



# **Fixin' San Mateo County**

**Presentation to SMC  
Behavioral Health Commission  
July 6, 2022**

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County

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# Who We Are

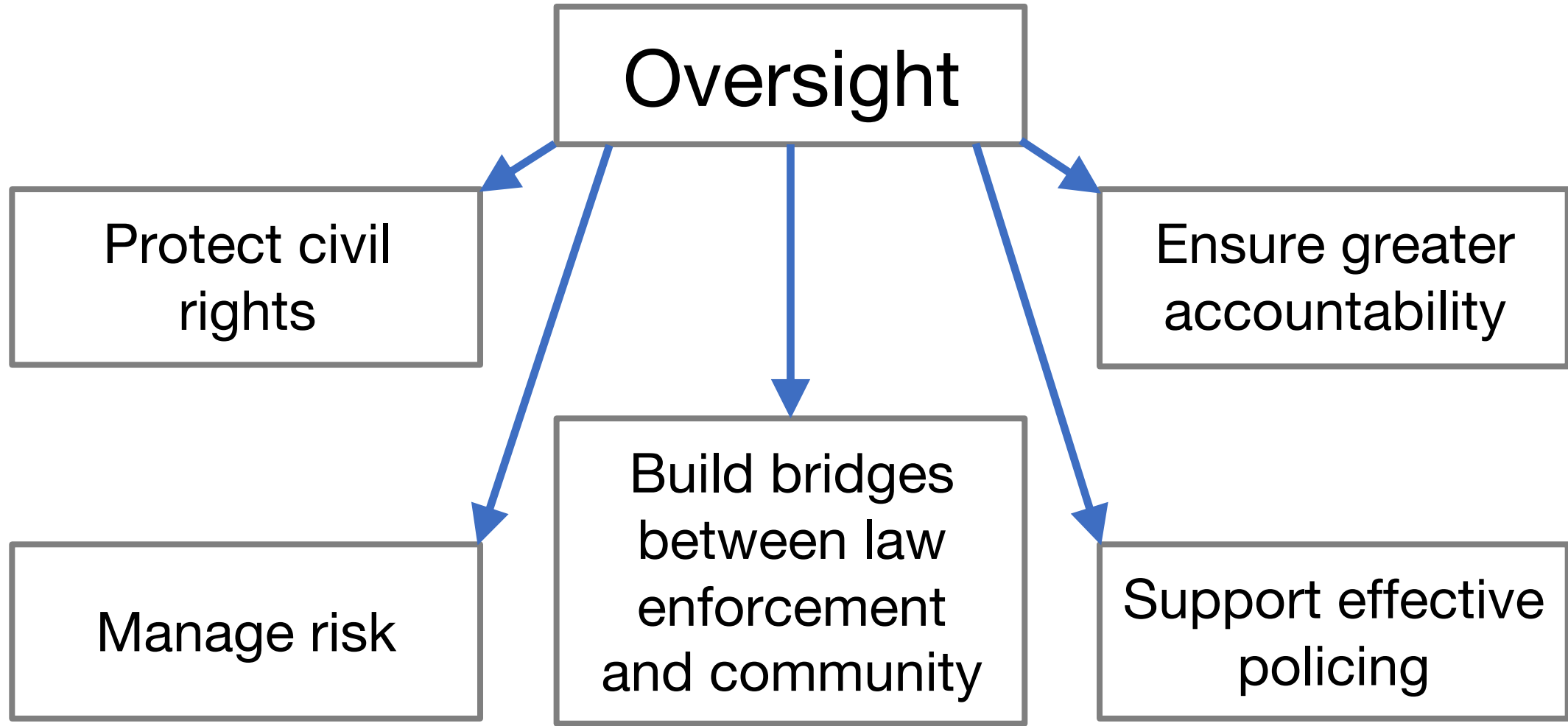
- Grassroots, founded by local activists in May 2021
  - 50 active volunteers, 250 on mailing list
- Incorporated as a 501(c)4 in November 2021
- Endorsed by all 5 fed/state electeds, HMB City Council, 13 Mayors/ former Mayors, and dozens of elected and appointed community leaders
- Support Sheriff Office in its mission to protect and serve

