

# 2025 - 2029 Strategic Plan

*Serving Our Communities,  
Striving for Excellence*

**December 2024**



**SUPERIOR COURT**  
*of*  
**SANTA BARBARA**

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## Table of Contents

*(hover your mouse over a section, and “control + click” to move to the desired section)*

Letter from Assistant Presiding Judge/CEO .....	ii
Strategic Planning Team .....	iii
Overview .....	1
Mission and Vision .....	2
Trends Analysis – External and Internal .....	3
Organizational Assessment .....	5
Strategic Focus Areas (SFAs), Goals, and Strategies .....	7
SFA1: Access and Service Excellence .....	8
SFA2: Timely Resolution and Operational Excellence .....	9
SFA3: Employee Well-Being and Engagement .....	10
SFA4: Facilities, Space, and Security .....	12
Appendix .....	14
A: Trends Analysis	

Additional Resources – Click on links to view files

1. [External Trends](#)
2. [Internal Trends](#)
3. [Strategic Planning Survey Report: Results and Findings](#)



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December 1, 2024

RE: Santa Barbara Superior Court Strategic Plan

We are pleased to present to you the updated version of the Santa Barbara Superior Court's Long-Term Strategic Plan. As Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee and Court Executive Officer, it is with great excitement that we share with you the culmination of diligent efforts, thoughtful deliberations, and collaborative endeavors of our esteemed team.

This revised strategic plan reflects our unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation, and service to the community we proudly serve. It encompasses our collective vision for the future, outlining clear goals, strategies, and initiatives aimed at enhancing the administration of justice, improving access to our judicial system, and serving as an engaging workplace with dedicated team members.

Through extensive stakeholder engagement, comprehensive analysis, and strategic foresight, we have identified key priorities and areas for advancement that align with our overarching mission and values. The updated plan underscores our dedication to fostering transparency, accountability, and fairness while embracing technological advancements and best practices to meet the evolving needs of our diverse communities.

We are confident that this strategic blueprint will serve as a guiding framework for our court's operations and initiatives in the years ahead, empowering us to adapt, innovate, and excel in delivering justice with integrity and compassion.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all stakeholders, including judges, court staff, justice partners, and community members, whose invaluable contributions and unwavering support have been instrumental in shaping this strategic roadmap.

We invite you to join us in our journey towards achieving our shared vision of a more efficient, equitable, and accessible justice system that upholds the principles of fairness, integrity, and respect for all.

Thank you for your continued collaboration and partnership as we strive to fulfill our mission of administering justice in a manner that inspires public trust and confidence.

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**Judge Patricia L. Kelly**  
*Assistant Presiding Judge  
Chair, Strategic Planning Committee*

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**Darrel E. Parker**  
*Court Executive Officer  
Clerk of the Court / Jury Commissioner*

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## Strategic Planning Team

Hon. Patricia L. Kelly, Assistant Presiding Judge,  
Chair – Santa Maria, Civil

Hon. Clifford “Kip” Anderson  
Santa Barbara, Criminal

Hon. Denise M. Hippach  
Santa Maria, Criminal

Hon. James F. Rigali  
Santa Maria, Civil

Hon. Donna D. Geck  
Santa Barbara, Civil

Darrel E. Parker  
Court Executive Officer/Clerk of Court/Jury  
Commissioner

Angela Braun  
Chief Deputy Executive Officer

Patrick Ballard  
Chief Financial Officer

Esteban Enriquez  
Criminal Manager

Marcos Ybarra  
Acting Chief Financial Officer

Julie Nicola  
Civil Manager

Mark Hanson  
Jury, Records, Juvenile, and CMS Manager

Jessica Thomson  
IT Director

Stephanie Robbins,  
HR Manager

Dr. Brenda J. Wagenknecht-Ivey, Consultant  
PRAXIS Consulting, Inc., Denver, CO



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# 2025 – 2029 Strategic Plan

December 2024

## Overview

The Superior Court of Santa Barbara (Court) embarked on a planning process in the fall of 2023 to refresh the Court’s long-range Strategic Plan. The planning process, which was supported by a grant from the State Justice Institute, provided the Court with an opportunity to pause, assess, and recalibrate its future direction based on recent disruptions, the future outlook in California, and a desire to continue enhancing services to the people of Santa Barbara County.

