

Lessons Learned from COVID-19



**San Mateo County Juvenile Justice and
Delinquency Prevention Commission**

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Introduction

On March 16, 2020, San Mateo County issued a stay-at-home order marking the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the past year and a half, people and agencies across the county have had to adapt to fulfil crucial tasks while simultaneously minimizing risk of spreading the virus.

The response to COVID-19 affected every aspect of the San Mateo County's Juvenile Justice System. This project documents pandemic-related policy and procedural changes across the juvenile justice system, and feedback by system partners on which could become permanent, and which would require problem-solving (for example, due to conflicting policies within the juvenile justice space, resources, etc.) to accomplish.

We interviewed Police Departments; all areas of Probation; the Judges; the Private Defender's Office; the District Attorney's Office; and youth in detention, and youth on probation. Key areas to examine are policing tactics, judicial sentencing, and detention procedures.

As members of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission we moved our meetings online using Zoom allowing for increased community engagement and collaboration. The meetings became more dynamic as a commissioner or any other participant could participate in a variety of ways at once: listen, discuss, chat, research, and upload links. Much of this dynamism came from the public's use of chat which allowed for more input than usual, whether sharing resources or sharing a personal experience in the juvenile justice system.

We hope this report provides a snapshot into one of the most challenging times that our county has faced and what reflections and steps we can take to ensure that we best serve youth who are the care and custody of our San Mateo County.

Law Enforcement

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted law enforcement and law enforcement agencies throughout San Mateo County. When San Mateo County officials issued a “Shelter in Place” order on March 16, 2020, Police Department buildings were closed, mandatory personal protective gear was issued, programs were suspended, and all officer-initiated proactive policing measures ceased countywide. As a result of COVID-19 related changes to the booking policies at the Youth Services Center, only juveniles suspected of committing the most serious offenses were booked into Juvenile Hall. Law enforcement officers routinely called up to the Youth Services Center prior to transporting a youth for booking to ensure the criteria for booking had been met.

Law enforcement officers issued citations for most juvenile offenses committed in San Mateo County throughout the pandemic. Police reports were then forwarded to the District Attorney’s Office and/or Probation for further investigation and/or assessment.

Notably, with the significant decrease in juvenile detentions and the sharp increase in the number of juvenile cite and releases, juvenile recidivism rates did not increase anywhere in San Mateo County.

Medical screening and clearances (oftentimes required for booking into the YSC) at San Mateo County General Medical Center took additional time. Limitations on the number of people allowed in the emergency room were also an issue at times. With the closure of schools, School Resource and School Liaison programs were suspended, and officers were reassigned into the community to help meet the ongoing challenges of the pandemic.

Domestic violence related calls for service, incidents, and temporary restraining orders increased dramatically countywide. It is notable that in almost all cases, the perpetrators were adults and not juveniles. Tragically, teen suicide in San Mateo County increased during the pandemic. Mental Health Crisis calls, and mental health service referrals also significantly increased during the pandemic.

The murder of George Floyd on May 31, 2020 impacted communities and law enforcement agencies nationwide. San Mateo County was no exception. Cities across the county began community conversations on policing, equity, and social justice. Many cities conducted virtual “Town Halls” or “Listening Sessions.” A few cities have created Police Advisory Commissions who have been tasked with advancing public policy on these critical moral and legal issues. While many of the COVID-19 policies and procedures were similar, each law enforcement agency in San Mateo County faced its own unique challenges and found creative ways to provide programming and services to meet the increasing needs of youth and families in their communities.

See the Law Enforcement appendix individual interviews with San Mateo County Law Enforcement Agencies.

Juvenile Hall

Jehan Clark, Superintendent, Juvenile Services Division

At the start of the pandemic, there were 55 youth in detention. Since then, between 10 to 15 youth have been in detention at any point in time. Major changes occurred in intake, technological capacity on-unit, family contact, programming, and food. Some of these changes will continue due to the positive effects.

Intake staff stopped accepting all youth brought to the YSC by law-enforcement. Before the pandemic, although staff had discretion, it was practice to accept all youth. This has now shifted to only accepting youth for 707b crimes, an outstanding arrest warrant, or if a youth is a danger to self or community. During normal hours, Assessment and Investigations staff decide whom to book. After hours, an on-call Judge reads the contact report and decides whether to book that youth. The Private Defender's Office reported that, thus far, there does not seem to be an increased risk of re-offense or public safety as a result of citing and releasing youth to the custody of their families rather than playing youth in detention.

At the time of the interview, 14 youth were detained at the YSC. Ms. Clark says having a more selective standard for detention is realistic going forward. We recommend that the Chief of Probation issue a policy to formalize this practice. The YSC has had two active units during this time. One houses boys who are post-quarantine. The other houses boys who are in quarantine, YSC girls, and sleeps Camp Kemp girls who are there to reduce Camp Kemp facility costs.

Prior to the pandemic, WIFI access on-unit was intermittent at best. Consistent WIFI and a computer was brought into each unit for youth use to zoom with parents because in-person visits were canceled. Each youth was allowed three or four zoom sessions per week that lasted 30 minutes instead of two in-person visits which are 30 minutes each. Zoom was well-received and even after visiting restarted, 90% of parents chose to connect with their child by zoom. After Covid, the institution plans to provide to youth weekly: two (or three) zoom calls, two in-person visits, and three 10-minute telephone calls (unaffected by the pandemic) to encourage youth-family connection. This is a significant enhancement to the institution's trauma-informed practice and will enable youth to connect with their parents up to five days each week.

