



2010-2011 SANTA CLARA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORT

“CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?” EMERGENCY DISPATCH IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Introduction

When a resident of Santa Clara County (SCC) calls 9-1-1, certain basic expectations follow: that the call will be answered promptly, and that it will result in help being sent as soon as possible. What that caller does not think about, but what the Grand Jury undertook to explore, are the procedures, mechanics, city boundaries, political and economic interests that directly affect the response to any given call.

One of the fundamental obligations of County government is to maintain adequate levels of public safety and security by ensuring that citizens receive an appropriate and speedy response to emergency calls. The role of the emergency dispatch in delivering this service is vital to the quality of emergency response in Santa Clara County. Nevertheless, the Grand Jury has concerns regarding the effectiveness of the emergency dispatch system as it is now configured. These concerns include the apparent duplication of services among Santa Clara County Communications (County Comm) and individual municipalities, incompatibility of technology and dispatch protocols. Each raises serious issues relating to cost efficiency, given existing and projected reductions in revenue to government agencies in light of the economic downturn. The Grand Jury inquired into the existing dispatch system and sought to explore different or better ways in which this vital service can be provided.

Background

During the Grand Jury's exploration of possible changes in fire departments, it became clear that the manner in which emergency personnel and equipment are dispatched in response to 911 calls was a matter of broad concern that extended beyond the deployment of fire equipment and crews to include police, sheriff, and medical dispatch. These concerns can be summarized as follows:

- Basic dispatching functions and costs are being duplicated among a number of different agencies and jurisdictions, which wastes resources
- Duplication of dispatching functions may lead to a delayed, inadequate, or “over-adequate” response, i.e., too many units from too many jurisdictions are responding to a single incident

- The presence of a “middle-man,” i.e., in jurisdictions where 911 calls first go to a local dispatch center before being transferred to County Comm, delays response anywhere from 20 seconds to 3 minutes or more, depending on the state of the local agency’s communications equipment
- Regional radio communications equipment is not in place, meaning local jurisdictions cannot easily communicate with each other, local agents cannot communicate with their “home” area when the agent is out of range, and the entire network of county emergency responders cannot easily communicate in the event of a regional need, such as following a major earthquake or PG&E gas line rupture.

Methodology

In conjunction with its inquiry, the Grand Jury interviewed the following:

- All 15 SCC City and Town Managers
- All SCC County Fire Chiefs
- Presidents of both the Saratoga and Los Altos Hills Fire District Boards
- Selected Police Chiefs in SCC jurisdictions which maintain local dispatching centers

The Grand Jury also received and reviewed budget information for SCC cities, dispatch and response time reports, and information from County Comm regarding response protocols.

Discussion

In order to dispatch emergency personnel in response to a 911 call, four basic components must come together:

- The call must be answered (a dispatch center)
- The nature of the emergency must be assessed and prioritized (response protocols)
- The information received in the call must be transmitted (radio technology)
- The location from which emergency fire and medical responders are dispatched must be determined (jurisdiction).

These building blocks and how they affect response effectiveness are discussed below. The overall flow of a 911 call through dispatch is illustrated in Figure 1.

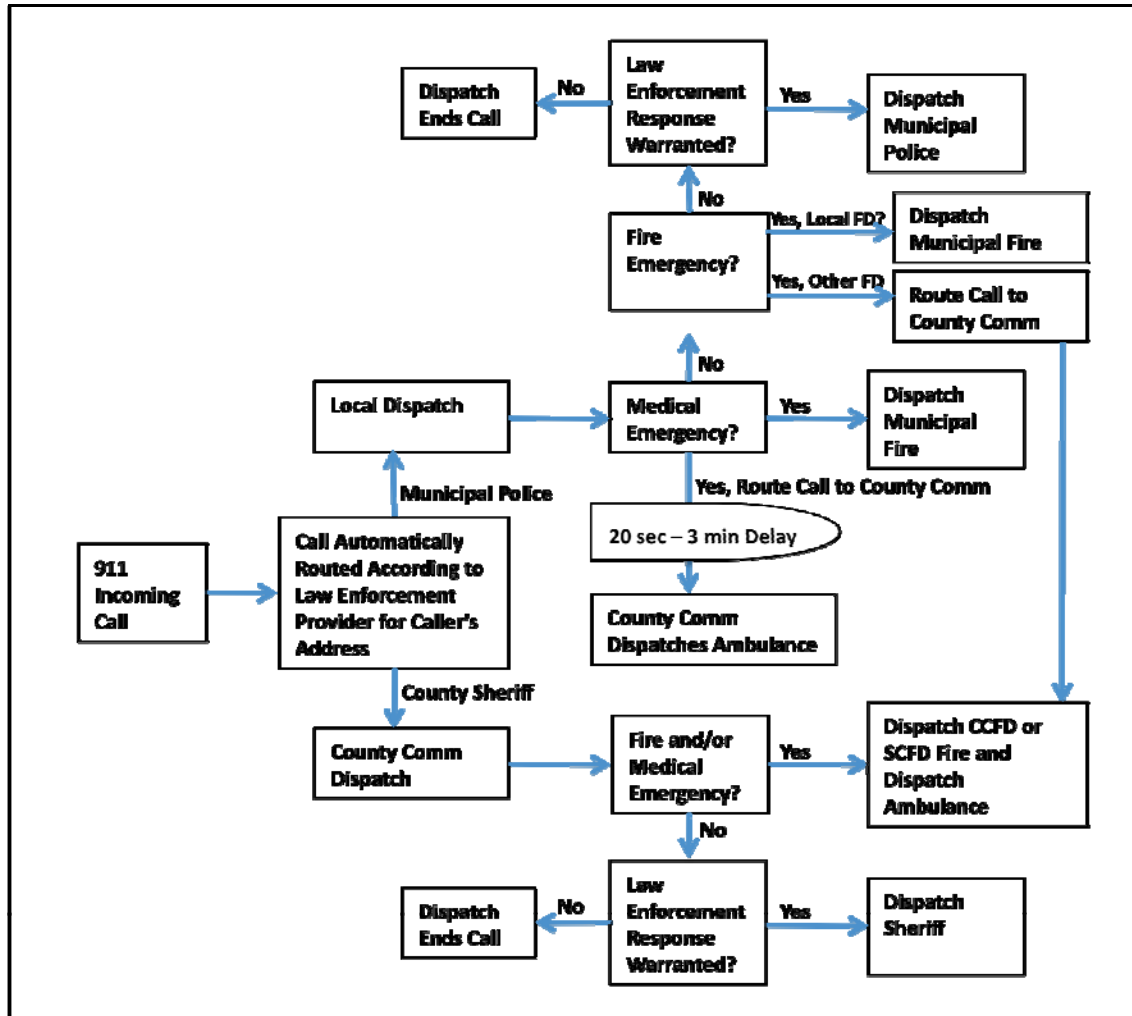


Figure 1: Overview of 911 Dispatching. Duplication of dispatch among municipalities and County Comm results in potential delay of fire and ambulance response, as well as duplication of equipment deployed.

Dispatch Centers

911 calls are automatically routed to the agency with jurisdiction over the permanent address associated with the caller's landline phone number (calls from cell phones are not addressed in this report). As shown in Figure 1, municipalities with police departments see 911 calls routed to their own local dispatch centers, which are operated by their police departments. For municipalities whose law enforcement needs are provided by the Sheriff, 911 calls are routed to County Comm. County Comm dispatches the county-contracted Emergency Medical Service (EMS), or ambulances; therefore, medical emergency calls that first route to a local dispatch must be transferred to County Comm for ambulance dispatch. Table 1 shows those municipalities that have local dispatch centers and those that use County Comm dispatch.

Table 1: Initial Response and Routing of 911 Calls to Dispatch*

Agency	911 Call Routing	Law Enforcement Dispatch	Fire Dispatch
Campbell	Campbell Police	Local	County Comm
Cupertino	County Comm	County Comm (Sheriff)	County Comm
Gilroy	Gilroy Police	Local	Local
Los Altos	Los Altos Police	Local	County Comm
Los Altos Hills	County Comm	County Comm (Sheriff)	County Comm
Los Gatos	Los Gatos Police	Local	County Comm
Milpitas	Milpitas Police	Local	Local
Monte Sereno	Los Gatos Police	Local	County Comm
Morgan Hill	Morgan Hill Police	Local	County Comm
Mountain View	Mountain View Police	Local	Local
Palo Alto	Palo Alto Police	Local	Local
San Jose	San Jose Police	Local	Local
City of Santa Clara	Public Safety Dispatch	Local	Local
Saratoga	County Comm	County Comm (Sheriff)	County Comm
Sunnyvale	Sunnyvale Public Safety	Local	Local
SCC	County Comm	County Comm (Sheriff)	County Comm

* All ambulance dispatching is done by County Comm.

Local dispatch centers are staffed by seven to fourteen city employees, which can create a significant liability to city budgets. For example, the Town of Los Gatos budgets 12 full-time equivalent Police Administration Services employees—which includes dispatch and records—with a budget of ~\$1.8 million for the 2010/2011 fiscal year. Further, in 2010, Milpitas considered consolidating its dispatch center with other SCC cities, citing the potential \$1 million cost savings by eliminating 12 city employees as a reason to do so. Overtime is an additional cost factor, as is coverage for sick and vacationing employees—a particularly significant factor in maintaining a round-the-clock emergency dispatch service for small centers. In a small center, employees may also be hampered professionally due to limited advancement or learning opportunities.

An added expense for local dispatch is maintaining back-up power in the event of a power outage. Failure might occur due to a simple power outage, or be caused by a catastrophic event such as an earthquake. Personnel back-up, which is needed if an event overwhelms a local dispatch center, is typically provided by routing calls to a neighboring municipality or to County Comm. In many cities, needed back-up is provided by County Comm; in fact, County Comm is the 911 “Alternate Answer Point” (AAP) for all but two SCC cities. The fact that such redundancy exists and is called upon from time to time also is an indication that some form of permanent regionalization can be accomplished.

In addition to the expense associated with maintaining local dispatch centers, the risk of a delayed emergency response resulting when calls are transferred to County Comm must be considered. When a call comes into a local dispatch facility, if it is requesting a law enforcement response, there is no delay. However, all calls requiring a medical response must be transferred to County Comm, as must *all* calls requesting ambulance service. Depending on the state of the municipality’s dispatching equipment, this transfer may take anywhere from twenty seconds to three minutes or more. For example, San Jose has one-button call transfer ability, which transfers a call in seconds. By contrast, Gilroy has less sophisticated equipment, and dispatchers must phone County Comm to transfer the call, which can take up to three minutes or more. All municipalities have the ability to transfer calls to County Comm and all municipalities can use County Comm as a back up 911 call center in case of a local emergency.

Since County Comm is already responsible for more fire dispatching than any other dispatch center, and is responsible for *all* ambulance dispatching, the Grand Jury asked interviewees the obvious question: “Given that there is duplication in the dispatching function, why maintain a local center?” Responses varied, but several themes emerged:

- Residents want a local connection with the dispatch center
- Police officers benefit by having an established relationship with a local dispatcher
- The manner in which a dispatcher responds to a call and even *whether* resources are dispatched, is a reflection of local values
- A local dispatcher has a familiarity with local geography that is valuable.

Upon closer examination, most of these concerns hold little merit. Interviewees could not point to evidence that residents really care who answers their 911 call; it is far more likely that callers simply want a speedy response from a knowledgeable resource.

Regarding law enforcement officer relationships with dispatch, the Grand Jury learned that the standard practice in areas with consolidated dispatch is to assign a particular “desk” to a particular community, such that the responder and dispatcher are able to develop the relationship and trust that some interviewees claimed could only come through a local operation.