The Strategic Plan presented below includes the Court’s updated:

1. Mission and vision statements.
2. Strategic focus areas, which are areas of strategic and long-term importance for the Court.
3. Long-range goals and strategies for making improvements and responding to evolving expectations and the changing environment.

A Strategic Planning committee comprised of judicial officers, administrators, and managers updated the Court’s Strategic Plan with input from the full bench via a spring Judge’s Retreat. The planning process included analyzing internal and external trends, reviewing the results of the 2023 – 2024 strategic planning surveys, considering future threats and opportunities, and refreshing the Court’s strategic focus areas. The voices of many external partners, court users, judges, and staff were considered in developing this updated Strategic Plan.

The Court’s strategic focus areas are:



Refer to the Annual Operational Plan for specific initiatives the Court is working on in each of the above areas.

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## Mission and Vision

Below are the Court's updated mission and vision statements.


SUPERIOR COURT OF SANTA BARBARA

**Mission - the Court's Purpose**

To protect constitutional rights and liberties, apply the law equally, resolve disputes, and reconcile relationships in a fair and timely manner.

**Vision - Ideal Future**

To be a model of judicial excellence, innovation, and accessibility.



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## Trends Analysis – External and Internal

A trends analysis is vitally important when thinking and planning strategically. It helps develop a common understanding of the external and internal landscapes and anticipate and prepare for likely future implications on the Court. It also helps organizations prepare to seize future opportunities and address likely future challenges.

Below is a summary of the potential future implications of external and internal trends. The list is not exhaustive but is intended to increase awareness of likely future opportunities and challenges facing the Court. See Appendix A for a detailed summary of the trends.

### Future Implications of External Trends

1. The expectations of the public are continuously changing (e.g., 24/7 access) and the needs of court users are increasing (e.g., self-represented, non-English speaking). The Court must be able to adapt and respond appropriately.
2. Access to the Court and the ability to recruit and retain staff are affected by the high cost of living (in Santa Barbara County). The Court also must be aware of and sensitive to the increasing costs of litigation.
3. Demographic and crime trends across the County will affect the Court's future caseloads and workloads.
4. The Court must anticipate and begin preparing now for a workforce of the future.
5. Organizational agility is necessary for the future. The Court needs to remain nimble and adapt procedures, practices, and services to meet changing expectations, demands, and situations.
6. New and emerging technologies are changing the landscape. The Court needs to stay abreast of developments and be intentional about using new and emerging technologies to enhance services and operational efficiencies. Fostering a team culture while continuing to expand the use of technology also is necessary in the future.
7. The Court is facing increased scrutiny for its use of public resources and overall court performance. It must be transparent and accountable.
8. The Court must continue to respond to legislative changes and implement mandates.
9. The Court will need to closely monitor the economic outlook for California and stand ready to respond to uncertainty and changes to funding.

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## Internal Trends – Opportunities and Challenges

An examination of internal trends revealed future opportunities and challenges facing the Court. Future opportunities include:

10. Improved use of data analytics will allow the court to better manage its caseload and appropriately deploy resources.
11. There are increasing pressures to Improve time to disposition in all case types. The court should focus on established time standards and strive to meet or exceed those benchmarks.
12. Enhance access and services provided to court users making it easier to understand and navigate the court system.
13. Ensure adequate staffing levels by employing contemporary recruitment and retention practices addressing the needs of the changing demographics in the employable community.
14. Improve employee recruitment, retention, and engagement recognizing the unique needs of the various generations working in the court.
15. Strengthen justice system and community partnerships.

Some of the anticipated challenges include:

16. Collecting and using quality data.
17. Legislative changes which can affect filings, sentencing, resources, programs (e.g., implementation of new mandates - e.g., Care Court).
18. Safety and security preparedness; being more proactive (rather than reactive).
19. Hiring and retaining staff – loss of institutional knowledge when people leave or retire; new hires do not have the same sense of investment/commitment to the Court.
20. Addressing staffing levels/shortages (e.g., court reporters, bailiffs).
21. Upskilling and reskilling and/or re-tooling the workforce.
22. Training of new staff; providing development opportunities for existing staff.