Staff had to invent and deliver more therapeutic programming when outside service providers were prohibited from coming into the facility (although some providers continued via zoom). Staff were trained in and began providing the "Why Try" curriculum and began their own creative initiatives. The group Applied Survey Researchers evaluated the efficacy of YSC program-delivery by zoom and found it not to be an effective delivery method compared to in-person delivery due to the difficulty for youth to pay sustained attention.

The normal 3-day orientation for incoming youth paused. Quarantined youth filled-out school-packets rather than attending Hillcrest remotely with the other youth. This seems like a missed opportunity to experiment with on-unit educational delivery, to integrate the incoming youth academically as soon as possible, and to reduce social isolation.

Now that consistent WIFI is available and being used, the institution is open to future youth use of laptops on a case-by-case basis and will consider use of laptops for the PREP program and on the girl's unit where staff has requested use during past inspections.

The final significant shift has been in food delivery. Because Covid-19 prevented group eating, meals which had been family style and provided by San Mateo County Health became individual trays and provided by the adult McGuire facility. Staff and youth are concerned that the quantity of food youth receive is not sufficient. We recommend this change as soon as possible and that extra trays be ordered for youth who are still hungry. Having fresh fruit on-unit available at all times is especially important.

Youth at Juvenile Hall

Incarcerated Youth

Over the course of our project, we interviewed four youth who were, at the time, incarcerated at the Youth Service Center.

Youth A was a 17-year-old Hispanic female from South San Francisco. She reported being in at the YSC for 10 months and shared that she was being released within a couple of days. While A said she felt safe throughout the pandemic, she did express some concern about the consolidation of cell blocks that required her to reside in the same intake unit with the male youth. While never experiencing any physical harassment, A said that she was verbally harassed and cat-called by some of the male youth.

In what proved to be a common occurrence throughout all the youth we talked to, A complained that the change in food preparation (from being made in-house to being brought in from the San Mateo County Jail) resulted in inedible food and inadequate nutrition. She also reported an ongoing pandemic-related supply issue with "Canteen" food items. A reported that she and other incarcerated youth constantly felt hungry and that available snacks were inadequate. While prior to the pandemic, youth would eat meals together in a common area "family style" where they shared food, they now had individual trays that they were forced to eat in their cell. A shared that the loss of communal mealtime further exacerbated her isolation on the unit.

When asked about any rules or disciplinary changes at YSC, she felt like staff treatment was inconsistent and depended on the individual interacting with her. She felt that while some staff members respected her, others treated her in a way that was needlessly insensitive or disrespectful. A stated she had full access to educational resources and expressed great enthusiasm about the academic progress she made over the past ten months. A also reported having access to mental health services throughout the pandemic and disclosed that she had received the COVID-19 vaccine. A reported having easy access to courts and her lawyer during the pandemic. Like all the other youth we interviewed, A appreciated the availability of visits through Zoom. She stated that it was sometimes difficult for her family to show up physically to the juvenile hall and that the flexibility of Zoom allowed her to stay more closely connected to her family.

Youth B was a 16-year-old Hispanic male from Daly City. He had only been at Hillcrest for a short time but disclosed that he had been incarcerated in numerous other juvenile detention centers. When asked how he ranked Hillcrest in comparison to the other facilities, he responded that YSC was "somewhere in the middle of the pack." Like A, he shared that the food was his biggest complaint and that he was surprised by how poor the food quality was, especially in relation to other youth facilities in nearby counties. He also reported that he has easy access to court and his lawyer.

Unlike Youth A, B reported not taking the COVID-19 vaccine, stating that he simply saw no need for it. B was also able to share the intake process with us. When initially booked into Hillcrest, he was given a COVID-19 test and forced to isolate in his cell for five days until the test came back negative (he told us that it was supposed to only be for three days, but medical processing was delayed). He was then monitored for two weeks to check for symptoms. Later, while talking with the staff, we learned of a case where a youth tested negative for COVID-19 when initially booked into the YSC; a week later, this youth developed symptoms and tested positive for the virus—requiring the unit to go into quarantine.

Youth C was a 17-year-old Hispanic male from East Palo Alto. He reported that he had been at the YSC for some time, prior to the pandemic. Like A and B, food was one of his biggest complaints. He said that he constantly felt hungry and felt the nutrition he received from the food was not sufficient, particularly for a teenage boy.

Youth C also shared some complaints about the shoes issued at YSC. He explained that the shoes were not meant for exercise; they wore down very quickly and caused painful blisters on his feet. C also stated that he wished there was more programming available for youth in the Hall, as he felt it became repetitive after a while.

Finally, C shared with us that his skin was allergic to the soap used at the YSC and that while he was previously allowed access to Dove soap, it was recently taken away without any explanation. On the more positive aspects, C shared that he was able to gain enough credits through the court school to graduate from high school. He also said that he felt well respected by the staff and that he had an adult he could confide in. C especially appreciated the Zoom visits as it allowed him to see his younger siblings, who previously would not have been allowed into the facility to visit him.

Youth D was a 16-year-old African American male from San Francisco. Like the rest of the youth, his biggest complaint was the food. He shared with us that meals had become extremely inconsistent. One time, he received Chicken nuggets that were raw on the inside, he also reported receiving spaghetti that was frozen solid and completely inedible. We had the opportunity to observe dinner service during our visit, which consisted of two containers, one for hot food and one for cold food. The hot container contained two corn dogs, corn, and three small potato wedges. The cold tray consisted of watery coleslaw.

