelines for the basic structure of final reports. Reports are reviewed for completeness, accuracy, clarity, uniformity of style and format.

### **Executive**

The Executive Committee consists of the Investigative Committee chairs, the Foreperson (ex officio), and the Foreperson Pro Tem as the chair.

The committee assesses the direction and ongoing productivity of the Investigative Committees. It serves as a forum for Investigative Committee chairs to discuss issues and provide for their resolution.

## Officers

All officers are elected by the Civil Grand Jury except for the Foreperson, who is appointed by the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of Ventura County.

### Correspondence Recorder

The Correspondence Recorder opens all incoming mail, stamps each piece of mail received as of the current date, and records it in the Incoming Correspondence Log. The Recorder maintains copies of outgoing correspondence written on Grand Jury letterhead and distributes incoming correspondence to the appropriate juror. An Outgoing Correspondence file is kept for all letters sent out by the Civil Grand Jury.

### Foreperson

The Foreperson ensures that the Civil Grand Jury operates effectively and efficiently in carrying out its oversight responsibilities and powers. The Foreperson serves as the official spokesperson for decisions or statements of the Civil Grand Jury. The Foreperson signs all written communications from the Civil Grand Jury, including letters, reports, and press releases as well as approves all reports before submission to the County Counsel and the Presiding Judge. Other duties assigned to this position include:

- Consults with the Presiding Judge, County Counsel and the District Attorney on legal issues raised by the Civil Grand Jury
- Prepares agendas for and presides at meetings of the full Civil Grand Jury panel, a.k.a. General Meetings
- Oversees election of Civil Grand Jury officers, formalizes committee structure with Civil Grand Jury approval, and oversees election of committee chairs
- Serves as an ex-officio voting member of all committees
- Ensures that jurors receive training relevant to their statutory functions, including interviewing and report writing
- Works with Jury Services when it is necessary to replace jurors and is responsible for orientation of incoming jurors.

### Foreperson Pro Tem

The Foreperson Pro Tem is appointed by the Foreperson and is confirmed by the entire Civil Grand Jury. The Pro Tem assumes the Foreperson's responsibilities in the absence of, or at the request of, the Foreperson. The Pro Tem accepts assignments from and assists and advises the Foreperson as needed. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Foreperson, the Pro Tem acts as the Foreperson until the Presiding Judge officially selects a replacement. The Pro Tem serves as the Chair of the Executive Committee.



**Grand Jury Recorder**

The Civil Grand Jury Recorder keeps minutes of Civil Grand Jury general meetings and distributes copies of the minutes to all jurors. The Recorder also maintains a file of signed original minutes of all general meetings.

**Complaint Review Coordinator**

The Complaint Review Coordinator receives complaints from the public alleging government inefficiencies, suspicions of misconduct, mistreatment by officials or other matters of general community concern. The Coordinator also receives internal complaints initiated by sitting members of the Civil Grand Jury.

The Complaint Review Coordinator along with their pro tem, reviews each complaint received, both public and internal, to ensure that the complainant has provided all necessary information. The Coordinator also determines whether the subject matter of the complaint has been addressed by current or previous Grand Juries.

If a complaint appears valid and complete, and if the subject matter falls within the jurisdiction of the Civil Grand Jury, the Complaint Review Coordinator refers the complaint to the entire Civil Grand Jury for review and determination whether to adopt as an investigation.

**Librarian/Archivist**

The Librarian/Archivist maintains an archive of the current and past Civil Grand Jury final reports, background materials and responses. The Librarian/Archivist updates and assigns space for materials accumulated by the various committees. The Librarian/Archivist maintains and updates reference materials when received and organizes and maintains records and documents for the past five years.

**Parliamentarian**

The Parliamentarian observes the interaction among panel members during general and other meetings and offers guidance to the Foreperson or committee chairperson so that the members follow Robert's Rules of Order during discussions and voting. The Parliamentarian also advises the Foreperson or chairperson regarding parliamentary procedure and the order of business.

**Protocol Officer**

The Protocol Officer coordinates site visits to various facilities and agencies as well as arranges for agency briefings held in the Civil Grand Jury chambers. The Protocol Officer may also schedule coordinated activities with such agencies as law enforcement, fire departments and the county clerk-recorder.

**Response Review Coordinator**

The Response Review Coordinator receives and maintains responses to Civil Grand Jury reports. The Response Review Coordinator maintains an accurate log of the Civil Grand Jury's reports, responses required by law, and requested responses. The Coordinator sends reminder letters to entities that have not provided responses within the required time frame.