## Organizational Assessment

Below is a partial list of the Court's strengths and areas for improvement following an analysis of trends and the strategic planning survey results. It is important to note that there are areas that are both strengths and areas for improvement, hence they are listed in both columns. For more details, the Report is available here: [Strategic Planning Survey Report: Results and Findings](#)

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Court User Experience</u>: Court users gave high ratings based on their experiences with the Court (access, fairness, quality services, safety, virtual proceedings).</li> <li>2. <u>Fairness</u>: Survey respondents had positive perceptions of / gave high ratings on outcome and procedural fairness (e.g., respectful treatment, opportunity to be heard, etc.).</li> <li>3. <u>Virtual Proceedings/Virtual Access</u>: Court users and external partners rated their virtual experiences positively and suggested the Court continue to improve and expand virtual options.</li> <li>4. <u>Embrace Technology</u>: The Court is committed to using existing and emerging technologies; there is a desire to strengthen technological platforms/ infrastructure. The Court adapts quickly to new technologies.</li> <li>5. <u>Desire to Continuously Improve</u>: Leaders/ managers continually look for ways to improve operations (e.g., with new technology/ automation) and services to the public. The Court is dedicated to public service; It is open to suggestions for improvement and willing to be innovative/creative.</li> <li>6. <u>Employees</u>: Court employees are knowledgeable, caring, compassionate. Job satisfaction ratings are high - many employees are proud to work for the Court. Staff understand what is expected of them; most employees are helpful.</li> <li>7. <u>Leadership / Management</u>: The management team is dedicated, knowledgeable, and experienced.</li> <li>8. <u>Judicial Officers</u>: Judges are competent and dedicated.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Access</u>: The Court is not always user-friendly or ADA accessible. Access and navigational improvements are needed to ensure easy access for all people (e.g., self-help, language, information via a portal, add informational videos/resources to website, etc.).</li> <li>2. <u>Case Processing/Time to Disposition</u>: The Court should improve scheduling and case processing times. Wait and time to disposition times also need to be reduced. The Court should seek ways to better manage caseloads (e.g., use data, etc.) and improve operational efficiency.</li> <li>3. <u>Virtual Proceedings</u>: Consistency is needed across the Court (types of matters that are to be heard virtually, consistent policies, procedures, and practices, Zoom protocols, etc.).</li> <li>4. <u>Fairness and Services</u>: Help litigants understand what they need to do after a hearing/appearance; help litigants succeed.</li> <li>5. <u>Programs/ Services/Resources</u>: The Court should consider augmenting behavioral health and other needed services. There may be opportunities to collaborate with partners to improve court and community programs, services, and resources.</li> <li>6. <u>Workplace and Workforce: Recruitment, Retention, &amp; Staffing Levels</u>: It has been difficult to recruit/fill positions. Turnover is high; it's been difficult to retain newer employees. Succession planning is needed to prepare for impending retirements (e.g., in senior leadership / other positions). The Court is experiencing staffing shortages in key positions (e.g., court reporters, interpreters). Training and cross-training programs are needed including supervisor / management training. The Court needs to build employee connections and strengthen community. Internal communication and employee engagement need improvement.</li> </ol>

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
<p>9. <u>Workplace</u>: There are opportunities to transfer across divisions; the Court offers great career opportunities. It is a compassionate workplace – employees feel someone at work cares about them.</p> <p>10. <u>Safety/Security</u> – Court users and external partners feel safe and secure at court facilities; courtroom and courthouse security has improved.</p>	<p>Employee wellbeing needs to be addressed/prioritized.</p> <p>7. <u>Public Education</u>: The public does not understand the judicial branch. The Court needs to educate the public, court users, and partners about the Court.</p> <p>8. <u>Be more Proactive &amp; Overcome Resistance to Change</u>: The Court needs to be better at anticipating and preparing for impending changes (be less reactive). While “change” is inevitable, there is a tendency to resist change (e.g., revise policies and procedures). The Court needs to build a culture that embraces and is receptive to continuous change and improvement.</p> <p>9. <u>Facilities/Space/Safety &amp; Security</u>: Facilities need to be improved – people working for the Court feel vulnerable. The Court needs to continue to strengthen security and improve parking (in SB).</p> <p>10. <u>Funding Uncertainty/Adequacy of Resources</u>: The legislature controls funding. The Court is vulnerable to the whims of the legislature. The Court needs to devise a plan to reallocate resources as needed and continue to invest in technology, staff, etc.</p>

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## Strategic Focus Areas (SFAs), Goals, and Strategies

The Court’s four strategic focus areas, long-range goals, and comprehensive strategies for achieving the goals are presented in this section. The four areas emerged from an analysis of trends and the results of the strategic planning surveys. The four areas also align with the strategic goals of the California Judicial Branch.