D shared that while he did not get along with all staffers, he had many whom he could confide in and felt appreciated and respected by the staff.

D took great pride in his academic pursuits, sharing with us a long list of psychology books and textbooks he had read. However, he complained that the library present at the YSC lacked enough books and that certain ones he wanted to read were on a "banned book list" (a list we were unable to locate but, staff confirmed, exists.) Like C, D also shared a wish for more programming. He also shared that he felt he and his fellow youth could benefit from seeing more positive role models, especially people who shared their life experiences and proved to them that it was possible to turn things around.

Recommendations

Food Services

Among the most pressing issues we see is the food. It is clear that the youth are disgruntled about the quality and quantity of the food and prefer the system that was in place prior to the pandemic. As soon as it is deemed to be safe, we also urge the resumption of communal meals as they provide a valuable opportunity to relax and socialize.

Expanded Programming

Opportunities for more programming should also be provided, including access to mentors and role models who share similar life experiences to youth.

COVID-19

A robust COVID-19 educational campaign is needed to provide youth the information required to make a well-informed vaccination choice, as the current vaccination rate is alarmingly low.

The educational campaign should include the risks associated with contracting the COVID-19 virus, local, state, national health statistics and data, long-term complications, and mortality rates. The Covid-19 vaccine choices and availability, risks and benefits associated with each vaccine, the risks of remaining unvaccinated, especially in light of the COVID-19 variants currently spreading throughout Northern California, should be included.

Additionally, the campaign must quell misinformation and rumors about the COVID-19 virus and vaccines; and seek to address the underlying mistrust incarcerated youth have in governmental agencies, law enforcement, and the criminal justice system. Increasing the COVID-19 vaccination rate at the Youth Services Center is critical in protecting our incarcerated youth from the severe health risks, complications, and increased mortality caused by the COVID-19 virus.

Zoom Visiting

Allowing youth to continue to visit with their family members via Zoom is strongly recommended. Zoom visits increase equity by removing the need for childcare and transportation, and most importantly, allow minor siblings to visit with one another, stay connected, and help keep the family unit intact during incarceration.

YSC Bookings

Create future-looking policy that, in general, bookings will be limited to 707(b) crimes, an outstanding arrest warrant, or if a youth is a danger to self or to the community unless there are contraindications in the future.

Juvenile Probation

Melanie Stauffer Assistant Deputy Chief Probation Officer

Probation merged the Juvenile Assessment Center and Juvenile Investigations Unit in November 2020. Now, the same probation officer supervises a case from intake through informal supervision and, if a case is filed, pre-adjudication. Motivations for this change are providing one point-of-contact for youth and families, the limited number of youth entering the juvenile justice system during the pandemic, and lower staffing numbers (due to the 23 retirements).

In January 2020, 174 youth were either in Assessment (146) or Investigations (28). One year later, 109 youth were in the combined Assessment/Investigations Unit, a 37% reduction. According to the District Attorney's office, the Probation Department made 30% to 40% fewer petition requests. The sharp reduction is attributed to a pandemic-related decrease in youth crime because of Stay-at-Home orders, school closures, law enforcement protocols, and an effort by the Probation Department to utilize informal probation and avoid system processing.

The Probation Department is more likely to recommend electronic monitoring to the Court as a disposition to keep youth out of detention. Electronic monitoring is currently being used for most probation violations, whereas previously, these violations resulted in detention. Interestingly, according to the Probation Department's annual report, the overall number of youth on electronic monitoring decreased by 27% due to the pandemic.

The Probation Department manages dual-status youth, youth who are both delinquent and dependent. The numbers of dual-status youth are down. There was nine dual-status youth at the time of this interview. This lower rate is attributable to the closure of schools where a significant number of CPS referrals originate, a decrease in juvenile crime and arrests.

There are fewer probation violations due to the Stay-at-Home orders expanded thinking on how best to work with youth and families, and an increased number of programs and services being offered to youth and families through community-based organizations. Youth who commit a probation violation demonstrating a serious safety risk to themselves or the community are remanded into custody for therapeutic detention.

The District Attorney's office has not noticed an increase in crime due to pandemic-related cite and release policies. Recidivism statistics kept by the Probation Department's Assessment Center and Investigations Unit are down. However, second offenses handled by the Court are not included in the recidivism numbers.

Finally, Probation staff worked from home throughout the pandemic, which was made possible by the e-filing of law-enforcement contact reports and an online case management system. While Probation staff will return to the office post-Covid, the system improvements and increased locational flexibility will be used as applicable going forward.

Recommendations

- Continue to recommend electronic monitoring as an alternative to detention when violations do not present safety risk to self or others.
- Work with youth and families in ways that will continue to reduce probation violations

Judicial

Judges Etezadi and Jacobowski

Ron Rayes, Managing Attorney Private Defender Program Juvenile Branch

Rebecca Baum, District Attorney's Office

The number of Juvenile cases going before the Court dropped by 45% during the pandemic. The cases currently being brought before the Court are more serious in nature.

The Juvenile Judges, the District Attorney's Office, and Private Defender's office all agree that using the Zoom video platform has been beneficial and works well for regular check-ins and some probation violations. There is no legal obstacle to continuing to use Zoom format for these procedures post-pandemic. The continued use of Zoom will continue to be discretionary, depending on the preference and approval of all involved parties. Language interpreters are available to translate by phone during Zoom hearings.