The question of whether resources are actually dispatched is discussed in more detail below, but given the number and type of resources available to any given community, it may choose to send a response to a type of call, e.g., a complaint about a loud leaf blower, that another would not. Such local preferences can be made part of the dispatching protocol for that community, and has happened in Cupertino, Los Altos Hills and Saratoga, who contract with the Sheriff for somewhat customized law enforcement response for their communities.

Finally, with the proliferation of GPS systems, it is hard to justify the expense associated with maintaining a local dispatch center simply to ensure that people who “know the city” are available. One interviewee did argue that “GPS can show you where you’re going, but not what you’re getting into.” But another countered with the assertion that local police and fire personnel have the primary responsibility to know all aspects of their community and its geography as an integral part of their jobs.

Response Protocols

Consolidated dispatch centers and standardized equipment assure that 911 calls are answered and emergency personnel dispatched, but in order to achieve an effective and efficient response, protocols must be in place to determine which call will receive the most immediate attention. County Comm employs a prioritization system that ranks 911 calls by degree of seriousness, from an emergency that endangers life, down to complaints about violations of city ordinances (see Appendix A). Prioritization protocols in most SCC jurisdictions mirror this model. While in rare instances residents in some parts of SCC, often those living in unincorporated pockets, complain about slow response by law enforcement, most cities meet internal goals for response times based upon priority protocols. Further, response protocols for fire and emergency medical are virtually the same countywide, and pose no barrier to communications consolidation.

Law enforcement response protocols are very similar, as necessitated by legal boundaries. Yet police chiefs claim local dispatch control is required because their municipality has “nuanced” response protocol. This means, for example, that while one city would not respond to complaints of overly loud leaf blowers, another would. But there is no reason to think that such response nuances could not be implemented in a consolidated center where dispatchers are assigned to municipalities, and trained in area-specific, nuanced response protocol.

Radio Technology

Communications equipment is integral to the dispatch function. In order for dispatch consolidation to really work, all agencies must be able to talk to each other. However, equipment varies, as was noted above in discussing call transfer capability.

Radio equipment capability varies too. The Grand Jury learned that circumstances exist where a police chief may not be able to communicate with his own department when out of radio range, or one city may not be able to talk to another due to differences in equipment or radio frequencies used. In fact, Grand Jurors who participated in “Ride-Alongs” with the SCC Sheriff’s Office, observed that a number of patrol deputies chose to use personal cell phones rather than Sheriff’s radios. While this workaround may be effective for one-on-one communication, it is a wholly inadequate substitute for reliable long-range, countywide communication capability.

Standardization of equipment and technology is essential to successfully consolidating emergency communication and dispatch. This may pose a cost barrier initially, but long-term savings potential is worth going through the cost-benefit analysis.

Jurisdiction

Jurisdictional boundaries define which agency is called to respond to an emergency event. These boundaries largely follow city boundaries, but the lines do not make good sense from a response standpoint. Local dispatch systems may not have the visibility or authority to dispatch the closest resource when jurisdictional lines are not to be crossed. Particularly for fire or medical emergencies, this can impede the fastest response. For example, San Jose Fire Station 23 is closer to some areas of Milpitas than any of the four Milpitas fire stations; Palo Alto Station 5 is closer to some areas of Mountain View than any of Mountain View’s fire stations.

Improved response across all agencies can be expected through “boundary drop.” This is where jurisdictional lines are ignored such that the closest emergency resource responds to a given event. Once a 911 call is prioritized for response, equipment and crews are dispatched from the nearest possible location. Interviewees uniformly agreed that boundary drop would result in faster, more efficient emergency response, and many also agreed that the “communications component” is a major barrier in achieving full boundary drop as dispatching is not presently occurring from a central location. Adoption of a boundary drop system in dispatching may also lead to standardization in response protocols, radio technology, training and equipping of crews and emergency apparatus, and ultimately a breakdown in the artificial barriers standing in the way of full dispatch consolidation, which all interviewees agreed would result in better emergency response.

Communications Consolidation

Local dispatch centers clearly represent a duplication of services. The Grand Jury was encouraged to learn that most, if not all interviewees, recognize this as a problem and are already working to consolidate the dispatching function. All agreed that fire dispatch, which employs standardized response protocols and “speaks the same language,” lends itself easily to consolidation. There was more disagreement regarding

whether police dispatch could be easily integrated due to differing local law enforcement policies, but most interviewees acknowledged that these differences could be overcome with the right approach to consolidation – such as by establishing a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA); or consolidating by geographic region (North County, West Valley, South County) rather than county-wide. Active efforts to consolidate the dispatching function are being pursued in several SCC cities:

- Los Gatos and Campbell currently have a joint Request for Proposal (RFP) out to explore complete or partial consolidation of their two dispatch centers.
- Los Altos, Palo Alto, and Mountain View are pursuing “virtual consolidation,” which would give dispatchers the same information by computer and allow dispatching throughout the area without requiring construction of a new “brick and mortar” facility.

City Managers cited several reasons to pursue consolidation, focusing primarily on economy of scale, cost-savings, and efficiency. In addition, many cited the benefit of a faster, better response, which would in turn create safer communities. Finally, many advanced the theory that if SCC cities were able to achieve consolidation of emergency dispatch, functional consolidation of other agencies, such as fire departments, would more likely follow.

In fact, regional and functional consolidation has been successfully implemented both in the Bay Area and around the country. In San Mateo County, for example, all emergency dispatch is handled by a single countywide agency. Dispatchers work with a map displaying all available emergency vehicles, which are simply numbered in order, rather than by jurisdiction, and then dispatch the closest resources to any given event. In West Jordan, Utah, consolidated dispatch served several different municipalities in the Salt Lake City area; in Scottsdale, Arizona, a regional model developed in the 1970s is still in use today, whereby a single dispatch center serves 25 different fire departments. According to interviewees familiar with that system, it has been reproduced successfully elsewhere. The Grand Jury learned that many SCC police and fire officials bring out-of-state experience with successful multi-jurisdictional systems and can be instrumental in leading change.

In spite of resistance to consolidation, agencies throughout the county have demonstrated their ability to collaborate effectively through the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association (SVRIA). The Department of Homeland Security has identified interoperability as one of the nation’s highest priorities. For first responders, there is no greater area of concern when facing a regional emergency, such as the

1989 earthquake or the 2010 San Bruno fire. In general, interoperability refers to the ability of emergency responders to share information via voice and data signals on demand, in real time, when needed, and as authorized. SVRIA is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) among SCC agencies that has developed a long-term work plan to implement a regional communications system.

Conclusions

Clinging to local control seems to be a luxury rather than necessity, and it is a luxury municipalities may find they simply cannot afford to retain, particularly when County Comm offers both a capable and more technologically advanced alternative compared to the outdated equipment used in some municipalities.

The Grand Jury found that officials throughout Santa Clara County recognize, and are working to correct, inefficiencies in the existing emergency dispatch system. Elimination of local dispatch centers and elimination of local jurisdictional lines can go a long way toward providing faster, more efficient, and more cost-effective emergency response. The Grand Jury strongly encourages cities to work quickly and cooperatively to achieve the consolidation which will provide better emergency response service to the citizens of Santa Clara County.

Findings and Recommendations

Finding 1

Dispatch consolidation would result in more cost-effective and efficient emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County.

Recommendation 1

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale – and all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch—Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga—should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFPs to do so.

Finding 2

Radio equipment has not been standardized and impedes effective countywide communication and emergency dispatch.

Recommendation 2

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale; all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch—Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga; the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office; and Santa Clara County, should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology.

This report was **PASSED** and **ADOPTED** with a concurrence of at least 12 grand jurors on this 19th day of May, 2011.

Helene I. Popenhager
Foreperson

Gerard Roney
Foreperson pro tem

Kathryn Janoff
Secretary

County of Santa Clara

Office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
County Government Center, East Wing
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Maria Marinos
Clerk of the Board

FILED

September 1, 2011

SEP 12 2011

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/Clerk,
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. ALDYCKI

The Honorable Richard J. Loftus, Jr.
Presiding Judge
Santa Clara County Superior Court
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

RE: Grand Jury Report: "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County

Dear Judge Loftus:

At the August 23, 2011 meeting of the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors (Item No. 12), the Board adopted the response from the County Administration to the Final Grand Jury Report and recommendations relating to "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County.

As directed by the Board of Supervisors and on behalf of the Board President, our office is forwarding to you the enclosed certified copy of the response to the Final Grand Jury Report with the cover memorandum from Mr. Graves. This response constitutes the response of the Board of Supervisors, consistent with provisions of California Penal Section 933(c).

If there are any questions concerning this issue, please contact our office at 299-5001 or by email at maria.marinos@cob.sccgov.org.

Very truly yours,

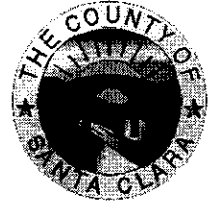
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maria Marinos".

MARIA MARINOS
Clerk, Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Clara

Enclosures

MM/mm

County of Santa Clara Office of the County Executive



CE01 082311

DATE: August 23, 2011

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary A. Graves".

Gary A. Graves
Chief Operating Officer

SUBJECT: Response to Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Report: "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Consider recommendations relating to Final Grand Jury Report relating to "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County.

Possible action:

- a. Adopt response from Administration to Final Grand Jury Report relating to "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County.

AND

- b. Authorize the Board President and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors to forward department responses to Grand Jury report to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court with approval that responses constitute the response of the Board of Supervisors, consistent with provisions of California Penal Code Section 933 (c).

OR

- c. Adopt a separate or amended response to the Final Grand Jury Report relating to "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County, and authorize the Board President and Clerk of the Board to forward response to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no fiscal implications associated with these Board actions.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

Attached is the County Communication Department and South Santa Clara County Fire District responses to the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations enumerated in the Final Report, "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County. The responses have been completed pursuant to California Penal Code, Section 933 (c) and 933.05 (a).

Child Impact Statement

The recommended action will have positive impact on children and youth.

BACKGROUND

While the Grand Jury was exploring the fire departments to recommend some changes, they became concerned with Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County. The Grand Jury explored the current procedures, mechanics, city boundaries, political and economic interests that affect the response to all emergency calls. The Grand Jury found that Santa Clara County is working to correct, inefficiencies in the existing emergency dispatch systems to provide better emergency response service to the citizens of Santa Clara County.

The Grand Jury's report makes two specific findings and two recommendations; The County Communications Department agrees with finding 1, and partially agrees with recommendation 1, and, partially agrees with Finding 2 and agrees with recommendation 2. While the District agrees to the recommendations the South Santa Clara County Fire District is not specifically mentioned or listed in the report.

Attached are the responses to the findings and recommendations.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The County would not be in compliance with the law in responding to the Grand Jury's Final Report.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

Following approval of the responses provided, forward all comments of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to the Honorable Richard J. Loftus, Jr., Presiding Judge, Santa Clara County Superior Court on or before Friday, September 16, 2011.