As each response is received, the Response Review Coordinator provides a copy to the chair of the appropriate investigative committee. The investigative committee recommends acceptance of the response if it is deemed to be complete and accurate. The response is then filed in the archived folder for the related report. A copy of each response is also sent to the County Website Applications Architect / Supervisor to post on the Civil Grand Jury's website.

**Sergeant at Arms**

The Sergeant at Arms is responsible for ensuring the Civil Grand Jury chambers are secure and a safe working environment. The Sergeant at Arms makes recommendations to the Foreperson concerning security matters and ensures that no unauthorized person is admitted to the Civil Grand Jury chambers. The Sergeant at Arms serves as the Civil Grand Jury Emergency Evacuation Coordinator.

**Technology Specialist**

The Technology Specialist identifies hardware and software needs for Civil Grand Jury members and coordinates service requests with the county's Information Technology Department. The Technology Specialist arranges computer access for incoming jurors. The Technology Specialist may hold computer training sessions as necessary and is available to assist jurors with computer questions or issues.

**Treasurer**

The Treasurer is responsible for the administration of the Civil Grand Jury budget. The Treasurer aids jurors in completing monthly claim forms and is responsible for processing all bills presented to the Civil Grand Jury for payment. The Treasurer receives and reviews expenditure statements from the county's fiscal office and presents relevant information to the Civil Grand Jury. The Treasurer orders all required office supplies and administers social dues money contributed by Grand Jurors.



## Protocol Visits and Agency Briefings

The purpose of protocol visits and agency briefings is to inform the Civil Grand Jury about governmental functions of the County of Ventura, the cities within, and Special Districts. These informational visits and briefings assist the jurors in meaningfully performing their statutory oversight functions.

Through briefings, jurors become acquainted with the officials and managers of agencies they may examine and are better able to evaluate them. The Civil Grand Jury was pleased to receive 27 agency briefings in its 2024-2025 term.

The 2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury wishes to thank the following officials and agencies for their flexibility, patience, and willingness to participate in this process.

Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner
Ventura County Airports
Ventura County Animal Services
Ventura County Area Agency on Aging
Ventura County Assessor's Office
Ventura County Auditor / Controller's Office
Ventura County Board of Supervisors District 1
Ventura County Board of Supervisors District 3
Ventura county Board of Supervisors District 5
Ventura County County Counsel
Ventura County District Attorney
Ventura County District Attorney's Office Active Shooter Training
Ventura County District Attorney's Consumer Protection Unit: Scam Protection Unit
Ventura County Elections Division
Ventura County Executive Office
Ventura County District Attorney's Office Family Justice Center
Ventura County Harbor Department
Ventura County Medical Examiner's Office
Ventura County Probation Agency
Ventura County Public Defender
Ventura County Sheriff's 911 Dispatch
Ventura County Sheriff's K-9 Unit
Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services
Ventura County Stop the Bleed
Ventura Local Agency Formation Agency



## Annual Inspection of Detention Facilities



The Civil Grand Jury's oversight responsibilities and powers are outlined in California Penal Code Section 919(b). One of these responsibilities is to "inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county."

The 2024-25 Civil Grand Jury conducted inquiries into the following facilities:

### Pre-Trial Detention Facility

The Pre-Trial Detention Facility is located in the City of Ventura and operated by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office (VCSO). It opened in 1980 with an original capacity of 800 to 850 individuals. The current population consists of an average of 594 (590 males and 4 females). The facility has more than 250 employees, including Deputy Sheriffs, Service Technicians, Deputy intake and release specialists, food service staff, medical service staff, and clerical support staff.

As part of the inquiry, the Civil Grand Jury requested documents from each facility. The documents that were requested and received for review before starting the inquiry into the Pre-Trial Detention Facility include the following:

- Annual Fire Inspection Report
- Medical/Mental Health Report
- Annual Environmental Health Report
- Annual Nutritional Health Report
- Annual Correctional Standards Authority of the California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) Report
- Grievance Reports
- Incident Reports

Before, during and after the facility inquiry and during the tour of the facility, the Civil Grand Jury was able to meet with select members of VCSO and other staff working in the jail. These staff members included:

- Assistant Sheriff
- Commander
- Captain
- Sergeant, Facilities / Maintenance

- Deputy Sheriff, Academic / Vocational / Classification Security
- Information Technology
- Behavioral Health
- Food Service
- Senior Management, Inmate Services
- Wellpath leadership, staff, and medical professionals

### **Todd Road Jail**

Todd Road Jail is located in the City of Santa Paula and is operated by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office. The facility opened in 1995 with an original capacity of 796 individuals. Today, the average daily population is 800 individuals. Todd Road Jail employs over 150 staff members, including sheriff's deputies, support staff, and medical personnel. The Health Program Unit (HPU) opened approximately a year ago and has 64 beds, with plans to add 60 more. The Therapeutic Inmate Management Program facilitates interactions with inmates who have mental health issues.