The use of Zoom has been beneficial to working families and families with childcare needs. A family's choice to appear in court, in person has been and will always be honored.

Juvenile trials were all held in person, including all witness appearances.

When the shutdown first occurred, the Juvenile Court conducted telephone hearings until they transitioned to Zoom. The San Mateo County Superior Court was actually at the forefront of implementing the use of this technology. During this time, The Probation Department continued to refer new cases. The District Attorney's office paused all filing petitions for six weeks.

Benefits of using zoom for some hearings include:

Court Procedures and Legal Representation

- Efficiency in court for some types of hearings, such as arraignments, pre-trial hearings, and continuances, which proceed quickly on Zoom.
- More frequent communication between attorney and family has eliminated many of the harried meetings before court.
- Attorney's do not need a private investigator to go to the family home on urgent matters.
- Fewer continuances are needed. This allows for a significant cost saving to the Private Defender's Office who pays for contracted experts (such as paralegals, legal assistants, investigators, video-enhancement consultants, psychological evaluations, etc.).
- More frequent communication between opposing attorneys allows issues to be worked out outside of the courtroom with greater efficiency.
- Ease of collaboration for staff (however, what was lost were opportunities for casual but productive conversations).

Family Participation

- Consistent family appearance. No family ever missed a Zoom hearing, whereas sometimes families can't make an in-person court hearing, and the lawyer appears without the family.
- Youth may physically remain at their private treatment program rather than being transferred to court.
- Convenience for families when they attend this way. Zoom hearings have less impact on employment; this is a significant issue for our families who may not have the flexibility to attend. Zoom hearings mean that siblings are not brought to court which is a risk factor for criminogenic behavior. Zoom hearings also are better organized in terms of start-time. Each family has a unique code to check-in to the Court's waiting room 30 minutes prior to the start of the morning or afternoon calendar.
- Wait time: This is a significant advantage over how the in-person court system works and the need for the family to wait up to 3 hours for a hearing.

The Judges have not observed an increase in family participation, although the DA's office believes both parents have been more likely to attend.

For family participation via Zoom to continue, the court must ensure families have access to a computer and internet and clarify which entity is responsible for funding this access. Schools loaned students laptops because of the pandemic. However, this will not continue going forward.

All agree that hearings are "more impressionable on the minor" when done in person. Situations in which the hearing should be in-person include: the first time a youth appears before the Judge, detention hearings, hearings for warrant arrests, and all contested hearings.

JJDPC Commissioners continued to attend court in person and on Zoom throughout the pandemic. The courtroom has a very large screen placed that is visible to everyone in the courtroom. Each Zoom participant in the hearing is in the gallery view, which becomes full-screen when speaking.

While the DA's office filed the same types of petitions as it did pre-Covid 19, its caseload has tilted towards the more serious crimes. It has considered Covid-19 risk when requesting disposition terms and is more likely to accept an alternative to detention, such as electronic monitoring.

The Private Defender's Office and the DA's Office have not noticed an increase in crime to coincide with less use of detention.

Lastly, timelines to pay restitution have been extended to account for the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We did not explore whether this is a positive change overall.

¹ The DA's Office welcomes a more predictable approach for families in how hearings are handled to have less negative impact on school and work. Ideas: 1. a DMV approach where the order of a hearing is given, but can be updated as needed, 2. overlapping windows, or 3. a text or restaurant buzzer when the case is ready to be heard. This would at least allow parents to use a phone for work or to feed a sibling while waiting.

Education

Sibone Parcels – Principal, Court and Community Schools
Shelly Johnson – Assistant Principal, Court and Community Schools

Our interview with Shelly Johnson focused primarily on the technological and curricular aspects of school that were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the severity of the pandemic became apparent, the San Mateo County Office of Education ensured that every student in both the Court and Community schools had access to laptops and WIFI hotspots. At Hillcrest, individual workstations with a Chromebook, dividers, and webcams were set up for every student. Teachers also received training on Zoom, Google Classroom, and specific curricular programs like Padlet, Nearpod, and Carnegie Learning math. The school also began a pilot program of Study Sync, a UC A-G approved English learning software for individualized teaching. StudySync is an individualized learning program that allows for more flexibility on the part of teachers in presenting curriculum and lessons to students. It helps make the transition back to home schools easier and ensures that students have a curriculum that fits their individual needs and levels. Johnson also identified that students designated as Special Education struggled greatly during the pandemic. For future goals, if the pilot program goes successfully, they hope to expand it to subjects other than English. The school also anticipates that they will have the funding to continue their technology program post-pandemic.

Sibone Parcels is the principal of the Hillcrest school which is run by the San Mateo County Office of Education. The school is responsible for educating youth incarcerated at the Youth Services Center, San Mateo County's Juvenile Hall.

At the start of the stay-at-home order, teachers were forced to leave the campus as they were not allowed to be in contact with youth at the hall. Transitioning to virtual/distance learning was a rough process. Teachers created educational “packets” that they dropped off for their students to complete. The process was complicated as they had to work through the Probation Department as the middleman since teachers were not allowed any direct contact with students.