ATTACHMENTS

- Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Final Report
- County Communications Response
- South Santa Clara County Fire District Response

County of Santa Clara

Office of the County Executive



Communications Department
2700 Carol Drive
San Jose, California 95125-2032
(408) 977-3200 FAX (408) 279-2666

Date: July 28, 2011

TO: Gary A. Graves,
Chief Operating Officer

FROM: Bert Hildebrand, *BH*
County Communications Director

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO THE 2010-2011 SANTA CLARA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND
JURY'S MAY 2011 REPORT – "CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?" EMERGENCY
DISPATCH IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Background

The County Communications Department was established by the Board of Supervisors on January 19, 1948 and has been providing emergency call answering, and law, medical and fire public safety dispatching and technical support services for over 63 years. The department plays a critical role in coordinating the delivery of important public safety services to the community operating as both a Primary (law) and Secondary (fire/medical) Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) and dispatch center for 9-1-1 and other emergency calls. The department is the local mutual aid dispatch center for law enforcement (Sheriff), fire (County Fire), and medical (Emergency Medical Services Agency), and also serves as the 9-1-1 alternate answering point for all jurisdictions except Los Altos and San Jose. County Communications is also very active in many local and regional efforts aimed at improving voice and data interoperability and coordinated response of public safety service providers during emergencies.

Dispatch Operations provides 9-1-1 and 7-digit emergency telephone answering services to the public and emergency radio dispatching services to approximately 60 law enforcement, fire, medical, and local government agencies, including the Office of the Sheriff, District Attorney, Department of Correction, County Parks, County Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency and the contract countywide ambulance transport service provider, Rural/Metro Corporation.

As a Primary (law) PSAP, the Department provides direct emergency 9-1-1 and 7-digit call answering services to the areas served by the Office of the Sheriff, including three contract cities (Cupertino, Los Altos Hills and Saratoga) and the unincorporated areas within Santa Clara County. As a Secondary (fire) PSAP, the Department provides emergency call handling (9-1-1 call transfers/7-digit direct calls) for areas served by the County Fire Department, including eight

Adopted

municipalities (Campbell, Cupertino, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill and Saratoga) and most unincorporated areas within Santa Clara County. Also, as a Secondary (medical) PSAP, the Department provides emergency call answering services (9-1-1 call transfers/7-digit direct calls) and Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) services, including pre-arrival medical instructions, for eight municipalities (Campbell, Cupertino, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill and Saratoga) who receive County law and fire services; and to the Cities of Gilroy and Milpitas by contract. The department also provides countywide ambulance transport dispatching services to all municipalities except the City of Palo Alto, where it is provided only when requested under Mutual Aid.

In addition to County Communications, there are currently twelve municipal Primary (law) PSAPs and seven municipal Secondary (fire/medical) PSAPs that operate within Santa Clara County. County Communications and seven municipalities (Gilroy, Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale) have both Primary (law) and Secondary (fire) PSAP dispatch operations. Five municipalities (Campbell, Los Altos, and Los Gatos jointly with Monte Sereno and Morgan Hill) operate law PSAPs. The South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District also operates as a Secondary (fire) PSAP, with medical and EMD services provided by County Communications.

Discussion

On May 19, 2011, the 2010-2011 Civil Grand Jury issued its final report "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County.

Although the nation's 9-1-1 call routing process (i.e., calls route first to law dispatch centers, and if required, are transferred to fire/medical dispatch centers) is unlikely to change, the County and local police, Fire, medical service providers and dispatch agencies are currently working with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Authority (SVRIA) to implement voice and data interoperability projects that address several of the concerns outlined within the Civil Grand Jury's report.

For example, the computer aided dispatch (CAD)-to-CAD/CROP project managed by the County on behalf of the SVRIA will, upon completion, provide two-way data exchange between PSAPs, centralized standardization and storage of data, report generation, as well as provide a dynamic visual display referred to as a Common Regional Operating Picture (CROP). The CROP will visually allow dispatchers and field staff to see all active events and their status, as well as the status and availability of field resources and key facilities. This system will create a virtually consolidated CAD system that improves auto and mutual aid responses and supports "boundary drop" operations that allow the closest emergency resource to be dispatched to an emergency regardless of jurisdictional boundaries. This regional system will also reduce duplication of effort and delays currently experienced when processing cross-discipline and/or multi-jurisdictional calls for service discussed in the report. The County manages three existing fire/medical CAD-to-CAD links. County Communications shares one two-way data link with San Jose Fire Dispatch and another one with the South Santa Clara County Fire District at the

CALFIRE emergency communications center in Morgan Hill. The remaining CAD link provides a one-way data transmission from the Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety Dispatch center to County Communications for ambulance transport support to fire, which has reduced duplicated effort and call processing time by as much as ninety seconds or more, with medical and fire resources often being dispatched at or near the same time.

Although Figure 1: “Overview of 911 Dispatching” on page 3 illustrates the complexity well, it is somewhat misleading as drawn. Some key points include:

- All 9-1-1 calls are first routed to Primary (law) PSAPs for initial call screening and handling. Procedurally, all dispatchers are required to answer calls with wording similar to “9-1-1 Emergency Services. What are you reporting?” If law enforcement in nature, the call is handled directly, but for fire or medical response, the call is transferred to a Secondary (fire/med) PSAP with a 9-1-1 transfer button, which takes no more than a few seconds.
- Landline 9-1-1 calls show the caller’s phone number and the address location associated with that number.
- Law PSAPs may retain initial call information and/or may stay on the line to obtain additional information, depending on their own internal procedures related to law response to medical and/or fire calls.
- Extended delays when transferring information to County Communications (i.e., “20 seconds – 3 min delay”) occur only when the agency first completes tasks related to dispatching its resources before contacting County Communications with the information needed for County response. Typically, actual exchange of information between dispatchers takes less than one minute.
- All municipal dispatch centers have one-button direct connection lines, which immediately ring at the other end when activated, as well as speed dials (dials the number automatically when activated) to contact County Communications, except for the Cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill, which rely only on the use of speed dial connectivity.
- Some medical calls are not transferred to County Communications for handling. There are five municipal PSAPs that normally provide EMD services and then contact the County to request paramedic ambulance transport services.
- County Communications dispatches Central Fire District/County Fire Department resources, but either transfers the caller directly to the South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District dispatching contractor (CALFIRE) to handle and dispatch resources in its jurisdiction if the call is initially received as a fire call, or handles the call and create a medical event in County’s CAD, which automatically creates a fire event response request via the CAD-to-CAD link, if the call was initially medical in nature. County Communications provides EMD services for all calls received from the South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District service area.
- See revised 9-1-1 Dispatching flow chart (Attached).

Although there are other inaccuracies and omissions within the Civil Grand Jury Report, overall the report’s findings and recommendations merit consideration.

The Civil Grand Jury's published report includes two "Findings" and two "Recommendations."

Finding 1

"Dispatch consolidation would result in more cost-effective and efficient emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County."

The County Communications Department agrees with Finding 1. As discussed in the Civil Grand Jury's Report, once accomplished, consolidation of services at any level (law, fire, or both law and fire) between two or more field agencies and/or dispatch centers would result in greater cost-efficiencies (e.g., improved economies of scale through reduced duplication of cost and/or effort, such as reduced staffing, equipment, maintenance, training, and other needs) and more efficient monitoring and deployment of field personnel and related resources across multiple agencies and/or jurisdictions, which should reduce response times and improve service delivery to local communities.

Recommendation 1

"Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale – and all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch – Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga – should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFPs to do so."

The County Communications Department partially agrees with Recommendation 1.

The dispatch centers listed are Primary (law) PSAPs, which may or may not also be Secondary (fire/medical) PSAPs. Secondary PSAPs may be better aligned for consolidation between service providers and/or centers than Primary PSAPs.

Recently, serious discussions regarding potential consolidation of dispatch centers and/or field services have been increasing in frequency and participation between Police Chiefs, Fire Chiefs, and City Managers, primarily due to the current economic downturn and a need to streamline costs. Local control, facility location and expansion/space limitations, experience/responsibility levels, disparate business rules and service delivery policies and practices, use of disparate systems and/or other technology challenges, as well as one-time start-up costs have all been identified as challenges hindering local consolidation efforts.

As mentioned in the report, many local agencies including the County believe dispatch consolidation is possible and that fire dispatch may lend itself more easily than law enforcement to consolidation due to fire agencies' higher use of standardized response protocols and terminology, and technology compatibilities. The County is very interested in working in partnership with other agencies to achieve improved cost-effectiveness, operational efficiencies,

and response times through the use of shared technology and consolidation of services, where appropriate.

As the second largest PSAP in Santa Clara County, the County Communications operates as an independent dispatch service provider, which reports directly to the Office of the County Executive and provides communications dispatching, engineering and maintenance services to approximately 60 entities.

County Communications' Dispatch Center was designed and equipped to support future growth in services. The site is located at the highest point on the valley floor, providing excellent 360 degree coverage for voice and data communication systems. The Dispatch Center currently has equipped console positions available that are capable of supporting an additional eight (three 9-1-1 call answering, two law, two fire and one medical) positions that could be used in support of consolidation. Existing space (approx. 2,600 sq. ft.) that was designed and previously used as a fire/medical dispatching control room could support a larger expansion of dispatch operations, if needed, with some relocation of existing staff members. There is also additional space on the grounds that could support added facility expansion.

Finding 2

"Radio equipment has not been standardized and impedes effective countywide communication and emergency dispatch."

The County Communications Department partially agrees with Finding 2.

Although it is true that radio equipment is not standardized between public safety agencies, the main issue impeding effective communications is the fact that many service disciplines and providers have radios that operate on different frequency bands. Most agencies currently have radios that operate only in VHF or UHF or 800 MHz frequency bands. Even if all agencies used the same brand and model of radio, unless they all operated on the same frequency band, they would not be able to communicate with each other. To resolve this problem, some field units maintain two or more radios so that they can communication with other municipalities, agencies and/or service disciplines.

Recommendation 2

"Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers - Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale; all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch - Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga; the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office; and Santa Clara County, should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology."

The County Communications Department agrees with Recommendation 2.

Adopted

The County and most municipalities are active participants in local and regional efforts aimed at improving voice and data interoperability and coordinated response of public safety services during emergencies.

The County has two elected officials serving as voting members of the SVRIA Board of Directors and three voting members serving on the SVRIA Working Committee, including a County Deputy County Executive, the County Communications Director, and a County Fire Deputy Chief who serves as one of two at-large members. County staff members also participate on several projects as project managers, technical and/or operational subject matter experts.

