



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

2023–2024 CIVIL GRAND JURY

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: sfcgj2024@gmail.com

Michael Carboy, Foreperson, +1 415 551-3635

Civil Grand Jury Calls for Greater Transparency in San Francisco Public Infrastructure Projects

2023–2024 San Francisco Civil Grand Jury Report Recommends Oversight by New Public Works Commission

SAN FRANCISCO (PR NEWSWIRE) JUNE 25, 2024 — San Francisco’s Department of Public Works is not publicly transparent in how it builds and maintains city assets worth nearly \$19 billion and does not know the true costs of restoring degraded assets to working condition, a new Civil Grand Jury report has found. A new body, the Public Works Commission, has been tasked with oversight, but its powers are not yet defined.

“The Jury identified several instances of recently constructed buildings that appear to have defects. We also discovered a lack of clear accounting for assets that have not been properly maintained,” said William McCaa, investigation committee head. “In tight budgetary times, transparency and accountability are more important than ever.”

The Jury investigation, “Building San Francisco,” identified recently constructed buildings that appear to have design and/or construction defects, or that were built in locations ill-suited for the building’s purpose. Impacts included water intrusion, broken mechanical equipment, and flooding that negatively affected facility operations. To address these issues, the report

recommends an analysis by the City Services Auditor of recent projects from initial design through construction to identify potential problems with how Public Works conducts large capital projects.

The Jury report additionally recommends an assessment by the San Francisco City Controller to quantify the current cost and function of so-called “degraded assets,” including the costs of restoring these assets to proper condition. The recommendation calls for ongoing reporting of these assets in the city’s 10-Year Capital Plan.

San Francisco voters recently created a new Public Works Commission that could oversee the Department of Public Works, but Jurors learned that this commission’s oversight powers are mostly undefined. “We call for the Commission to receive detailed reporting from Public Works to give the public a more comprehensive view of how hundreds of millions of dollars are spent,” McCaa said.

Additional recommendations include calling for a Controller’s analysis of the city’s Capital Planning Fund, including evaluating the benefits to the city of increasing this fund.

To read the full report, please visit

<https://www.sf.gov/resource/2024/civil-grand-jury-reports-2023-2024>.

About the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury

The Superior Court selects 19 San Franciscans to serve year-long terms as Civil Grand Jurors. The Jury has the authority to investigate City and County government by reviewing documents and interviewing public officials and private individuals. At the end of its inquiries, the Jury issues reports of its findings and recommendations. Agencies identified in the report must respond to these findings and recommendations within either 60 or 90 days, and the Board of Supervisors conducts a public hearing on each Civil Grand Jury report after those responses are submitted. For more information, visit the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury website:

<https://www.sf.gov/departments/civil-grand-jury>.

#