As the situation developed and it was realized that the pandemic was not ending anytime soon, teachers began training on how to effectively utilize online-learning platforms like Zoom and Google Classroom. Chromebooks and hotspots were provided to all students, but youth were not allowed to use them on their housing units or in their cells due to probation restrictions. The use of this technology was limited to the classroom.

As pandemic restrictions loosened and teachers could return physically to the classroom, there continued to be issues with technology and connecting virtually. To minimize the spread of COVID-19 within the juvenile hall, students no longer changed classes but rather stayed in one class with rotating teachers. Due to a decrease in the number of students at Hillcrest, there was also a reduction in staff.

From the pandemic, some positives that have emerged include the ability to build up technology, something that was lacking previously. This opportunity for “hybrid” education is something that could be continued in the future to provide more opportunities for youth. According to Principal Parcels, the pandemic also brought light to mental health issues facing both students and teachers, and the increased attention placed in that regard will continue post-pandemic. Parcels also indicated that it was too premature to talk about funding needs post-pandemic but that she is optimistic that there will be sufficient funds to continue programs like the 1-1 technology devices.

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission

Except for the mandated in-person inspections, the Commission has performed our work remotely since March 2020. Overall, online collaboration has been, in many cases, more efficient and productive. Commissioners can connect with more people across the space of juvenile justice more frequently. JJDPC monthly meeting attendance has increased three-fold. This has expanded our ability to influence and be influenced by the efforts of others working on behalf of youth in our county.

See Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission Appendix for additional information.

Recommendations

- Continue the use of Zoom and preserve a remote option for JJDPC meeting attendance.
- Preserve a chat feature that complies with the Brown Act. Meetings have become more dynamic as a commissioner, or any other participant could participate in a variety of ways. Much of this dynamism came from the public's use of chat which allowed for more input than usual, whether sharing resources or sharing a personal experience in the juvenile justice system.

Law Enforcement Appendix

San Mateo Police Department

Captain Dave Peruzzaro Field Operations

COVID-19 related policy and procedural changes

- Initially, all in-person juvenile programs were suspended. Programs and services were then quickly transitioned over to a virtual format using Zoom and resumed. San Mateo Police Department's timely implementation of virtual programs and services was the most comprehensive in San Mateo County.
- During the Shelter-at-Home period of the pandemic, all new Juvenile Diversion and prevention services referrals and intakes were made virtually rather than in person.
- Mental Health services were conducted virtually.
- School Resource Officers provided support to students via phone, virtually via Zoom and made home visits as needed.
- The Police Activities League began to provide essential services to the community. Several drive-thru events were held to distribute food, summer activity boxes, backpacks, and school supplies, and "Mental Wellness Boxes".
- The San Mateo Police Department increased its social media presence to help inform and notify the public of COVID-19 related changes to programs and services.
- Mutual aid agreements were put into place with nearby agencies in the event of a widespread COVID-19 breakout within a police department.

Juvenile Delinquency, Crime and Calls for Service

- Overall, crime among juveniles went down during the pandemic.
- The San Mateo Police Department did book youth into the YSC during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The types of juvenile crimes committed during the pandemic were more serious/felonious in nature.
- There was a sharp decrease in minor juvenile offenses such as petty theft, graffiti, minor assaults, threats, and tobacco/vape/marijuana.
- The COVID-19 related restrictions on YSC bookings and the cite and release policy did not increase recidivism for first-time offenders and lower-level minor juvenile crimes.

- Juvenile gang activity was notable during Shelter-at-Home period of the pandemic as these were the juveniles out in the community.
- Fewer Diversion referrals allowed the Youth Services Unit to implement a Prevention Services program for youth displaying at-risk behavior that is not criminal in nature.
- School closures contributed to a decrease in substance use/abuse reports as most of these reports originate from the schools.
- There was an increase in juvenile mental health crisis calls for service and commitments.
- There was a noticeable decrease in CPS referrals.
- The San Mateo Police Department developed creative online programming geared towards younger children to help support parents working from home.

Implementation Challenges

- Overall, it was difficult to fully engage and connect with the youth and families virtually, particularly for classes and during the intake process.
- Providing services to youth and families was also challenging.

COVID-19 changes that are expected to continue post-pandemic.

- Virtual parenting classes will likely continue as they are more convenient for parents to attend.
- PAL may continue to host drive-thru events to serve more families.
- The Youth Services Unit's new prevention program will continue.

Long-term feasibility of permanently implementing these changes.

- Staffing levels will determine the long-term viability of programs.
- Increased diversion referrals are expected to increase as youth return to school, and the pandemic restrictions are lifted.

Fiscal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Future SRO contracts will be determined by the San Mateo Union High School District. Monies previously earmarked for the SRO program were reallocated during the pandemic to provide mental health support to students. Additional funding sources for the SRO program may be exhausted.
- The SRO contract between the San Mateo Police Department and the San Mateo-Foster City Elementary School District was recently canceled.

Daly City Police Department

Sargent Keith Mattos Field Operations-Division

COVID-19 related policy and procedural changes

- With the closure of schools, the Department's School Resource Officer began assisting with online learning truancy to check in on the students, help identify any needs for services, i.e., WIFI Hotspots, etc., and improve online attendance.
- School Resource Officers were reassigned to assist with truancy. SRO's routinely went out to homes to check on students' status, safety and welfare that teachers and school officials were having difficulty reaching. Officers helped identify barriers preventing students from attending school online, i.e., lack of internet service and/or technology equipment.