Refer to the Court’s Annual Operational Plan for the specific strategic projects being worked on each year.

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## ***SFA1: Access and Service Excellence***

**Description:** The expectations and needs of court users are changing and increasing. The Court recognizes it must adapt and respond accordingly to meet the growing needs and build the public's trust and confidence. Thus, the Court is committed to improving access and enhancing services to all court users and the public. This includes making changes and improvements in the following areas, to name a few:

- Enhance onsite physical access, virtual / remote access, and online access.
- Improve and expand services and assistance to court users (including self-help, language such as multi-lingual forms, signage, etc.).
- Improve the court user and juror experiences.
- Improve information and resources available to court users – improve website, educational videos, live chat, chat bot/AI, etc.
- Improve onsite wi-fi, other equipment to support virtual/remote access.
- Evaluate and expand hours of operations (e.g., expand hours through use of virtual/remote services, etc.).
- Improve court and community programs (e.g., pretrial services, specialty court programs, mediation/ADR, etc.)
- Educate, conduct outreach to, and solicit feedback from, the public.

### ***Long Range Goals and Strategies:***

Goal 1: The Court will be easily accessible, comprehensible, and user-friendly.

#### Objectives/Strategies:

- a. Enhance in-person, online, and virtual court user services (e.g., hours, in-person and virtual self-help, navigator/wayfinding, language, website, online payments, etc.).
- b. Improve and simplify information and resources available to court users (e.g., multilingual resources).
- c. Use existing and emerging technologies to enhance access to information and assistance.
- d. Educate the public about the Court, court functions, and available information and resources.

Goal 2: The Court's programs will meet the needs of court users/the public and achieve effective outcomes.

#### Objectives/Strategies:

- a. Improve and expand court-based programs (e.g., family law facilitator, probate facilitator, specialty/treatment courts, mediation/alternative dispute resolution, pre-trial, etc.).
- b. Educate and provide resources to court users/the public about court-based programs.
- c. Continually explore and integrate evidence-based practices into court programs.
- d. Collaborate with community partners to enhance and expand other needed programming for justice-involved individuals and families (e.g., behavioral health – substance use and mental health, housing, education, employment, etc.).

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## ***SFA2: Timely Resolution and Operational Excellence***

*Description.* Resolving disputes in a fair and timely manner is central to the Court’s mission. Thus, fair and timely resolution and operational efficiency and effectiveness are high priorities for the Court. The timely disposition of cases requires operational excellence and efficiencies with an appropriate use of resources and without compromising fairness.

The Court sees opportunities to improve in a variety of areas in response to the results of the strategic planning surveys. Examples include:

- Improve scheduling and case management practices (e.g., more timely scheduling; use data dashboards / tools to manage cases; improve / standardize procedures and practices)
- Improve timeliness and timely resolution – (e.g., reduce wait times and time to resolution / disposition; expedite processing of paperwork; improve scheduling; start hearings / matters on time, etc.)
- Streamline work processes and workflow (e.g., including the pace of processing paperwork in the Clerk’s Office; use technology / automation)
- Standardize and improve / expand virtual proceedings practices (e.g., Zoom protocols, consistent procedures across courtrooms / entire court)
- Equip, and continue to update, all courtrooms with needed in-person and virtual equipment and technology
- Help court users understand what happened in court and what they need to do next / after a court hearing.

### **Long Range Goals and Strategies:**

#### Goal 1: Court matters will be resolved in a timely and efficient manner.

##### Objectives/Strategies:

- a. Use effective case management protocols and best practices across all areas of the Court.
- b. Use quality / reliable data and information to improve case management and reduce time to disposition (e.g., real time data dashboards).
- c. Use existing and emerging technologies to improve operational efficiencies.
- d. Educate and collaborate with partners to improve timely resolution and court operations (e.g., scheduling, wait times, etc.).