As part of the inquiry, the Civil Grand Jury submitted document requests to each facility. The documents that were requested and received for review prior to the inquiry into Todd Road Jail included:

- Annual Fire Inspection Report
- Medical/Mental Health Report
- Annual Environmental Health Report
- Annual Nutritional Health Report
- Annual Correctional Standards Authority of the BSCC Report
- Grievance Reports
- Incident Reports

Before, during and after touring the facility, the Civil Grand Jury was able to meet with select members of the VCSO and staff who are not sworn officers. These members and staff included:

- Commander
- Captain, Detention Center
- Captain, Health and Programming Unit
- Sergeant, Administration
- Budget Administrator
- Deputy Sheriff Officers
- Inmate Classification Deputies
- Behavioral Health
- Inmate Services
- Kitchen Manager
- Commissary Program Administrator
- Wellpath, Staff, Leadership, RN, CAN

### **Ventura County Juvenile Facility**

The Ventura County Juvenile Facility, established in 2003, is located in an unincorporated area of the county and operated by the Ventura County Probation Agency. Its original capacity was 420 youth (both male and female). The complex is located on a 45-acre parcel that includes outdoor recreation areas, a multipurpose gymnasium/technology training center, medical offices, and classrooms. It currently houses 62 youth, both male and female, ages 12 to 25. The Juvenile Detention Facility has roughly 75 staff.

As part of the inquiry, the Civil Grand Jury requested documents from each facility. The documents requested and received for review before the inquiry into the Juvenile Detention Facility included:

- Annual Fire Inspection Report
- Medical/Mental Health Report
- Annual Environmental Health Report
- Annual Nutritional Health Report
- Annual Correctional Standards Authority of the BSCC Report
- Grievance Reports
- Incident Reports
- Vocational Training curriculum
- Classroom curriculum

Before, during and after the inspection of the Juvenile Detention Facility, the Civil Grand Jury was able to meet with select members of the Ventura County Probation Agency (VCPA) and staff who are not sworn officers:

- Chief Deputy/Institutions VCPA
- Division Manager Juvenile Facility
- Facilities Manager
- Operation Manager
- Programming Manager
- Wellpath Staff, RN, CAN

In addition, during each facility visit, a pair of Civil Grand Jurors interviewed two detainees separately, per Penal Code Section 919(a).

The Civil Grand Jury's examination of requested documents revealed that the California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) report dated August 28, 2024, showed no noncompliance with its guidelines concerning the Ventura County Juvenile Facilities during its targeted inspection. Additionally, the Civil Grand Jury's review of requested documents indicated that the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) stated in its reports dated October 4, 2024, that both Todd Road Jail and the Pre-Trial Detention Facility received NCCHC accreditation.

The Civil Grand Jury found all three inspected facilities to be clean and well-maintained. Staff consistently demonstrated commitment to and pride in their work, while showing concern for safety and order within the facilities. The Civil Grand Jury observed clear operational excellence at each location. They were particularly impressed with the Health and Programming Unit at



Todd Road, which offers support for detainees facing mental health challenges, in addition to educational programming that includes instruction for high school equivalency certification and training for custodial certification, landscaping, and food service jobs. The Civil Grand Jury also had a highly favorable impression of the educational offerings at the Juvenile Facility, which provides high school education through Providence School, operating under the Ventura County Office of Education, and complies with California Department of Education (CDE) requirements while offering coursework leading to Associate in Arts (A.A.) degrees through Oxnard College. The two Civil Grand Jurors who interviewed detainees at the three facilities found them to be open and satisfied with their relationships with the staff at each location.



## **Civil Grand Jury Community Relations**

The Community Relations Committee informs the public about the history, purpose, and operations of the Civil Grand Jury by making presentations, answering questions and distributing information to the community. The Community Relations Committee also disseminates information via press releases about relevant events during the Civil Grand Jury's term including open house, information sessions for prospective grand jurors and investigative report summaries.

### **2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury Presentations**

- Ojai Valley Woman's Club
- The Kiwanis Club of Ventura
- County of Ventura Superior Court, Jury Assembly Room (Weekly)
- Public Open House