Juvenile Delinquency, Crime and Calls for Service

- The Daly City Police Department did book youth into the YSC for serious offenses during the pandemic.
- Juvenile Crime in Daly City is way down, particularly auto thefts and drug-related crimes.
- The majority of Juvenile crime in Daly City is being committed by San Francisco and Alameda County residents.
- Crime in Daly City is predominantly well-organized "Retail Crime Rings" operating at Westlake, Serramonte Mall, Walgreens, and CVS. Retail crime rings are connected to fencing operations at the UN Plaza in San Francisco and the Oakland Swap Meet. Adults recruit youth from underserved communities to commit crimes in San Mateo County to avoid harsher penalties and sentencing.
- The San Mateo County District Attorney's office prosecutes adult criminal cases at a much higher rate than surrounding Bay Area counties.
- There was a marked decrease in the number of CPS calls received, and CPS reports taken throughout the pandemic.
- Daly City Police Department does not have a Juvenile Diversion program.

COVID-19 changes that are expected to continue post-pandemic

- Daly City's School Resource Officer program may be discontinued at two of the four high schools. Daly City High School are Jefferson, Westmoor, Thornton, and Wilderness.

Daly City CPS Referral Protocols

The Daly City Police Department has an extensive multi-layered approach for handling CPS cases that is a model for the region.

Daly City Police Department's CPS Protocols require each referral to be assigned by a Captain, who is then responsible for overseeing the investigation, documentation, and review in a comprehensive and timely manner.

Youth Services Center Booking Requirement: Medical Screening and Clearance

When a juvenile is arrested for a crime requiring booking into the YSC, a medical questionnaire is completed by the arresting or transporting officer that screens for suicide, severe medical conditions, and alcohol or drug use, including marijuana, in the last 24 hours. If any of these conditions are present, medical screening and clearance from a hospital prior to booking the youth into the YSC are required.

While Seton Medical Center is in Daly City, qualified to perform these services, and can often do so in much less time, the Daly City Police Department is prohibited from using Seton due to cost. Seton direct bills the Daly City Police Department for these services, and there is no funding mechanism or source currently in place to reimburse the Police Department for these costs. Therefore, all juveniles arrested in Daly City who require medical screening and clearance for booking into the YSC must be taken to the San Mateo County Medical Center. The wait time at the San Mateo County Medical center can be up to 4-5 hours. It is not uncommon for youth to wait handcuffed in a patrol car for at least a portion of this time.

Once the youth has been medically screened and cleared, they are transported down to the YSC for booking. A juvenile arrest in Daly City requiring booking, medical screening and clearance can tie up an officer for an entire shift, result in officer holdovers and overtime costs.

Recommendations

1. **Cost Comparison:** A cost comparison to determine if staffing costs associated with using the San Mateo County Medical Center for YSC medical screening and clearance meet or exceed the fees charged by Seton Medical Center for these same services. Particularly considering the prolonged amount of time juveniles are detained in handcuffs, in a patrol vehicle while waiting to be seen by medical staff at San Mateo County Medical Center and impact on staffing levels at the Police Department.
2. **Notify and Request Assistance from Elected Officials:** Elected officials representing Daly City on the City, County, and State level need to be aware of this critical issue to address it. Entering into a contract with Seton Medical Center for YSC medical screening and clearance services for juveniles arrested in Daly City and allocating and/or identifying potential funding sources for reimbursement of these mandatory services should be thoroughly explored.

Redwood City Police Department

Captain Ashley Osborne Field Operations Division

COVID-19 related policy and procedural changes

- The School Resource Officer and some specialty positions were reassigned to patrol. i.e., motorcycle traffic officers.
- The annual Redwood City Police/Fire Toy & Book Drive was converted to a “Drive-Through” operation this year. This program serves over 500 low-income families in Redwood City and Unincorporated San Mateo County.
- Juvenile Diversion programs and have continued virtually. In-person services are expected to resume in the Summer/Fall.
- The Parent Project classes were deferred.
- The Adopt-a-School program was suspended.
- The Cadet program was initially suspended and later resumed.
- The Gang Tattoo Removal program was suspended due to COVID-19 health orders of the County and State.
- In-person programs and services were transitioned into virtual programs via Zoom, where possible.
- The Redwood City PAL Programs were suspended.
- Police Department command staff attended local and regional meetings virtually via Zoom.

Juvenile Delinquency, Crime and Calls for Service

- There was no noticeable increase in juvenile crime.
- The Redwood City Police Department may have booked a Juvenile into the YSC during the pandemic.
- There was no noticeable increase in gang activity during the pandemic. Gang activity has decreased significantly over the past 25 years. This is due in part to gentrification, displacement, and the prosecution of elder gang members.
- There was no increase in juvenile related domestic violence incidents.

COVID-19 related changes that are expected to continue post-pandemic

When booking youth into the YSC, officers will continue to:

- Consult and discuss circumstances of crime, arrest, etc., with the supervising Sergeant prior to transport for booking.
- Officers will continue to use discretion to cite and release where applicable for non 707(b) offenses.
- The use of Zoom will continue for various programs, services, and meetings, where appropriate.
- Negotiations are currently underway to renew the contract between the City of Redwood City, Redwood City Police Department, and the Sequoia Union High School re: School Resource Officer program at Sequoia High School. The School Resource Officer program is funded 50% by the City of Redwood City and 50% by the Sequoia Union High School District.

The Redwood City Police Department offers extensive juvenile diversion, gang prevention, and parenting support services.