#### Goal 2: Processes, procedures, and practices will be streamlined, comprehensible, and consistent across the Court.

##### Objectives/Strategies:

- a. Simplify and standardize business processes, procedures, and practices where applicable.
- b. Train and cross train employees on improved and consistent processes, procedures, and practices.
- c. Educate court users on court procedures and processes.  
Use technology to streamline processes and procedures.

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### ***SFA3: Employee Well-Being and Engagement***

*Description:* The Court must prepare now for the future of work. Critically reviewing, reimagining, strengthening, and transforming human resource and management practices are essential to respond to the current and future environments. The Court sees opportunities to make itself a more desirable place to work. The Court will focus on employee well-being, engagement, and other areas to help recruit and retain a skilled, dedicated, and satisfied workforce.

Future areas for improvement include the following, in response to the strategic planning survey results:

- Improve recruitment / seek solutions to staffing shortage and hiring challenges (e.g., be a sought-after public sector employer).
- Improve retention and reduce turnover (e.g., ensure adequate staffing levels).
- Strengthen work environment (e.g., build relationships/ connections/teams, improve involvement and engagement, make wellbeing a priority, etc.).
- Improve communication and information sharing across the Court.
- Provide training / development opportunities (e.g., expand options, eliminate redundancy).
- Provide career advancement / promotional opportunities (e.g., succession planning).
- Expand flexible or alternative hours / develop hybrid options.
- Provide equipment / technology needed to do work well.
- Enhance onboarding and on-the-job training.
- Provide mentorship opportunities.
- Improve employee satisfaction (e.g., employees feeling like they are doing meaningful work; help them understand the importance of what they do – connect to the Court’s mission and vision).
- Increase collaboration and teamwork within and across areas of the Court (e.g., reduce working in a vacuum, encourage bottom-up involvement; build team environment; make time to communicate and collaborate within and across units, build collegiality and camaraderie).

#### **Long Range Goals and Strategies:**

Goal 1: The Court will be a sought-after employer for job candidates interested in / committed to public service.

##### **Objectives/Strategies:**

- a. Use innovative and effective recruitment strategies / practices to reach and interest talented and diverse candidates.
- b. Work with educational institutions to inform and attract job candidates.
- c. Promote the many benefits to working for the Court (e.g., competitive and attractive compensation and benefits, work-life balance, meaningful work, high levels of employee satisfaction, career opportunities, etc.).



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Goal 2: Judicial officers and employees will perform at the highest levels.

Objectives/Strategies:

- a. Improve court and department onboarding and orientation for new employees and judges.
- b. Provide / expand training, cross-training, and professional development opportunities (e.g., in-house, in partnerships with JCC, other courts, educational institutions, job and soft skills, etc.)
- c. Build a coaching and mentoring culture (e.g., peer to peer interaction, personal / mentoring relationships).
- d. Develop the next generation of court managers and leaders (e.g., succession planning).

Goal 3: The Court's work environment will be inclusive/welcoming, equitable, and satisfying.

Objectives/Strategies:

- a. Build / ensure a welcoming, equitable, and engaging work environment.
- b. Promote the important and meaningful work of the Court.
- c. Recognize / show appreciation to employees for good work/ providing quality services.
- d. Provide / expand development and career advancement opportunities.
- e. Improve top down and bottom-up communication / information sharing.
- f. Use data and information to measure and improve employee satisfaction and retention.
- g. Implement human resource and management practices that are important to / valued by employees (e.g., implement hybrid work/alternative schedules, focus on well-being, involve employees in making changes/improvements, provide career advancement opportunities, provide new and competitive pay and benefits, etc.).

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## ***SFA4: Facilities, Space, and Security***

*Description.* Maintaining adequate facilities and ensuring safe and secure courthouses are top priorities for the Superior Court of Santa Barbara. The Court's current facilities and space need refurbishing. The Court also needs a new courthouse to replace a tired facility which has outlived its usefulness. The Court also must continually strengthen courthouse safety and security ensuring all who work in and use the Court are safe. The Court is committed to seeking improvements to current facilities including existing space, and courthouse safety and security, and will continue advocating for and collaborating with state and county partners to plan for and secure a new courthouse.