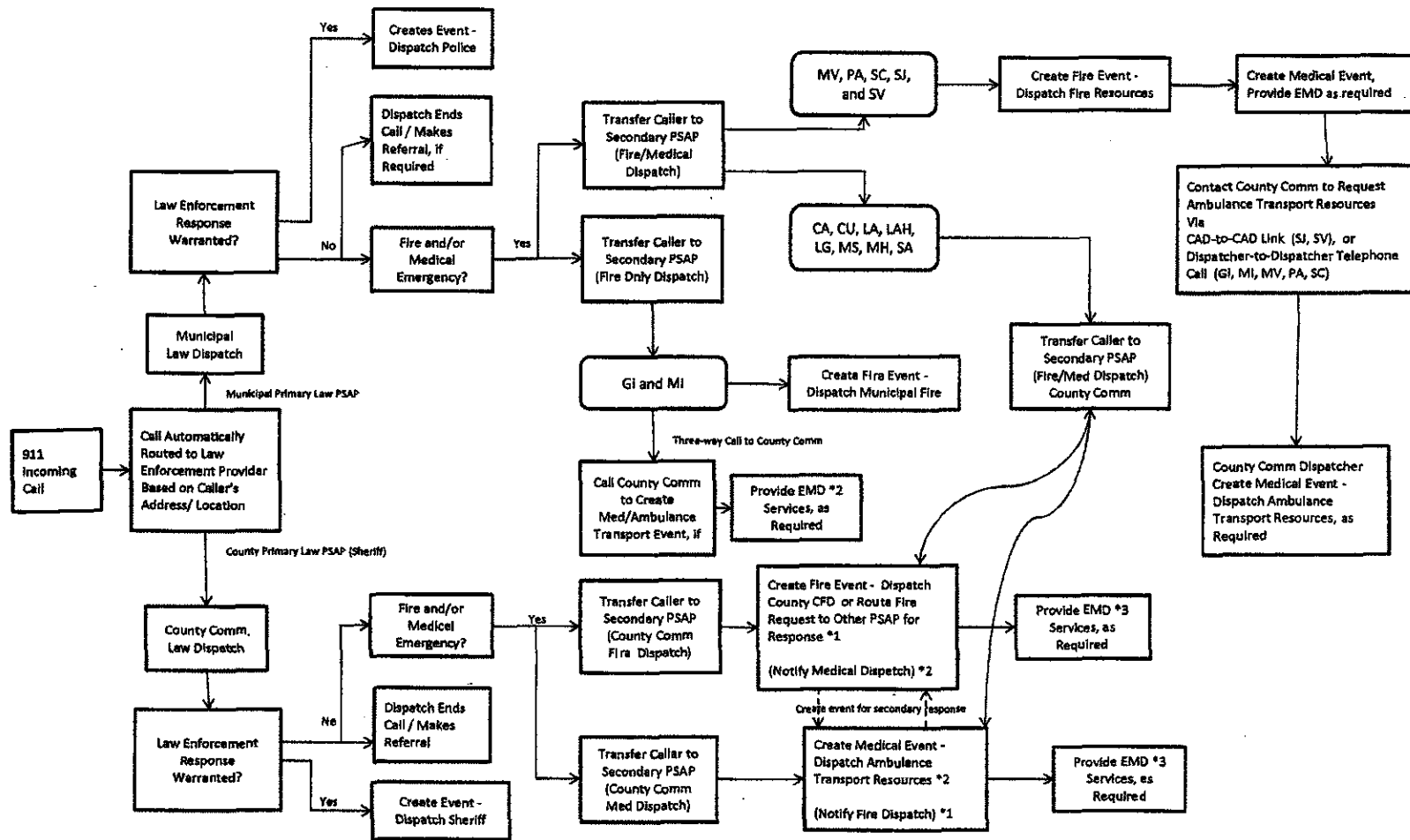
The foregoing instrument is a correct copy
of the original.

ATTEST: Maria Marinos
Clerk of the Board

BY: Melissa Villa
Deputy Clerk

Date: AUG 23 2011

Revised Figure 1 - Overview of 911 Dispatching



* 1 - Most fire response calls received by County Communications result in the dispatch of Central Fire District/County Fire Department resources. Some fire calls may involve other fire agencies under "Auto Aid" (first due response) agreements. Fire response calls that fall within the South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District service area are transferred to the District for its response. (See note *2 for medical calls requiring fire response.)

* 2 - County Communications provides centralized countywide advanced life support (ALS) paramedic ambulance transport dispatching services for all municipalities (except Palo Alto, unless requested under mutual aid) and to unincorporated county areas. All medical calls directly received by County Communications require the generation of a corresponding fire service response request. The response depends on the initial source: 9-1-1 caller; Law PSAP transfer from Central Fire District/County Fire Department service areas; Milpitas or Gilroy Fire PSAPs transfer for EMD services and/or request for paramedic ambulance transport service. When County Communications' computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system creates a medical (paramedic ambulance transport request) event it automatically creates a duplicate fire CAD system event for dispatch of County Fire resources or creates a fire event to transfer through a CAD-to-CAD link with the San Jose Fire Department or with South Santa Clara Santa Clara County Fire Protection District (at CALFIRE in Morgan Hill) for each's respective response to the call. All other fire calls are manually transferred, dispatcher-to-dispatcher, via telephone.

* 3 - County Communications provides Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD) Services to all callers from unincorporated county areas (including the South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District) and 8 municipalities that receive Fire Protection Services from the Central Fire District/County Fire Department and 2 cities (Gilroy and Milpitas) that directly contract with County Communications for EMD services.

Adopted



South Santa Clara County Fire District

15670 Monterey Street Morgan Hill, CA 95037 • (408) 779-2121 • www.sscbfd.com
Steven F. Woodill, Fire Chief

July 26, 2011

TO: Gary Graves, Chief Operating Officer

FROM: Steven F. Woodill, Fire Chief
South Santa Clara County Fire District

SUBJECT: Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Report, "Can You Hear Me Now?
Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County

This memo responds to the findings and recommendations in the Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Report, dated June 9, 2011, subject as above.

Overview

CALFIRE, as part of its contract for services, direct dispatches all Fire District personnel and equipment from its Dispatch Center in Morgan Hill. Additionally the CAL FIRE dispatch center in Morgan Hill dispatches State fire engine, helicopter, and bulldozer resources located at 7 State Fire Stations located throughout the unincorporated wild land areas of Santa Clara County. This dispatch center also direct dispatches State Fire resources located in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus Counties. This CALFIRE center is direct CAD to CAD linked with similar CAL FIRE centers in Monterey and Santa Cruz counties. A similar link was established with Santa Clara County Comm. in June 2011 which is undergoing Beta testing.

Referencing the Figure 1 dispatch flow chart on page 3 of the Grand Jury Report, it shows County Comm. dispatching District resources. This is incorrect as CALFIRE provides this service. 911 calls are received at County Comm. and the information is then routed by voice and/or teleprinter to CALFIRE if the emergency is in the District or in the unincorporated areas of the County that fall outside any fire jurisdiction in the County. CALFIRE then dispatches the appropriate fire equipment. CALFIRE also direct dispatches volunteer fire companies located at Uvas, Casa Loma, Ormsby, and Spring Valley as a service to the County. Table 1 located on page 4 is also incomplete as neither the South Santa Clara County Fire District nor CALFIRE are listed.

Response to Findings and Recommendations

Finding 1

Dispatch consolidation would result in more cost-effective and efficient emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County.

Adopted

Response

The District generally agrees with this statement. The term "dispatch consolidations" seems more practical.

Recommendation 1

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale – and all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch – Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga – should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFPs to do so.

Response

The District is not specifically mentioned.

Finding 2

Radio equipment has not been standardized and impedes effective countywide communication and emergency dispatch.

Response

The Fire Service in general has been very pro active in this area locally and on a State-wide basis. This is due in large part to a very robust statewide fire mutual aid system where fire resources respond from all over the State during large, major emergencies. Further establishment of CAD to CAD links and progress through SVRIA will see continued improvements.

Recommendation 2

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale; all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch – Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga; the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office; and Santa Clara County, should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology.

Response

While not specifically listed in the report the District agrees with the recommendation.

Sincerely,




Steven F. Woodill
Fire Chief
South Santa Clara County Fire District

Cooperative Fire Protection Provided by CAL FIRE

The foregoing instrument is a correct copy of the original.

ATTEST: Maria Marinos
Clerk of the Board

BY: 
Deputy Clerk

Date: AUG 23 2011



CITY OF CAMPBELL
Police Department

FILED

SEP 19 2011

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/Clerk,
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. ALDYCKI

September 6, 2011

Honorable Richard J. Loftus, Jr.
Presiding Judge
Santa Clara County Superior Court
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Judge Loftus,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Campbell City Council which approved the attached responses to two Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury reports, "*Can You Hear Me Now?, Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County*" and "*Fighting Fire or Fighting Change? Rethinking Fire Department Response Protocol and Consolidation Opportunities*"

Regarding emergency dispatch, the City of Campbell generally agrees with the Grand Jury's findings and both dispatch consolidation and radio interoperability are a high priority for the City. We are, in fact, already exploring a possible dispatch consolidation with the Los Gatos/Monte Sereno Police Department.

In response to the fire services report, the City of Campbell generally agrees with the Grand Jury's findings and works very closely with Santa Clara County Fire to ensure that we are providing effective emergency services to the community.

Please feel free to contact me or Interim City Manager Al Bito at (408) 866-2125 if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Regards,


Jason T. Baker
Mayor

Cc: Councilmembers
Interim City Manager

Attachment 1: City Response – Emergency Dispatch
Attachment 2: City Response – Fire Services

***Can You Hear Me Now?
Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County***

City of Campbell Response to Finding/Recommendations:

Finding 1:

Dispatch consolidation would result in more cost-effective and efficient emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County.

Response: The City of Campbell agrees partially with the finding. The City of Campbell does believe that varying models of collaboration including virtual consolidation and/or physical co-location could result in more cost-effective and efficient emergency response, but further study and analysis of regional dispatch and consolidation options is required to ensure that each agency continue to provide the highest quality service for the community.

Recommendation 1:

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale – and all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch—Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga—should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFPs to do so.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis. The City of Campbell is in the process of exploring collaboration with the Los Gatos/Monte Sereno Police Department and has issued a Request for Proposal to hire a consultant to complete a feasibility study. Additionally, the City of Campbell has participated in discussions with several agencies in the past 12 months regarding the topic of regional dispatch. The City is committed to continuing to explore regional dispatch opportunities.

Finding 2:

Radio equipment has not been standardized and impedes effective countywide communication and emergency dispatch.

Response: The City of Campbell agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 2:

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale; all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch—Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga; the Santa Clara County Sheriff's

***Can You Hear Me Now?
Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County***

Office; and Santa Clara County, should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis. A county-wide interoperable radio system is in the planning stages and the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Authority is preparing a Request for Proposal for release in late 2011. A project of this magnitude requires significant infrastructure investment funded through sources not yet identified. Until a project funding stream is identified, this project will receive priority funding for Homeland Security Grants.

FILED

AUG 05 2011



CUPERTINO

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

CITY HALL

10300 TORRE AVENUE • CUPERTINO, CA 95014-3255

TELEPHONE: (408) 777-3212 • FAX: (408) 777-3366

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/Clerk,
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. ALDYCKI

August 3, 2011

Ms. Helen Popenhager, Foreperson
Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury
Superior Court Building
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Ms. Popenhager:

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Cupertino received the Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury final report, **"Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County**. Please note that the City of Cupertino does not have its own emergency dispatch. The Council has determined as follows: the City agrees with findings 1 and 2 and authorized the City Manager to send this letter on its behalf.

In response to recommendation 1 which is **[A]ll jurisdictions which use the Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch – Cupertino, Los Altos Hill, and Saratoga- should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFP's to do so.**

The City Council of Cupertino has determined: pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.05(b)(3):

Due to the City's contractual relationship with the County and the Sheriff's department this analysis may be performed by these other entities. The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.

In response to recommendation 2 which is **[A]ll jurisdictions which use the Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch – Cupertino, Los Altos Hill, and Saratoga; the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office and Santa Clara County, should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology.**

The City Council of Cupertino has determined: pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.05(b)(1):

The recommendation has been implemented as Cupertino is a member of and contributes to the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Authority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David W. Knapp".

David W. Knapp
City Manager



MEMORANDUM

FILED

SEP 12 2011

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/Clerk,
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY T. ALDYCK

DATE: August 23, 2011

TO: Honorable Richard J. Loftus, Presiding Judge, Santa Clara County Superior Court

FROM: Governing Body, City of Los Altos

SUBJECT: Responses to Findings and Recommendations in the Final Report by the 2010-2011 Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury; "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County.

Finding 1

Dispatch consolidation would result in more cost-effective and efficient emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County.

Response 1

Respondent (City of Los Altos) agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 1

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale – and all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch – Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga – should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFPs to do so.

Response 1

The recommendation has been implemented. The cities of Los Altos, Palo Alto and Mountain View are in the process of collaborating on a joint virtual dispatch center consolidation project. Requests For Proposals (RFPs) for portions of the project have been issued.

Finding 2

Radio equipment has not been standardized and impedes effective countywide communication and emergency dispatch.

