



# CITY OF BLYTHE

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June 12, 2024

The Honorable Judith C. Clark, Presiding Judge  
Superior Court of California, County of Riverside  
4050 Main Street  
Riverside, CA 92501

Riverside County Grand Jury  
P.O. Box 829  
Riverside, CA 92502

Riverside County Clerk-Recorder  
2720 Gateway Drive  
Riverside, CA 92507

**Re: City of Blythe Response to the 2023-2024 Grand Jury Report Entitled: "Blythe, California Awakening of a New 'Gateway City'"**

Dear Judge Clark:

The City Council of the City of Blythe is in receipt of the 2023-2024 Grand Jury Report entitled "Blythe, California Awakening of a New 'Gateway City'" (the "Report"), provided to the City Council on April 3, 2024 and released to the public after the close of business on April 9, 2024.

In accordance with California Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, enclosed is the Mayor's and the City Council's response to each of the findings and recommendations included in the Report. The City Council approved the enclosed response on June 11, 2024.

The City of Blythe appreciates the opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury.

Sincerely,

Joseph Deconinck, Mayor

CC: Johnny Rodriguez, Vice Mayor  
Joseph Halby, Council Member  
Samuel Burton, Council Member

## **Grand Jury Recommendations:**

- R1. Develop a long-term strategic plan, as recommended by the State Auditor. The plan is to guide the City's budgetary decision-making, to address the long-term needs to achieve financial stability following the closing of Chuckawalla Valley State Prison, and to chart a path for improving its status as a 'going concern'. Plan is to be completed and included in the City's response to this report by end of September 2024.**

**City's Response:** The recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. A strategic plan will require a considerable amount of staff time as well as City resources to develop. It is estimated a strategic plan could take at least six months to prepare. As the City's response to the Grand Jury report is due in July, the plan cannot be included in the City's response.

- R2. Develop a five-year strategic plan, as recommended by the State Auditor, to define the City's priorities, goals, and expected outcomes, based on the findings of Retail Strategies project and the Blythe Economic Resiliency study. Plan is to be completed and included in the City's response to this report by the end of September 2024.**

**City's Response:** The recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. As the City's response to the Grand Jury Report is due in early July, the plan cannot be included in the City's response. Although the City has good building blocks from the Economic Resiliency Study, a strategic plan will require staff time and possibly a consultant to prepare. As an enormous amount of time went into the Save Chuck campaign, partnership with Brown University and other avenues the City has been working on due to the proposed closure of Chuckawalla Valley State Prison, time was not dedicated to the strategic plan. After the Save Chuck efforts wind down, the City can begin to develop a five-year strategic plan. The City estimates completing the five-year strategic plan by December 2025.

- R3. The City of Blythe should be clear as to its intention to hire a full-time City Manager. If it is to hire, the Grand Jury recommends that a deadline be established no later than year-end 2024, following the adoption of a long-term strategic plan. The new city manager will be accountable for the implementation of the City's long-term and strategic objectives, as defined in R1 & R2.**

**City's Response:** The recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future. It is anticipated that the City Council will provide direction related to the hiring of a permanent City Manager at the end of the 2024 calendar year.

- R4. [Applies to Riverside County.]**