Juvenile Specialist Manuel Velarde has been instrumental in creating, coordinating, and expanding the Juvenile Diversion, Gang Prevention, Delinquency Prevention, and Tattoo Removal programs. More recently, Manuel implemented the Parent Project, a 12-week program that teaches parents Proven concepts and methods designed to empower parents to reign in the abusive and destructive behavior of “out of control” teens. Thus, improving the family dynamic and successfully preventing at-risk youth from entering the juvenile justice system.

On June 5, 2021, Manuel Velarde retired from the Redwood City Police after 20 years of dedicated service. The Redwood City Police Department is actively looking to fill the Juvenile Specialist position.

South San Francisco Police Department

Lieutenant Ken Chetcuti Community Relations

COVID-19 Policy and Procedural Changes

- The Neighborhood Enforcement Action Team, the Juvenile Community Service Diversion Program, was halted during the pandemic.
- The Project Yes (Youth Enrichment Services) Program was suspended due to the school closures. Project YES 5th grade program teaches rights and responsibilities and decision making. The 7th-grade program focuses on depression, suicide prevention, cyberbullying, and online safety.

Juvenile Delinquency, Crime and Calls for Service

- Juvenile crime rates for serious related offenses continued to decline.
- The vast majority of juvenile crime committed during the pandemic were lower-level crimes such as probation violations, graffiti, minor theft, truancy, running away from home. Lower-level crimes are typically committed by local youth who reside in South San Francisco, San Bruno, or Daly City.
- The COVID-19 related restrictions on YSC bookings and cite and release policies did not increase recidivism for first-time offenders and lower-level minor juvenile crimes.
- The South San Francisco Police Department did book youth into the YSC during the pandemic.
- School closures did not impact juvenile arrest rates. From 2015-2020, only five juvenile arrests were made on a school campus in South San Francisco.

COVID-19 related changes that are expected to continue post-pandemic

School Liaison Program

The South San Francisco Unified School District is unique. The district oversees all public schools in South San Francisco and all public school students in grades K-12, including 11 elementary, 3 middle, 2 high schools.

- The Memorandum of Understanding between the City of South San Francisco, the South San Francisco Police Department, and the South San Francisco Unified School District is currently being revised.

- The Student Liaison Officer Program is funded entirely by the City of South San Francisco and is offered to the South San Francisco Unified School District free of charge. School Liaison Officers currently provide 17 different community-based programs for children and youth. Budgetary issues and funding limitations may impact the long-term viability of the program.

The South San Francisco Police Department is doing extraordinary work for children, youth, and families in South San Francisco.

The department successfully utilizes a community-centered, relationship-building approach to programs for children and youth. Their commitment to the well-being and success of youth is clearly demonstrated by the amount of time invested in the extensive programming offered to school-aged children.

South San Francisco Police Department's restorative justice approach to juvenile delinquency and crime prevention is a model for the region.

Their community service-based "Neighborhood Enforcement Team" Juvenile Diversion program prevents youth from entering the Juvenile Justice System, offers them the opportunity to make amends by repairing, mending, and improving their community through service. This approach instills a sense of appreciation, personal investment, and a connection to their community and its members.

Lastly, 34% of South San Francisco's Police Department personnel have either grown up, attended school, or currently live in South San Francisco.

Hillsborough Police Department

Captain Nelson Corteway Patrol and Operations Division

COVID-19 Policy and Procedural Changes

- Traffic enforcement stops were halted during the Shelter-at-Home period of the pandemic.
- Incident and crime reports were taken by telephone and online.
- Town Hall Meetings were held via Zoom to help inform and notify the public of all COVID-19 related changes.
- School Resource Officer visits were suspended at all 6 of Hillsborough's public and private schools.

Juvenile Delinquency, Crime and Calls for Service

- Overall, there was a 33% decrease in calls for service.
- There was an increase in juvenile alcohol and drug use/abuse. Juvenile drug use is an issue in Hillsborough due to increased accessibility and financial means.
- While alcohol and drug use increased, there was no increase in juvenile DUI offenses. The sharp decrease in juvenile DUI's over the past 15 years is believed to be the result of local high school "Sober Graduation" programs and the invention of ride-share companies such as Uber and Lift.
- There was an increase in juvenile mental health crisis calls and mental health commitments.
- There was a reduction in juvenile offenses. This is believed to be in part due to the "Shelter-at-Home" order and suspension of traffic enforcement stops.
- There was a sharp reduction in residential "Burglary Rings" coming in from Stanislaus County. Property theft-related crimes were also down. This is believed to be the result of residents being home for extended periods.
- Juvenile crime is being committed predominantly by juveniles living outside of San Mateo County. As also seen in Daly City, adult residents of nearby counties are recruiting youth from underserved communities to commit crimes in San Mateo County to intentionally avoid the harsher penalties and sentencing imposed on adults in San Mateo County.

COVID-19 changes that are expected to continue post pandemic

- The use of Zoom is likely to continue for community meetings, incident reporting, and programs and services, where applicable.

Prior to coming to the Hillsborough Police Department 25 years ago, Captain Corteway worked at the California Youth Authority Intake Facility in Stockton. Captain Corteway is very well versed in the California Juvenile Justice System, and the issues facing system impacted youth.

