

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO 2006-2007 GRAND JURY REPORTS (District: All))

**County of San Diego Response to Grand Jury Report:
“Replace Las Colinas Now!!”
Issued May 30, 2007**

FINDINGS AND RESPONSES: *(Joint Sheriff/County responses)*

Finding: The modular buildings are of the same or substantially similar construction as those utilized as temporary classrooms on public school campuses.

Response: Agree

Finding: Intensive reactive maintenance projects have prevented the total deterioration of the modular buildings.

Response: Agree

Finding: Each and every woman in San Diego County is at risk of detention at Las Colinas if she makes one poor decision in violation of California law.

Response: Agree

Finding: Gender bias is suspected when Las Colinas is contrasted with living conditions at male booking and holding facility counterparts.

Response: **Disagree.** The County recognizes the deteriorating conditions and continues its systematic efforts to put in place the necessary components leading to replacement of the Las Colinas Detention Facility. The Sheriff’s Department has made and continues with a concerted effort to address current health and safety concerns at the existing facility. They have invested more than \$2 million in the past two years to upgrade dormitory floors, roofs, and restrooms, as well as funded projects to upgrade cameras and recording capabilities, replace HVAC air supply grills, replace hot water boilers, abate asbestos contamination, complete preventative maintenance of the high voltage power supply, and seal and strip parking lots. These on-going maintenance efforts at the facility are focused on meeting minimal standards and needs of the inmates and detention staff, while the work to complete environmental clearance, design, and to secure funding moves forward. In addition, see response to Grand Jury Recommendation 07-99.

Finding: Based upon the dearth of expansion construction of Las Colinas since the September 17, 1996 *Settlement Agreement*, certain high level elected county officials have discounted the recommendations of five of the six previous San Diego County Grand Juries; while other high level elected county officials have not aggressively pursued those recommendations on behalf of San Diego County taxpayers.

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Response: Disagree. The County Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff's Department have both strongly supported and pursued recommendations provided by previous Grand Juries as to the Las Colinas Detention Facility.

Finding: During the approximately two and a half years it took for Carter Goble to compile the new Development Plan, nearly 38,000 women were processed and housed in Las Colinas in buildings 21 years beyond their projected life expectancy at construction.

Response: Agree

Finding: On March 07, 2007, the current Grand Jury witnessed the first completed renovation efforts to replace the rotten wood flooring of all modular buildings. Reportedly, the construction cost for the renovation project is \$125,000 per building. Approximately two and one half years have elapsed since the 2003/2004 Grand Jury recommendation to the date of renovation demolition.

Response: Agree

Finding: The current Grand Jury heard testimony from a County official who admitted not inspecting Las Colinas in recent years.

Response: Disagree. The County has no knowledge or information of the Grand Jury's communications with "a County official."

Finding: Notwithstanding the annual recommendation of five out of six previous Grand Jury Reports that Las Colinas be replaced, one County official who had not visited there recently testified that replacement was not a high priority on past County-wide Capital Improvement Needs Assessments (CINA).

Response: Disagree. The County has no knowledge or information of the Grand Jury's communications with "one County official." Additionally and regardless of what the "County official" stated, Las Colinas replacement is number one on the CINA as approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Finding: The Grand Jury heard testimony from a County official who claimed to have inspected Las Colinas within the past two years. This official was unaware of the rotting floors and the grossly insufficient bathroom facilities.

Response: Disagree. The County has no knowledge or information of the Grand Jury's communications with "a County official."

Finding: The San Diego County Sheriff's Department deflected suggestions of gender bias when interviewed. Officials who testified were confident in their defense against allegations such as this.

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Response: Agree.

Finding: If those excess funds [of the Sheriff's Department] had been allocated to a Las Colinas construction trust fund, three quarters of the current proposed construction cost estimate would be covered.

Response: **Disagree.** This finding presupposes that the Sheriff's Department *could* allocate 100% of its fund balance towards construction costs. In fact, this is not the case as there are other, long-standing programs that are also funded from these monies.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES:

The 2006-2007 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and the San Diego County Sheriff's Department:

Recommendation 07-95: Come to an agreement on priorities that will pave the way for the replacement of Las Colinas Women's Detention Facility with all possible speed.

Response: **The recommendation has been implemented.** Las Colinas replacement is the number one facility construction priority for the County.

The 2006-2007 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and the City of Santee officials:

Recommendation 07-96: The San Diego County Board of Supervisors, the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and the City of Santee officials make a prompt, joint, unannounced visit to Las Colinas.

Response: **The recommendation will not be implemented,** because it is unclear what purpose the visit would serve. The County Board of Supervisors and Sheriff already understand the gravity of the situation at Las Colinas, and have made replacement of this facility the County's number one capital funding priority. The County cannot speak for City of Santee officials.

Further, in addition to the Sheriff's on-site facility staff, there are a number of other agencies and organizations that visit the Las Colinas facility and report on its operation. To ensure robust oversight of the facility, the Sheriff has established a Standards and Compliance Team who visit the facility and provide continuous oversight, inspections of and recommendations for Las Colinas. Also, there are numerous existing oversight and inspection bodies whose work requires them to visit the Las Colinas Detention Facility; such as:

- State Corrections Standards Authority
- Fire Marshall
- Environmental Health
- Title 15 Medical

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- Grand Jury
- CLERB
- Sheriff's Senior Management

The Sheriff's Department has always welcomed visits and/or inspections by interested public agencies, groups or officials.

The 2006-2007 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Department of Public Works:

Recommendation 07-97: Encourage the firm producing the Environmental Impact Report to move posthaste to finish it.

Response: **The recommendation has been implemented.** The County has long agreed that Las Colinas needs to be replaced and is aggressively pursuing a deliberate, thoughtful process to ensure that County taxpayers get the best new facility possible. To that end, the County's Department of Public Works is working closely with Dudek Engineering + Environmental, the County's consultant, to complete a comprehensive EIR as quickly as possible.