

August 30, 2002

Honorable Rodney S. Melville
Presiding Judge, Santa Barbara Superior Court
312-C East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93456-5369

**RE: SANTA BARBARA COUNTY GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT ON HOUSING THE
CITIZENS OF SANTA BARBARA COUNTY**

The purpose of this letter is to transmit the City of Santa Maria's formal response to subject report dated June 27, 2002. According to Penal Code section 933, the City has 90 days to reply to the Grand Jury Report. This letter is intended to satisfy that reporting requirement.

The Grand Jury Report made five findings and three recommendations, of which two findings and one recommendation require a response from the City of Santa Maria. The following is the City's formal response to the report's findings and recommendations:

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING
HOUSING THE CITIZENS OF SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Finding 1: The cities and County will have great difficulty in achieving the State mandated housing goals.

CITY RESPONSE: The City of Santa Maria disagrees partially with the finding as the City currently works under a California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Certified Housing Element and has met or exceeded housing development targets. The City has provided the necessary planning and infrastructure for future development through implementation of its General Plan and Specific Plans. Barring an unforeseen, significant negative impact to its revenue stream or a dramatic downturn in the real estate market, the City should have no difficulty achieving State-mandated goals.

Finding 2: The cities and the County have already lost valuable time in setting goals and policies to achieve housing growth rates to provide adequate housing for our citizens.

CITY RESPONSE: The City of Santa Maria disagrees partially with the finding. Using the currently certified City Housing Element as a model, the City is on a pace to complete its Housing Element on or before the December 31, 2003 deadline. As in the past, the City expects HCD certification of the new Housing Element.

Recommendation 1: In meeting the housing goals established by the State and soon to be allocated by SBCAG, the cities and County need to establish policies and metrics to facilitate the necessary actions and to track performance.

CITY RESPONSE: The recommendation has been implemented. The City of Santa Maria already has established policies, found in the Housing Element and Land Use Element of the General Plan necessary to effectuate the production of its fair share of housing. In addition, a highly detailed report is produced every six months, which closely tracks all stages of development. These policies and reports can be easily modeled by other cities and the County.

The City of Santa Maria welcomes this opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury Report.

JOE CENTENO
Mayor

c: Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Foreperson
Santa Maria City Clerk