Response 2

Respondent agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 2

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale; all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch – Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga; the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office; and Santa Clara County, should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology.

Response 2

The recommendation has been implemented. The City is now working with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association (SVRIA) to achieve a countywide standardization of radio technology. A City representative sits on the SVRIA Working Committee and Radio Interoperability sub-committee. The City has issued an RFP to implement a mutual aid radio channel for the cities of Los Altos, Palo Alto and Mountain View. The system will be scalable to allow other agencies to join.

End of Response Report



FILED

AUG 04 2011

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/Clerk,
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. ALDYCKI *[Signature]*

July 22, 2011

The Honorable Richard J. Loftus, Jr.
Presiding Judge
Santa Clara County Superior Court
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Re: 2010-2011 Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Final Report – “Can You Hear Me Now?”
Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County

Dear Judge Loftus,

Please find the response requested to the subject report as filed with the Clerk of the Court on June 15, 2011.

With regard to Finding 1, The Town of Los Altos Hills agrees with the finding that dispatch consolidation would result in more cost-effective and efficient emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County.

With regard to Recommendation 1, the recommendation that jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch should consolidate with neighboring jurisdictions will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The purpose of consolidation would be to eliminate a duplication of services. However, jurisdictions including Los Altos Hills which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch have already consolidated. The Town has a long term agreement with the County for law enforcement services that includes emergency communications and dispatch services in support of the Sheriff's Department and Town operations. Services include 24 hour per day 911 telephone answering and radio dispatching of Sheriff's personnel. The Civil Grand Jury's Report provides no clear reasoning as to why jurisdictions using County Communications for dispatch should instead consolidate with other neighboring jurisdictions which all currently operate local dispatch centers. The Town's law enforcement services contract with the County may be allowed to expire on July 1, 2014. At such time, the Town would be free to consider procuring any available alternative consolidated dispatch service.

The Honorable Richard J. Loftus, Jr.
Presiding Judge
July 22, 2011
Page Two

With regard to Finding 2, The Town of Los Altos Hills agrees with the finding that radio equipment has not been standardized and impedes effective countywide communication and dispatch.

With regard to Recommendation 2, the recommendation that jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association (SVRIA) to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology has been implemented to the extent practicable. The Town's work with the SVRIA is largely indirect. This is because the Town employs no dispatch or communications personnel and does not lease, own or maintain any radio equipment. The Town endorses the SVRIA JPA's goal to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology. The Town contracts with the County for communications and dispatch services and supports the County's active participation in SVRIA.

On behalf of the Town, I thank the Santa Clara Civil Grand Jury for providing a comprehensive review of emergency dispatch services in Santa Clara County.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carl Cahill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Carl" and last name "Cahill" clearly distinguishable.

Carl Cahill
City Manager



TOWN OF LOS GATOS

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

(408) 354-6832
FAX: (408) 399-5786

CIVIC CENTER
110 E. MAIN STREET
P.O. BOX 949
LOS GATOS, CA 95031

September 13, 2011

FILED

SEP 19 2011

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/Clerk
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. ALDYCKI

Santa Clara County Superior Court
Office of the Honorable Judge Richard J. Loftus, Jr.
Presiding Judge
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Judge Loftus:

Attached please find the Town of Los Gatos' response to the Santa Clara Grand Jury reports for both **dispatch service consolidation** and fire service consolidation and modification. These responses were reviewed and approved by the Los Gatos Town Council on September 6th, 2011.

Should you have any questions regarding the enclosed document, please feel free to call me at 408-354-6832.

Sincerely,

GREG LARSON
Town Manager

GL:jj

cc: Chief Scott Seaman
Fire Chief Ken Kehmna

Attachments:

- 1) Town of Los Gatos Response to Santa Clara Grand Jury Report: **"Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County**
- 2) Town of Los Gatos Response to Santa Clara Grand Jury Report: Fighting Fire or Fighting Change? Rethinking Fire Department Response Protocol and Consolidation Opportunities

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**Town of Los Gatos Response to Santa Clara Grand Jury Report: "Can You Hear Me Now?"
Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County**

September 13, 2011

The dispatch report outlines the basic issues associated with providing dispatch service to a community for both police and fire. The report's inquiry and discussion leads to findings and recommendations supporting consolidation of services and standardization of equipment and technology. The report specifically recognized the Town and Campbell for their current work to issue a request for proposals to study a full or partial consolidation of dispatch services. Two findings and recommendations were made in the report. The Town is required to respond to both.

Finding 1

Dispatch consolidation would result in more cost-effective and efficient emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County.

Recommendation 1

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, The City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale – and all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch – Cupertino, Los Altos Hills and Saratoga – should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFPs to do so.

Town response:

Agree. The recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

The Town of Los Gatos is preparing to issue a contract to study consolidation of dispatch with the City of Campbell and expects to have the results of that study by January 2012. While the Town indicates that it agrees with the recommendation, a decision to consolidate with Campbell is dependent upon receipt and consideration of the study and Town Council consideration of cost savings/service level impacts.

In addition, the Town of Los Gatos has participated in regional dispatch consolidation research through the Chief of Police's involvement as chair of the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Authority (SVRIA) Working Committee. The chief has convened two meetings with public safety officials to discuss regional consolidation and also participated in a December 2010 site visit to the Utah dispatch center identified in the Grand Jury report. The complete study and analysis of regional dispatch is a high priority for County police chiefs including the Los Gatos Chief. Several agencies are exploring varying models of collaboration to include virtual and traditional brick and mortar regionalization. Since the role of the dispatcher plays a key part in the successful delivery of community safety, agencies are deliberate in their review to help ensure the highest quality dispatch services.

Finding 2

Radio equipment has not been standardized and impedes effective countywide communication and emergency dispatch.

Recommendation 2

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, The City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale; all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch – Cupertino, Los Altos Hills and Saratoga; the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office, and Santa Clara County, should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Authority to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology.

Town Response

Agree. The recommendation has been implemented.

A county-wide interoperable radio system is in the planning stages. The Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Authority is preparing a formal request for proposals to be released in late 2011. A project of this magnitude requires significant infrastructure investment funded through sources not yet identified. Until a project funding stream is identified, this project will receive priority funding for Homeland Security Grants. In addition, the Town is upgrading and standardizing its dispatch system as a sub-recipient through the City of Sunnyvale.



17555 Peak Avenue
Morgan Hill, CA 95037-4128
TEL: 408-779-7271
FAX: 408-779-3117
www.morganhill.ca.gov

STEVE TATE
Mayor

August 25, 2011

FILED

AUG 31 2011

Honorable Richard J. Loftus, Jr.
Presiding Judge
Santa Clara County Superior Court
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/Clerk
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. ALDYCKI

RE: City of Morgan Hill response to "Can You Hear Me Now" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County.

Dear Judge Loftus:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and respond to the 2010-2011 Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury's Report, "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County.

Finding 1

Dispatch consolidation would result in more cost-effective and efficient emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County.

Recommendation 1

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers: Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale and all jurisdictions that use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch: Cupertino, Los Altos Hills and Saratoga should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFP's to do so.

Response to recommendation 1: Agree

The complete study and analysis of regional dispatch is a high priority for County Police Chiefs as evidenced by multiple meetings on the topic in the past year. Several agencies are exploring varying models of collaboration to include virtual and traditional brick and mortar regionalization. Since the role of the dispatcher plays a key part in the successful delivery of safety in our communities, agencies are deliberate in their review to help ensure the highest quality service.

Finding 2

Radio equipment has not been standardized and impedes effective countywide communication and emergency dispatch

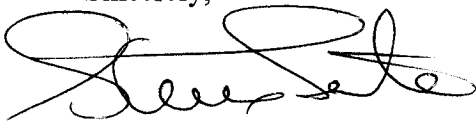
Recommendation 2

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers: Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale; all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch: Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga; the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office; and Santa Clara County, should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology.

Response to recommendation 2: Agree

A county-wide interoperable radio system is in the planning stages. The Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Authority is preparing a formal request for proposal to be released in late 2011. A project of this magnitude requires significant infrastructure investment funded through sources not yet identified. Until a project funding stream is identified, this project will receive priority funding for Homeland Security Grants.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Tate', with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

Steve Tate
Mayor
City of Morgan Hill



CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

Office of the Mayor and City Council • 500 Castro Street • Post Office Box 7540 • Mountain View, California 94039-7540
650-903-6304 • FAX 650-903-6039

September 14, 2011

Ms. Helene Popenhager, Foreperson
Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury
Superior Court Building
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

FILED

SEP 19 2011

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/Clerk
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. ALDYCKI

RE: City of Mountain View Response to "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County

Dear Ms. Popenhager:

Thank you for the opportunity to response to the Grand Jury's report on emergency dispatch, and resulting recommendations and findings.

Finding 1

Dispatch consolidation would result in more cost-effective and efficient emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County.

The City agrees with this finding. The City of Mountain View agrees that the dispatch consolidation could provide a more cost-effective emergency response in Santa Clara County. The City further believes that there are many ways in which greater consolidation or regionalization could occur. In addition to the City's current efforts to establish/provide joint dispatching with the Cities of Palo Alto and Los Altos (described further below), the City's Police Chief is an active participant in the County Police Chiefs' analysis of regional dispatch.

Recommendation 1

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching center—Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara and Sunnyvale—and all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County communications for dispatch—Cupertino, Los Altos Hills and Saratoga—should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFPs to do so.

This recommendation is being implemented. The City of Mountain View recognizes challenges of a regionalized and consolidated emergency dispatch system. We are in the process of a "virtual consolidation" with the Cities of Palo Alto and Los Altos which will provide many of the benefits of a consolidated dispatch center without many of the financial and logistical challenges of a "brick-and-mortar" consolidation. The three cities anticipate completing our virtual consolidation in approximately one year. The City is also involved in the larger discussions of the County Police Chiefs who have met on the topic numerous times over the past 12 months. The complete study and analysis of regional dispatch is a high priority for the County Police Chiefs.

Finding 2

Radio equipment has not been standardized and impedes effective County-wide communication and emergency dispatch.

The City agrees with this finding. A County-wide and interoperable radio system is in the planning stages and SVRIA is preparing an RFP for release in late 2011. A project of this magnitude requires significant infrastructure investments funded through sources not yet identified. Until a project-funding stream is identified, this project will receive priority funding from homeland security grants.

Recommendation 2

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching center—Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara and Sunnyvale—and all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch—Cupertino, Los Altos Hills and Saratoga; the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office; and Santa Clara County, should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association to achieve County-wide standardization of radio technology.

The City has implemented this recommendation and is working closely with SVRIA.

Thank you for your consideration of this response.

Sincerely,


Jac Siegel
Mayor, City of Mountain View

cc: City Manager
City Attorney
City Clerk

FILED

SEP 15 2011

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/Clerk
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. AIDYCKI

City of Palo Alto
Police Department

September 1, 2011

Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury
Superior Court
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Re: Civil Grand Jury Report - "Can You Hear Me Now? Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County"

Presiding Judge,

Attached you will find, as required by California Penal Code Section 933.05(a,b), the City of Palo Alto's response to the Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury's Final Report, "Can You Hear Me Now? Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County."

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the enclosed document, please feel free to call me at (650) 329-2103.

Sincerely,



Dennis Burns
Interim Public Safety Director

Grand Jury Recommendations:

Finding 1: *Dispatch Consolidation would result in more cost effective emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County.*

The City agrees with Finding 1.

Recommendation 1: *Jurisdictions that maintain their own dispatching centers should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFPs to do so.*

The City agrees with Recommendation 1.