Needed improvements in this focus area include:

- Secure new courthouse in downtown Santa Barbara.
- Secure adequate parking in Santa Barbara for jurors, court users, and court employees.
- Improve existing space (e.g., repurpose, refurbish, and modernize; develop a schedule for refurbishing space).
- Enhance physical / onsite safety and security (e.g., cameras, screening, procedures/protocols, courtroom security).
- Continue to enhance digital / cyber security.
- Enhance emergency preparedness (e.g., training, updated COOP).
- Strengthen communication among the court and security providers (e.g., increase collaboration, clearly delineate areas of responsibility).
- Better define internal management responsibilities (e.g., clarify/define lines of responsibility - who's in charge; increase collaboration around safety issues – e.g., IT, HR, Security guards).

### **Long Range Goals and Strategies:**

Goal 1: The Court's facilities will be welcoming and professional, and will build trust / confidence in the court system.

Objectives/Strategies:

- a. Improve and maintain the sanitation, maintenance, and cleanliness of all court facilities.
- b. Strengthen safety and security protocols and procedures.
- c. Improve wayfinding and signage (e.g., expand assistance; ensure accurate, relevant, and timely information; expand multi-lingual signage).
- d. Improve ADA accessibility.

Goal 2: Judicial officers, court employees, and court users will be safe in all court facilities.

Objectives/Strategies:

- a. Increase emergency / crisis response preparedness.
- b. Strengthen safety and security protocols and procedures.
- c. Use emerging technologies to enhance security.
- d. Collaborate with county and justice system partners to ensure a safe and secure environment for all who work in and use the Court.

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Goal 3: The Court's facilities / space will allow for future growth and will meet current and future needs.

Objectives/Strategies:

- a. Continue to demonstrate needs and advocate for new facilities with the Judicial Council.
- b. Work with county and justice system partners to find a long-term solution to parking (for employees and court users) in Santa Barbara.
- c. Assess and remediate existing facility deficiencies.
- d. Assess and repurpose space to meet needs.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A: Trends Analysis

#### External Trends – Summary of Implications

1. Changing Expectations and Growing Needs. The Court will continue to experience pressure to respond to changing public/court users' expectations such as being able to conduct court business remotely and 24x7 and receiving assistance navigating the court system. The Court also will likely struggle to provide services that meet the growing needs of court users including self-help services, language assistance, and the like. Behavioral health, alternative dispute resolution, and other community-based programs also will be needed.
2. Cost of Living. The cost of living, including the cost of housing and rent, is high in the city of Santa Barbara and Santa Barbara County. The high cost of living affects court users and employees. The Court must be aware of and sensitive to the high cost of living and increasing costs of litigation. Access to the Court and the ability to recruit and retain staff are affected by these costs.
3. Caseloads and Workloads. The Court's future caseloads and workloads will be impacted by population age and growth, crime rates, state and local policy decisions (e.g., by law enforcement, prosecutors, and new expectations and practices to achieve positive outcomes, e.g., juvenile delinquency matters), and other external influences. The Court needs to be able to adapt quickly to changes including adding effective programs and services and realigning internal judicial and staff resources to meet workload demands and operate efficiently and effectively.
4. Workforce of the Future. The pandemic disrupted work; it revolutionized how and where work is done. The Court needs to develop an optimal solution to changing expectations while serving the public. Additionally, the Court will likely continue to experience (at least for the foreseeable future) high vacancy rates, difficulties recruiting / hiring qualified staff and retaining staff, and challenges making employee well-being and work-life balance priorities. Human resource and management practices will need to be modernized to respond to the changing times. The Court also will be challenged to foster a work environment that upholds its values and appeals to all generations in the workforce.
5. Organizational Resilience and Agility. The Court experienced major disruptions during the pandemic. But it pivoted quickly, altering operations to continue serving the public. Albeit challenging, the Court demonstrated its ability to adapt quickly and respond effectively to the crisis. Organizational agility is necessary for the future. The Court needs to remain nimble and adapt procedures, practices, and services to meet changing expectations, demands, and situations (e.g., probate matters in the north and south). This includes shifting and/or reallocating resources as needed to meet service and operational needs.
6. Technological Innovations. New and emerging technologies are changing the landscape. Innovations include the use of e-filing, video conferencing (e.g., Zoom), texting notifications, live chat, artificial intelligence (especially generative AI such as ChatGPT), robotics, data analytics and data sharing, telecommunications, hardware, software, and more.