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# Why We Need Oversight



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Adapted from San Mateo County Democracy for America graphic



# Goal and Strategy

## Goal

Establish an effective community-based Sheriff Oversight Board and Inspector General, both with subpoena power, to address resident complaints, investigate issues, and make policy and practice recommendations

## Strategy

Develop and roll out a robust community based campaign to persuade the Board of Supervisors to use their legislative authority to pass an ordinance for strong and independent civilian oversight



# Mental Health and the Jails

- 44% of jail inmates have been told by a professional that they have a mental health condition
- 63% do not receive treatment while incarcerated
- More than 50% on meds at admission did not continue to receive meds while incarcerated
- Impacts jail safety and recidivism



# Incarcerated Youth

- 45% to 66% of males and 45% to 73% of females in the system have at least 1 psychiatric disorder
- 34% of males and 60% of females in juvenile detention facilities have 3 or more disorders
- Substance use disorders most common - up to 46-50%
- Anxiety, mood, and behavioral disorders common



# Mental Health and Law Enforcement

- People with untreated mental health conditions are 16 times more likely to be killed by police
- 25-50% of fatal police shootings involve people with untreated severe mental illness
- “Reducing encounters ...may represent the single most immediate, practical strategy for reducing fatal police shootings”

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# Alternative Policing

- Triage mental health calls at 911
- Send crisis worker instead of armed deputy if no threat
- Expand PERT countywide 24/7
- Community education
- Officer training





# Benefits of Oversight

- Review jail conditions - subpoena power
  - Look at jail policies with special impact on mental health (e.g. no personal mail)
  - Address individual cases (“Diego”)
- Review use of force incidents and training
- Recommend best practices
- Regular public reports to Sheriff and Supervisors



# Civilian Oversight Facts

- 220 cities and counties nationally have civilian oversight
- 25 cities/counties are in California including the following counties:

Los Angeles	San Francisco
Sacramento	Santa Clara
San Diego	Sonoma

*State law AB1185 gives subpoena power to boards & inspectors general but does not create these boards/offices*



# Oversight Board Composition & Duties

- 11 community members with lived experience or advocates
- Monthly public meetings
- Community outreach/listening
- Receive and investigate complaints and incidents
- Subpoena power
- Review and recommend policies/public reports



# Inspector General

- Trained professional
- Investigate complaints from civilians and whistleblowers
- Investigate incidents of force including:
  - excessive force
  - deaths in custody
  - racial profiling trends
- Subpoena power
- Review and recommend policies/public reports

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# Must Haves

- Independent
- Strong subpoena power
- Oversight board membership reflects the diversity of the community
- Consistent support from the jurisdiction's governing body
- Adequate funding
- Ability to take complaints directly from residents
- Access to data and records



# Limits of Civilian Oversight

- Oversight is a necessary component, but not a complete solution

<b>CAN PROVIDE</b>	<b>CANNOT PROVIDE</b>
Create transparency and accountability through public reports to Supervisors and Sheriff	Set Sheriff or Board of Supervisor policy or discipline/fire deputies



# Where Do We Go Now?

- Countywide volunteer campaign to raise awareness of benefits of civilian oversight
  - Outreach to community groups and the public for support
  - Endorsements by City Councils and elected and appointed officials
- Request Board of Supervisors to enact strong ordinance

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## Action Steps

- Endorse FxSMC to be listed on website  
<https://fixinsmc.org/about/endorsements/>
- Sign up for FxSMC email list at  
[FixinSMC.org/get-involved/volunteer/](https://FixinSMC.org/get-involved/volunteer/)





[Link](#) to Slide Show

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