The City of Palo Alto is working with the cities of Mountain View and Los Altos on a project to create a tri-city computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system. The City believes a “virtual consolidation” is a more cost effective solution, at least initially, than a physical consolidation.

The proposed tri-city virtual consolidation model will provide most of the benefits of consolidation without the start-up costs of building and equipping a brick and mortar facility.

Palo Alto Communications provides a number of ancillary services in addition to public safety dispatching. These services include dispatching for Animal Services, Utilities Customer Service, Park Rangers, Stanford Alarm Techs, after hours Public Works, after hours Stanford Facilities, and after hours Water Gas Waste Water. In addition, the center is the primary contact for the public and on-duty employees after hours and on weekends and holidays. It is unlikely that all of these services would be provided in a physically consolidated environment. The cost of replicating the services that remained with the City would need to be factored into any brick and mortar consolidation.

The Palo Alto Police Department believes the “virtual consolidation” strategy is consistent with the Grand Jury’s recommendations and that the strategy will provide a more efficient use of resources and enhanced situational awareness. The planned technologies are scalable enabling other agencies to participate in the future. There are clear cost savings benefits to this approach and it is anticipated additional efficiencies will become evident as implementation occurs.

Finding 2: *Radio equipment has not been standardized and impedes effective countywide communication and emergency dispatch.*

The City agrees with Finding 2.

Recommendation 2: *Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Authority to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology.*

The City agrees with Recommendation 2.

Police and Fire agencies in Santa Clara County operate on three disparate radio bands, VHF, UHF and 800 MHz. SVRIA is a countywide JPA that seeks to address the problem of voice and data interoperability. SVRIA plans to build a countywide 700 MHz radio system for all Santa Clara County public safety agencies. The Department agrees that this proposal is a sound model for Police Communications. There continues to be debate in the Fire Community about the reliability of digital 700 MHz radio communication during active fire incidents. SVRIA is scheduled to release an RFP in September for a regional radio system.

Funding has not been secured for the proposed system and cost estimates vary from 60 to 100 million dollars for the complete project. There may be additional costs to individual agencies for subscriber units (mobile and portable radios). The County Police and Fire Chiefs have committed future Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funding to the proposed system but, even in a phased approach, a considerable funding shortfall exists. The proposed installation schedule has Palo Alto, Mountain View and Los Altos as a phase three or final phase installation. Given these obstacles, the installation of a tri-city radio channel provides critical radio communications over the North County Region until the longer-term strategy can be implemented. There are representatives from all three cities participating in SVRIA committees dedicated to Santa Clara County regional goals.

The radio communication issues identified by the Grand Jury continue to be a major issue for the region. The consolidated effort under SVRIA is making progress defining the scope and cost of countywide radio system. There are funding challenges to building such a system. The Department and its partners in Mountain View and Los Altos are actively engaged with SVRIA in this and other regional communications projects.



City of Palo Alto City Council Staff Report

(ID # 2012)

Report Type: Consent Calendar

Meeting Date: 9/12/2011

Summary Title: Grand Jury Response - Emergency Dispatch

Title: Approval of Response to Santa Clara County Grand Jury Report "Can You Hear Me Now? Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County"

From: City Manager

Lead Department: Police

Recommendation

Staff recommends that Council approve the attached response to the Santa Clara County Grand Jury report on public safety dispatching and radio communications in Santa Clara County.

Executive Summary

The 2010-2011 Santa Clara County Grand Jury Report entitled "Can You Hear Me Now? Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County" outlines a series of concerns, findings and recommendations regarding public safety dispatching and radio communications in Santa Clara County. The primary concerns of the Grand Jury are:

- The duplication of resources by multiple agencies and jurisdictions.
- The duplication of resources may cause delayed or inadequate responses, particularly for EMS, or conversely the "over-allocation" of resources when multiple jurisdictions respond to the same incident.
- The transfer of medical calls to County EMS results in a delayed response to medical emergencies.
- The facts that Police, Fire and EMS agencies are on three different frequency bands and that radio coverage is limited to local areas inhibits the ability of agencies to communicate with each other and restricts inner-agency radio communication to a relatively small geographic area.

Background

The Palo Alto Police Department operates the Emergency Communications Center for City and has dispatch responsibilities for Police, Fire, Stanford DPS, Animal Control and Utilities Customer Service. In calendar 2010, the center received 145,267 incoming phone calls of which 32,401 calls were received over 9-1-1 trunk lines. The Communications center dispatched 53,992 Palo Alto Police incidents, 10,279 Stanford DPS incidents, 9,370 Fire incidents, 4,349 Animal Control incidents and 6,684 Utilities incidents for a total of 84,674 incidents. Because of the center's ancillary responsibilities, Palo Alto has the third highest incoming call volume in Santa Clara County (behind San Jose and County Communications). The center employs 20 Public Safety Dispatchers. Contracts with Stanford and Palo Alto Utilities result in the cost recovery of 25% of the Communications budget.

Discussion

The report mentions the "virtual consolidation" effort by the cities of Palo Alto, Mountain View, and Los Altos. The three Police departments spearheading this effort believe that this strategy addresses most of the Grand Jury concerns without burdening the cities with the start-up costs of a brick and mortar consolidation.

The Grand Jury Report cites the West Jordan, Utah Regional Center as a model for successful dispatch consolidation. The center is an excellent example of a unified operation. However, the initial cost for building and equipping the facility in the year 2000 was \$10 million dollars. In order to estimate the true cost savings of a physical consolidation, the anticipated savings would need to be clearly defined and amortized to understand how long it would take to recover the construction and equipment costs. A distinct advantage of virtual consolidation is the geographic redundancy of three locations. A single location has increased vulnerability in the event of a catastrophic event.

The virtual consolidation concept enables the three cities' 9-1-1 centers to operate on the same technology platform and networks for core public safety applications, the 9-1-1 phone system and a shared radio frequency. The first phase of this strategy is the joint acquisition of public safety applications that will operate on a single network. These applications include Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), Records Management (RMS) and mobile and in-field reporting systems. A vendor has been selected for this project and project implementation is anticipated to begin in the fourth quarter of 2011.

The second phase of this concept is the installation of a common radio channel covering all three cities. A frequency has been identified and licensed by the FCC and an RFP for construction has been issued. Grant funding through the State Homeland Security Grant program has been secured for this project.

The third phase of virtual consolidation is the design and deployment of a common 9-1-1 phone system that will allow the three cities to load share and have redundant capabilities. Initial discussions with potential providers have been initiated and implementation is anticipated for 2012. The State 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Office provides the funding for this project.

Leveraging this shared technology will enable the cities to increase efficiency, share resources and reduce costs.

The Grand Jury report is accurate in describing the duplication of resources by multiple agencies across the County. Each dispatch center allocates staffing based on peak call volume and demand and must be prepared to handle major incidents such as a multi-alarm fire or a large scale police response 24/7.

On a shared system, duplication would be reduced in a number of areas. Staffing adjustments based on shared capabilities would reduce overtime for sick calls and, potentially, the number of FTE positions. The overall staffing for three physically separate centers based on the tri-city activity level is inherently complex but each city would no longer be required to staff for the worst possible scenario. For example, if Palo Alto was working a 3 alarm fire, incoming 9-1-1 calls could be routed to Mountain View or Los Altos. The other agencies could create calls-for-service in the shared computer aided dispatch (CAD) system and dispatch Palo Alto responders over the shared radio frequency, thus freeing Palo Alto personnel to focus exclusively on the critical Fire event.

In addition, the shared technology will facilitate the use of resources outside of the geographic boundaries of each individual city. The enhanced situational awareness the technology provides will allow the dispatch of the closest available Police or Fire resource regardless of jurisdiction. These capabilities will also provide the opportunity to pursue true boundary drops for Fire response districts, initially between Palo Alto and Mountain View and possibly with County Fire in Los Altos.

The Grand Jury's concerns about delayed EMS responses and the transfer of EMS calls to County Communications are not applicable to Palo Alto as Palo Alto Fire provides its own EMS services including ambulances. Palo Alto Communications dispatches EMS resources and does not transfer callers to County Communications. A county-wide CAD to CAD interoperability project has the potential to reduce EMS response times for the other participating cities.

The tri-city CAD system will allow the three agencies to create common response algorithms that insure the correct allocation of resources to joint response incidents and precludes the duplication of efforts.

The radio communication concerns expressed by the Grand Jury continue to be an issue not only for Santa Clara County but for the State and the County as a whole. The Department concurs with the recommendations that all three cities continue to participate in the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Authority (SVRIA) in an effort to provide a long term solution to radio issues in Santa Clara County. Palo Alto, Mountain View and Los Altos have representatives on various working committees of the JPA. The aforementioned regional radio channel under development solves Police communication issues in the short term between the three Cities.

The radio channel provides a critical communication link between the Police units and allows for better coordination of joint responses or major events in the region.

There are number of other issues identified in the Grand Jury Report. The report cites the maintenance of back-up power as an additional expense necessitated by the need for continuity of operations in the dispatch centers. While this true, most Cities have other critical technology infrastructure and services that require an Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) and generators. Elimination of the Communications Centers would not eliminate the need for these redundant power sources.

The report identifies County Communications as the "Alternate Answering Point" for most Santa Clara County 9-1-1 centers. This back-up design is vulnerable in the event of a major catastrophe such as an earthquake when multiple centers could cease operations. County Communications is not capable of providing dispatch services for other centers as it does not have access to their radio systems. It is highly unlikely the center could handle the influx of 9-1-1 calls from several additional cities after a major event. The advantage of virtual consolidation is that the Palo Alto, Mountain View and Los Altos will provide redundant capabilities for each other. The technology is duplicated at all three locations insuring continuity of operations as long as one center is functioning.

Policy Implications

This response is consistent with City policy.

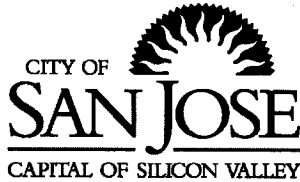
Attachments:

- Can You Hear Me Now Cover Letter 090111 (PDF)
- Can You Hear Me Now - Emerg Dispatch June 2011 (PDF)

Prepared By: Dennis Burns, Police Chief

Department Head: Dennis Burns, Police Chief

City Manager Approval: James Keene, City Manager



Office of the City Attorney

RICHARD DOYLE, CITY ATTORNEY

BRIAN DOYLE
Senior Deputy City Attorney
Direct Line: (408) 535-1908


September 14, 2011

HAND DELIVERED

The Honorable Richard J. Loftus, Jr.
Presiding Judge
Santa Clara County Superior Court
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

FILED

SEP 19 2011

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer, Clerk,
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. ALDYCKI 

Re: Grand Jury Reports

Dear Judge Loftus:

Pursuant to California Penal Code section 933, et seq., please accept the City's response to the 2010-2011 Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Report, "Can You Hear Me Now? Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County." The approved City responses and the Grand Jury's Report are enclosed for your review.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

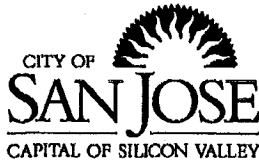
RICHARD DOYLE, City Attorney

By: 

BRIAN DOYLE
Senior Deputy City Attorney

RD:BD
Enclosures

cc: Mayor Chuck Reed
Debra Figone, City Manager
William McDonald, Fire Chief



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: William McDonald
Fire Chief

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: August 22, 2011

Approved

Date

9/1/11

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORT: "CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW? EMERGENCY DISPATCH IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY."

RECOMMENDATION

Accept and approve the staff response to the Civil Grand Jury Report "Can you Hear Me Now? Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County."