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The Court needs to stay abreast of developments and be intentional about using new and emerging technologies to enhance services and operational efficiency and effectiveness. But it also must be aware of the digital divide where not all court users have access to digital devices or the Internet, or know how to use them. Additionally, safeguarding data and information and protecting against cyber-attacks and threats will be paramount. Judicial officers and staff will increasingly need to be tech savvy; they need to have the skills to use existing and new technologies. Finally, advocating for needed funding and promoting the appropriate uses of technologies will be increasingly important and necessary in the future.

Additionally, the work environment is becoming less personal / less relational with the increased use of technology. It is increasingly difficult to create an environment where employees feel connected and a part of an entire court team. The Court needs to make an extra effort to provide opportunities to build relationships and strive to maintain a team culture while integrating new and emerging technologies.

7. Accountability Expectations. Increased Scrutiny on Court Performance. The Court is facing increased scrutiny from the legislature, the public, and others for uses of public resources and overall court performance. There are increasing expectations for Courts to use public resources responsibly.
8. Legislative Mandates and Influences. The Court is continually responding to legislative changes and mandates; there is a disconnect between laws passed and implementation by courts at the local level. The implications of the mandates are usually significant. For example, cases are more complex and take longer to resolve because of changes in law. Some changes restrict what judges can do in matters before them (e.g., juvenile delinquency). Additionally, mandates to address homelessness and behavioral health issues require courts to shift resources and implement new programs and practices (e.g., CARE Court). Many of these requirements are resource intensive; they take additional time and money to implement and/or effectuate.
9. Volatile Economic Outlook and Funding Uncertainty. The economic outlook for California is bleak at least for the next few years; budget shortfalls are projected. The Court needs to begin preparing now to respond to projected funding reductions, drawing upon lessons learned from prior years. Frustration will increase when the Court does not have the resources needed to maintain high levels of services to the public or make internal improvements (technology, etc.). The trend of doing away with fines and fees is adversely impacting budgets/resources.

### **Internal Trends – Opportunities and Challenges**

Below is a summary of opportunities and challenges facing the Court following a discussion of internal trends.

Opportunities: Internal trends point to the following opportunities, identified by the Planning Committee.

10. Data Analytics. Need better definition of case events (e.g., disposition); need to be able to measure complexity of cases and post judgment work; better define key data elements/key metrics; strengthen accuracy and reliability of data.

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11. Time to Disposition. Reduce backlogs, improve time to disposition, use effective/proven caseflow management practices (e.g., case triage, settlement conferences, firm trial dates, etc.); expand ADR in family law (e.g., for non-English speaking court users).
  12. Access and Services. Improve access, services, and assistance provided to court users such as self-help, language; collaborate with legal partners to incentivize pro-bono attorney services.
  13. Staffing Levels. Find innovative solutions to staffing shortages for interpreters, court reporters, others (e.g., scheduling, remote services, use of technology – e.g., AI, changing policies/procedures).
  14. Employee Recruitment and Retention. Reengineer, rebrand – think outside of the box – re: recruitment practices; create a pipeline of diverse and talented applicants interested in public service in collaboration with new partners (e.g., high schools, community colleges); improve messaging and outreach to potential job applicants; enhance training and development opportunities (e.g., for JAs, etc.); expand promotional/advancement opportunities – develop the next generation of leaders (e.g., succession planning); expand jobs/positions to adapt to current work responsibilities).
  15. Partnerships. Collaborate with community partners to help provide needed services.

Challenges: Below are current pressures and challenges facing the Court, according to members of the Strategic Planning Committee.

16. Collecting and using quality data.
17. Legislative changes which can affect filings, sentencing, resources, programs (e.g., implementation of new mandates - e.g., Care Court).
18. Safety and security preparedness; being proactive (rather than reactive).
19. Hiring and retaining staff – loss of institutional knowledge when people leave or retire; new hires do not have the same sense of investment/commitment to the Court.
20. Staffing levels/shortages (e.g., court reporters, bailiffs).
21. Upskilling and reskilling and/or re-tooling the workforce – everyone is expected to be a technologist plus now.
22. Training of new staff; providing development opportunities for existing staff.