Captain Corteway is particularly sensitive to the complex needs of underserved youth in San Mateo County. This includes recognizing the need for trauma-informed care and services, substance abuse treatment, vocational programs, building trade apprenticeships, and certification programs that offer the opportunity to earn sustainable wages and benefits necessary to live and thrive in San Mateo County.

Due to the socio-economic means of Hillsborough residents, juvenile referrals to programs and services are uncommon and therefore were not impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Hillsborough Police Department is interested in collaborating with the San Mateo County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission going forward.

Atherton Police Department

Commander Daniel Larsen Administration Unit

COVID-19 Policy and Procedural Changes

- The School Resource Officer(s) were reassigned during school closures.
- All school-related details, i.e., sporting events, traffic safety, were canceled during school closures.
- Traffic enforcement measures were halted citywide during the Shelter-at-Home period of the pandemic.
- The PAL program was suspended through the Fall of 2020.
- Atherton increased social media presence to stay connected and provide essential information to the community.

Juvenile Delinquency, Crime and Calls for Service

- Juvenile crime decreased overall during the pandemic.
- With the closures of schools, juvenile assault and weapons charges dropped considerably.
- School closures contributed to a decrease in juvenile substance use and abuse reports, as most of these reports originate from the schools.
- The reduction in traffic enforcement stops during the Shelter-at-Home period of the pandemic also contributed to a reduction in juvenile offenses and charges.
- Juvenile gang-related crimes decreased significantly during the pandemic.
- There was a marked decrease in the number of CPS referrals received, and CPS reports taken throughout the pandemic.
- Residential burglaries, auto thefts, and property crimes are typically committed by sophisticated crime rings that originate from outside of San Mateo County.
- In April 2021, all Atherton schools had reopened.

COVID-19 changes that are expected to continue post-pandemic.

- The use of Zoom technology for community meetings and services will continue.
- Commander Daniel Larsen is very interested in collaborating with the JJPDC going forward and is particularly interested in the Peer Court program.

Long Term Fiscal Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Atherton Police Department was in the process of applying for grants to help fund their School Resource Officer program when the pandemic began. The economic impacts of COVID-19 on the long-term availability of funding and resources are currently unknown.

School Resource Officer Program

There are nine schools located within the Atherton Police Department's jurisdiction.

The SRO program is a partnership between the Sequoia Union High School District, the Menlo Park School District, Menlo School, Sacred Heart Prep, and the Atherton Police Department. The goal of the SRO program is to prevent juvenile delinquency by building positive relationships with law enforcement. Most juvenile contacts occur in or around school campuses, school activities and related events, traffic enforcement stops of youth traveling in and/or through the town of Atherton.

San Mateo County Sheriff's Office

Captain Paul R. Kunkel Chief of Police Services Millbrae Police Bureau

COVID-19 Policy and Procedural Changes

- The Sheriff's Department's School Resource Officer Supervisor and twelve SRO officers were reassigned. The Sheriff's Department does not have a fee-based contract for SRO services.
- The Sheriff's Activity League "SAL" program was halted.
- The annual Holiday Toy and Book Drive was redesigned to safely provide toys and books to an increased number of children and families in need over the 2020 Holiday Season.
- Mutual Aid Agreements were made with neighboring agencies in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak within a police department.
- The Sheriff's Department assisted the East Palo Alto Police Department when five officers came down with COVID-19.
- Parking tickets were not issued.
- The Gang Task Force operated at reduced levels during the Shelter-at-Home period of the pandemic.

Juvenile Delinquency, Crime and Calls for Service

- School closures resulted in a reduction in juvenile transit-related crimes.
- Halting traffic stops during the Shelter in place resulted in fewer juvenile gun and drug offenses.
- There was a decrease in CPS referrals and reports during the pandemic.
- Juvenile Mental Health Crisis calls and commitments were up.

Fiscal and long-term impacts of COVID-19

- The Sheriff's SRO Program might be discontinued. The current reduction in staffing levels does not support the 12+ positions required to operate the SRO program throughout the San Mateo County Sheriff's jurisdiction.

Recommendations

1. Create a Law Enforcement Liaison position on the JJDPC.
2. Recruit a JJDPC Law Enforcement Representative from North, Central, and South San Mateo County.

This will allow the JJDPC to

- Understand what is happening in each region of San Mateo County
 - Follow juvenile crime trends and track recidivism rates via RIMMS
 - Pinpoint the need for programs and services; Collaborate on restorative justice approaches to juvenile crime in San Mateo County.
3. Follow the ongoing status of School Resource Officer/School Liaison programs countywide.
 4. Create an ongoing dialogue with all law enforcement agencies in the County. This will allow us to focus our efforts, outreach, and resources where they are needed most and closely monitor the location and types of juvenile offenses committed in San Mateo County.

JJDPC Appendix

Changes	Outcomes	Fiscal Impact	Feasibility
Remote monthly meetings	<p>Increased public participation and interest</p> <p>Easy sharing of documents, comments, and making connections via chat</p> <p>Easier recruiting of new Commissioners</p>	None	Legal issues are being worked through
Reviewing inspection documents online	Allows for greater attention to details	None	Feasible with the accommodation of Probation
Project meetings via Zoom	Logistical ease affords more routine and frequent project meetings promote productivity and collaboration	None	Feasible
Remote attendance at other community meetings	Broader reach, more knowledge, and more collaborative connections without effort to attend in-person	None	Depends on future legality and each organization's choice
Remote meetings with stakeholders	Ease to schedule and to share PowerPoints and written information		Feasible