OUTCOME

Consideration and acceptance of the staff response to the Civil Grand Jury Report made public on June 15, 2011.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fire Department's detailed responses to the two findings and two recommendations of the Civil Grand Jury report are included in this response. Staff agrees with both findings and recommendations in the Civil Grand Jury report. The ability to implement the recommendations will be dependent upon the willingness and ability of the County cities, fire districts and County of Santa Clara to move forward in a coordinated way.

BACKGROUND

On June 15, 2011, the Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury released a report entitled, "Can you Hear Me Now? Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County." The report primarily considers the high number of local (operated by a city or district) fire and medical communications centers whether fire only or combined police/fire centers within the County. The Grand Jury report states that the existence of local centers create a seemingly unnecessary duplication of expense and effort when compared with a consolidated regional center. The report also points out that consolidated centers facilitate automatic aid and boundary drops between neighboring fire departments and

that a regional communications center would ensure that agencies from different jurisdictions could effectively communicate during emergencies, thereby making the environment much safer for responders.

According to the report, the Grand Jury interviewed all 15 Santa Clara County City Managers, all Fire Chiefs and Public Safety Chiefs responsible for fire departments, the Presidents of special fire district boards and selected Police Chiefs with a focus on the emergency medical dispatch function. The Grand Jury also received and reviewed budget information from County cities, dispatch data and records from various sources and reviewed Santa Clara County Communications Center response protocols.

The report provides operational and financial justification in support of consolidating local centers into a regional operation. A regional fire and EMS communications center would significantly improve interagency communications, allow cities and districts to take full operational advantage of boundary drops as well as the sharing of resources across jurisdictional boundaries, result in lower costs and faster emergency response times, and facilitate future resource sharing opportunities including full consolidations. However, a key factual error included on page 5 of the report states the following:

“Since County Comm (sic) is already responsible for more fire dispatching than any other dispatch center, and is responsible for *all* ambulance dispatching, the Grand Jury asked interviewees the obvious question: Given that there is duplication in the dispatching function, why maintain a local center?”

According to the report, Santa Clara County Communications (County Comm.) provides fire and EMS dispatching services to the cities of Cupertino, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Saratoga and the Santa Clara County Fire District. The 2010 annual report for Santa Clara County Fire District, the agency that serves those communities, reported a total of 18,007 dispatched emergency incidents. The City of San José Fire and EMS Communications Center by contrast, processed more than 70,000 emergency requests during that same time period or 3.5 times more than Santa Clara County Communications. Additionally, it is estimated that the cities of Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, Palo Alto and Mountain View account for a sizeable volume of annual emergencies possibly totaling the calls processed by Santa Clara County Communications. It could be concluded from the inaccurate statement and resulting findings, that the report is leading readers to a potential solution (i.e., consolidate all local centers into County Comm as it is stated in the report’s conclusion), when at a minimum, more research is required.

ANALYSIS

California Penal Code Section 933c requires that a governing body of the public agency which has been subject to a Grand Jury final report shall respond within 90 days to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to

matters under control of the governing body. The code section contains guidelines for responses requiring the City to state one of the following in response to the Grand Jury findings:

- It agrees with the finding.
- It agrees partially with the finding and provides explanation.
- It disagrees wholly with finding and provides explanation.

In addition, for each Grand Jury recommendation, the City is required to report one of the following actions:

- The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
- The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with an implementation timeframe.
- The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope of the parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion, which shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.
- The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation.

GRAND JURY FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CITY'S RESPONSE

Civil Grand Jury Finding 1

Dispatch consolidation would result in a more cost-effective and efficient emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County.

City Response:

The City of San José agrees with this finding.

Civil Grand Jury Recommendation 1

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San José, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale – and all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch – Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga – should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFPs to do so.

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

August 22, 2011

Subject: Grand Jury Response – “Can You Hear Me Now?”

Page 4

City Response:

The City of San José agrees with this recommendation. However, its full implementation depends on the willingness and ability of County agencies to collaborate and agree on mutually beneficial relationships. Department Staff has been in discussions with neighboring fire agencies on a variety of relationship agreements that will improve and enhance services to all communities served. These include boundary drops, enhanced automatic aid, the potential for sharing and contracting new services, other regional fire and EMS delivery options, and department consolidations.

Civil Grand Jury Finding 2

Radio equipment has not yet been standardized and impedes effective countywide communication and emergency dispatch.

City Response:

The City of San José agrees with this finding.

Civil Grand Jury Recommendation 2

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San José, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale – and all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch – Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga – should continue to work with Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association (SVRIA) to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology.

City Response:

The City of San José agrees with and has implemented the recommendation. All fire agencies in the County are participating and support the efforts of SVRIA.

/s/

WILLIAM MCDONALD, Fire Chief

For questions, please contact William McDonald, Fire Chief, at 408-794-6951.



FILED

SEP 12 2011

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/Clerk,
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. ALDYCKI



Mayor

Jamie L. Matthews

Council Members

Lisa M. Gillmor
Will Kennedy
Patrick Kolstad
Patricia Mahan
Jamie McLeod
Kevin Moore

August 31, 2011

Honorable Richard J. Loftus, Jr.
Presiding Judge
Santa Clara County Superior Court
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Judge Loftus:

Per California Penal Code sections 933(c) and 933.05, please find below the City of Santa Clara's responses to the findings and recommendations found in the 2010-2011 Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Report, "CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?" EMERGENCY DISPATCH IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY.

Finding 1:

Dispatch consolidation would result in more cost-effective and efficient emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County.

City Response to Finding 1:

The City agrees, in part, with the finding.

The City agrees that consolidation of the dispatch centers at smaller agencies could result in cost savings for those entities. The City does not believe, however, that transferring its dispatch function to an alternate location would result in more efficient emergency response.

Consolidation that results in eliminating and/or combining administrative and managerial positions or reducing the quantity of line personnel can be more cost effective. The City does not dispute this point, but each individual agency would need to conduct its own cost/benefit analysis to determine if consolidation is truly cost effective as it pertains to their situation. The capital outlay for the technology required to consolidate would be significant.

The City disagrees with the assertion that our emergency response would be more efficient under a consolidated dispatching system. The study suggests that there is a twenty second to three minute delay for medical calls due to the need to transfer the call

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1500 Warburton Avenue
Santa Clara, CA 95050
(408) 615-2250
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to County Communications. This is not the case in the City of Santa Clara. On the vast majority of calls, life saving medical equipment and personnel from the Santa Clara Fire Department is dispatched from our Communications Center in less than a minute from the time a citizen dials 9-1-1. Our medical calls are not transferred to County Communications. (We do contact County Communications at the touch of a button, via a dedicated line, only to request an ambulance). This results in very efficient dispatching and arrival of life saving medical assets. Additionally, our dispatch personnel are highly trained in Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD) and provide medical instructions to the caller until help arrives.

Recommendation 1:

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale – and all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch – Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga – should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFP's to do so.

City Response to Recommendation 1:

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable at this time.

The City of Santa Clara recently made a \$5 million capital investment in a brand new, state-of-the-art, 9-1-1 Communications Center to serve its citizens. This facility is less than a year old. The center fields over 184,000 calls per year and dispatches over 82,000 events to Police, Fire, and EMS personnel. Additionally, the City's entire radio system is operated from here and provides vital communications to Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and the City-owned electric utility department--Silicon Valley Power. The center does more than just dispatch Police and Fire first responders. The Center is a vital part of the City's structure and would play a critical role in any major disaster.

The City of Santa Clara may be interested in participating in some degree of consolidation as a provider. The City of Santa Clara would examine and consider responding to any RFP's soliciting the consolidation or provision of dispatch services. Our facility is large enough and our systems are robust enough that we could be a potential site for other jurisdictions that are looking to outsource or consolidate their dispatching function.

Finding 2:

Radio equipment has not been standardized and impedes effective countywide communication and emergency dispatch.

City Response to Finding 2:

The City agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 2:

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale; all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch – Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga; the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office; and Santa Clara County, should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association (sic) to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology.

City Response to Recommendation 2:

The recommendation has been implemented.

The City of Santa Clara, via its Police Department, has a multi-year history of being an active participant in the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Authority (SVRIA), and its predecessor, the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Project (SVRIP). Santa Clara Police Department personnel, in partnership with colleagues from the Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety, were recently responsible for initiating the Authority's renewed focus on and goal of building a single countywide radio system. A radio system covering the cities of Santa Clara and Sunnyvale will be the first phase of a multi-phase countywide build out.

The Santa Clara County Police Chiefs Association also recognized the importance of a countywide radio system. The association recently made the countywide radio system its number one priority when it pertains to grant funding. Because of this support, SVRIA has been able to obtain approximately \$1.2 million dollars in federal grant funding to begin building this countywide system.

Meetings took place in May and June of 2011 between SVRIA and representatives from many agencies in Santa Clara County. An RFP is currently being created for phase one of this project. The goal of SVRIA is to have the RFP for phase one released for proposals by September 1, 2011, with phase one completed by November of 2012.

The City of Santa Clara, via its Police Department, is committed to working with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Authority (SVRIA) until a truly interoperable countywide radio system is built.

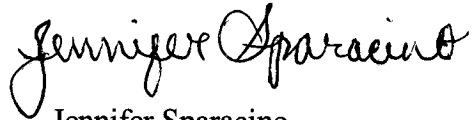
Judge Richard J. Loftus, Jr.
August 31, 2011
Page 4

If there are any questions in regards to the City's response to the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations, please contact City Manager Jennifer Sparacino at (408) 615-2210.
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the report.

Sincerely,



Jamie L. Matthews
Mayor



Jennifer Sparacino
City Manager

JLM:JS:yfg

cc: City Council
Kevin Kyle, Police Chief
Phil Kleinheinz, Fire Chief



Incorporated October 22, 1956

CITY OF SARATOGA

13777 FRUITVALE AVENUE • SARATOGA, CALIFORNIA 95070 • (408) 868-1200

FILED

AUG 31 2011

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer, Clerk,
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. ALDYCKI

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Manny Cappello
Jill Hunter
Emily Lo
Howard Miller
Chuck Page

August 18, 2011

Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury
Office of the Civil Grand Jury
c/o Honorable Richard J. Loftus, Jr.
Presiding Judge
Santa Clara County Superior Court
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Re: 2010-2011 SANTA CLARA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORT REGARDING
"CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?" EMERGENCY DISPATCH IN SANTA CLARA
COUNTY"

Honorable Members of the Civil Grand Jury:

The City Council for the City of Saratoga has reviewed your June 15, 2011 report regarding "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County ("Report") and authorized me to provide this response. The City Council appreciates the thorough and deliberate work of the Civil Grand Jury and the Grand Jury's attention to the important issue of radio interoperability. The City of Saratoga has devoted considerable resources to promoting radio interoperability in Santa Clara County.

With respect to the specific applicable findings and recommendations in the Report, the City's response is set forth below:

Finding 1:

Dispatch consolidation would result in more cost-effective and efficient emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County.

The City agrees.

Recommendation 1:

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale – and all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County

Communications for dispatch—Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga— should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFPs to do so.

The City will implement the recommendation to the extent practicable given that the City does not operate a police or fire department. The Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department providing police services to the City and the independent fire districts serving City residents already have consolidated operations with neighboring jurisdictions. The City will urge those organizations to consider further consolidation subject to terms and conditions that maintain effective dispatch operations for existing residents and businesses served by the consolidated dispatch operations. This action will be completed by September 30, 2011.

Finding 2:

Radio equipment has not been standardized and impedes effective countywide communication and emergency dispatch.

The City agrees.

Recommendation 2:

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale; all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch—Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga; the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office; and Santa Clara County, should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology.

The recommendation has been implemented. The City Manager and Mayor worked with the Santa Clara County/Cities Managers' Association to have the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association formalized as a joint powers agency to provide stability of long term service and to facilitate coordination and resource sharing among member agencies. The City Manager serves as one of the Board Members of the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association.

Thank you for your consideration of this response.

Sincerely,



Howard A. Miller

Mayor, City of Saratoga

Cc: Members of the Saratoga City Council
City Manager
City Attorney

CITY OF SUNNYVALE

The Heart of Silicon Valleysm

456 WEST OLIVE AVENUE SUNNYVALE, CALIFORNIA 94086 (408) 730-7473

August 23, 2011

FILED

SEP 15 2011

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/D clerk,
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. ALDYCKI

Melinda Hamilton
Mayor

Jim Griffith
Vice Mayor

Otto Lee
Councilmember

Christopher R. Moylan
Councilmember

Anthony (Tony) Spitaleri
Councilmember

David Whittum
Councilmember

Honorable Richard J. Loftus, Jr.
Presiding Judge
Santa Clara County Superior Court
191 North First St.
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Judge Loftus,

The Sunnyvale City Council received the 2010 – 2011 Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury's Final Reports on *"Fighting Fire or Fighting Change? Rethinking Fire Department Response Protocol and Consolidation Opportunities"* and *"Can You Hear Me Now? Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County"*.

Following is the Council's response to the Findings and Recommendations per authority section 933.05(a) of the California Penal Code.

Fighting Fire or Fighting Change? Rethinking Fire Department Response Protocol and Consolidation Opportunities

Finding 1

It is extremely costly to equip a fire department for only the occasional fire response; the County and fifteen towns/cities have not been proactive in challenging fire departments to adopt changes that are more cost effective and that better serve their communities. Further, unions are more interested in job preservation than in providing the right mix of capabilities at a reasonable cost, using scare tactics to influence the public and fostering firefighter unwillingness to collaborate with EMS.

Response

The respondent wholly disagrees with the finding.

In 1950, the City of Sunnyvale recognized fiscal savings by combining emergency services through a Public Safety model. This model places two department members on fire apparatus and supplements response to fire calls with members based in police

services. All members are trained as Police Officers, Firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians – Basic and fulfill roles based upon need. Utilizing the resources of the Santa Clara County EMS Agency, the Department of Public Safety does not provide paramedic services, thus reducing our personnel costs.

A per capita review finds the cost of service delivery in Sunnyvale one of the lowest in the region. Being the second largest city in Santa Clara County, the City of Sunnyvale has one of the lowest staffing levels, but still provides full emergency services to residents and visitors. The per capita cost of salary and benefits is also significantly lower than our neighboring cities.

In reviewing the Grand Jury's Report, the chart on page two identifies the jurisdictions within Santa Clara County. Of the 14 jurisdictions identified with a *Fire Budget per Capita*, the City of Sunnyvale, which is the second largest city in Santa Clara County, has the 9th lowest cost per capita to deliver fire services.

Recommendation 1A

All cities that manage their own fire department—Gilroy, Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale—and the County (for CCFD and SCFD) should benchmark and observe best practices from communities that have demonstrated successful changes in response protocol and consolidation efforts, such as in San Mateo County, CA; West Jordan, UT; or Scottsdale, Arizona.

Response

The recommendation has been implemented.

All Public Safety Officers are trained as Police Officers, Firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians – Basic. Transitioning to a traditional police and fire department would significantly increase costs of fire and EMS services in that additional personnel would need to be hired to staff the resulting fire department.

Sunnyvale staffs fire apparatus with two (2) personnel since the vast majority of service calls are of an EMS nature. Response to fires brings cross trained police personnel to supplement those responding on fire apparatus. This model allows the City to appropriately staff responding fire apparatus with police-based employees for calls requiring additional personnel. On page 13 of

the Grand Jury Report, data from the LAFCO Report states Sunnyvale has five (5) firefighters per apparatus; this is incorrect - Sunnyvale has two (2) per apparatus.

Recommendation 1B

All fifteen towns/cities—Campbell, Cupertino, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, Saratoga, Sunnyvale—and the County (for CCFD and SCFD) should determine the emergency response service they want to achieve, particularly as to the result, then determine how best to achieve that.

Response

The recommendation has been implemented.

The City of Sunnyvale agrees with this statement, which is reflected in our numerous performance outcomes and measurements. The implementation of our cost efficient Public Safety model validates the decision to have a Department of Public Safety.

Recommendation 1C

All cities that manage their own fire department—Gilroy, Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale—and the County (for CCFD and SCFD) should collaborate with their fire department, union and political leadership to drive fire department change and develop consistent, joint communications messages for the public.

Response

The recommendation has been implemented.

Finding 2

Based on SCC's fluctuating demand for emergency services, contractually based minimum staffing requirements are not warranted and hinder fire chiefs in effectively managing firefighter staffing to meet time of day, day of week, season of year demand. This wastes money and may drive station closure as budgets continue to erode.

Response

The respondent partially agrees with this finding.

Sunnyvale does not have a mandated minimum staffing model for the Bureau of Fire Operations. Apparatus are staffed with two (2) personnel which is the safe minimum for operating the vehicle and a minimum number of personnel for response to an emergency medical service call.

Recommendation 2

All cities that manage their own fire department—Gilroy, Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale—and the County (for CCFD and SCFD) and that also have contractual minimum staffing requirements should reopen negotiations with the unions to eliminate this term and any other term that limits a fire chief's ability to "right-size" staffing given the time of day or time of year.

Response

The recommendation has been implemented.

Sunnyvale does not have contractually mandated minimum staffing model for the Bureau of Fire Operations.

Finding 3

Whether the emergency responder is a firefighter-paramedic or an EMS paramedic matters little to the person with the medical emergency; using firefighter-paramedics in firefighting equipment as first responders to all non-police emergencies is unnecessarily costly when less expensive paramedics on ambulances possess the skills needed to address the 96% of calls that are not fire related.

Response

The respondent wholly disagrees with the finding.

Sunnyvale is not aware of call analysis or any studies identifying that 96% of non-fire-related calls can be handled by paramedics on an ambulance. If that data is available, we would like to review it.

The response to many emergency medical service calls require additional personnel for lifting, carrying, extricating, performing CPR, etc. The Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety staffs fire

apparatus with two (2) Emergency Medical Technicians – Basic and relies upon the County to provide paramedic services. If additional personnel are required, another apparatus is called or police-based staff responds.

Recommendation 3A

All fifteen towns/cities—Campbell, Cupertino, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, Saratoga, Sunnyvale—and the County (for CCFD and SCFD) should adopt an emergency services department mentality and staff or contract accordingly to meet demand.

Response

The recommendation has been implemented.

Sunnyvale is not sure what the Grand Jury is referencing in regards to adopting an “*emergency services department mentality*.” In 1950, the City adopted a Public Safety Model which allowed for a lower level of staffing and the response of cross-trained police and fire personnel to emergency calls for service.

The City relies upon the County of Santa Clara to provide complete paramedic services.

Recommendation 3B

The County should modify its approach to mandating (through direct contract or through the EMS provider contract) that fire departments serve as first-responder, reserve the use of firefighting vehicles for fire events, and enable the EMS contractor to be first responder.

Response

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is it reasonable.

Within Sunnyvale, the County of Santa Clara is the first responder for paramedic service calls. Job tasks on scene, specialized equipment for calls and rapid response for cardiac arrests, require the response of Public Safety resources.

The current County contract for paramedic response requires a **7:59** response time with 90% compliance. Relying on this would significantly decrease an individual's chance of being successfully resuscitated from a cardiac arrest. For every minute a person is in cardiac arrest, their chance of successful resuscitation decreases 7 – 10 %. An 8-minute response time is not acceptable within Sunnyvale.

Sunnyvale's response to cardiac events involves both police and fire services responding to provide the best chance of success for saving a life. To meet the response times currently achieved within Sunnyvale, the County would need to significantly increase their number of paramedic ambulances.

Recommendation 3C

In consideration of non-fire emergencies, all cities that manage their own fire department—Gilroy, Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale—and the County (for CCFD and SCFD) should modify fire department protocols to authorize, incorporate and use less expensive non-firefighter paramedics and non-firefighting equipment.

Response

Sunnyvale does not operate a paramedic service. The City utilizes the County of Santa Clara to provide paramedic service delivery.

Recommendation 3D

All cities that manage their own fire department—Gilroy, Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale—and the County (for CCFD and SCFD) should consider ways to extend the service life of expensive firefighting vehicles by augmenting with ambulance vehicles—either newly purchased as fire apparatus is replaced or in collaboration with the county EMS provider.

Response

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is it reasonable.

The City of Sunnyvale current service life of our firefighting apparatus is 20 years. Advancements in technology, emissions, and apparatus safety significantly improve in that 20 year time period. Extending service life several years for a specific apparatus does occur on a case by case basis.

Finding 4

Emergency callers care less about seeing their city/town name on the equipment door than receiving timely assistance when needed, and a wide variety of consolidation opportunities offer cities ways to deliver emergency response services at a reduced cost and without compromising service response times.

Response

The respondent agrees with this finding.

Sunnyvale participates in a variety of multi-agency efforts to consolidate or share services and resources. Technology is now available, to drop geographic boundaries and use virtual mapping to assign the closest first responder regardless of agency. This effort is led in part by the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Authority (SVRIA).

Recommendation 4A

All cities that manage their own fire department—Gilroy, Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale—and the County (for CCFD and SCFD) should evaluate and implement cost-saving consolidations, including administration consolidation, boundary drop, department or regional consolidation, purchasing, personnel training and equipment maintenance.

Response

The recommendation has been implemented.

The Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety utilizes one administration to manage what other cities refer to as their Police and Fire Departments. All Public Safety members are cross trained as Police Officers, Firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians – Basic and operate in any role at any time. This model allows for rapid deployment of personnel to any emergency with significantly fewer total staff members.

The City participates in regional training academies for both police and fire training.

Sunnyvale is working with the cities of Los Gatos and Monte Sereno to vertically consolidate the Computer Aided Dispatching system to reduce costs. Automated database access and sharing

is underway, multi-agency collaboration for the purchase of Communications and Dispatch platforms are in-process. Beyond Mutual Aid and Automatic Aid Agreements, agencies are exploring the Battalion Chief as a shared resource. Other efforts include the sharing and collaboration of Fire Cause and Arson Investigation personnel, in-county Overhead Command Teams, and Multi-Discipline/Multi-County Task Force Teams.

Recommendation 4B

All cities that manage their own fire department—Gilroy, Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale—and the County (for CCFD and SCFD) should consider adopting a vehicle fleet management approach by establishing a countywide standard for vehicles and equipment, consolidating purchases to take advantage of lowered costs, and consolidating maintenance or revisiting guaranteed maintenance contracts on new vehicle purchases.

Response

The recommendation has been implemented.

Joint purchase and sharing of Reserve Fire Apparatus, regional equipment maintenance and management is currently under discussion.

Can You Hear Me Now? Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County

Finding 1

Dispatch consolidation would result in more cost-effective and efficient emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County.

Response

The respondent disagrees partially with the finding.

The Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety has been in ongoing discussions with other County agencies to discuss the feasibility of a consolidated dispatch center. Additionally, partnerships in the County are being formed to create virtual consolidated dispatching through like software purchases and the hosting of such solutions.

The requirements and expenses associated to a truly consolidated dispatch center are significant. Communication/phone lines, utilization of the same Computer Aided Dispatch system, radio systems being interoperable and the appropriate facilities to accommodate the personnel would be required prior to consolidation.

Recommendation 1

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale – and all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch—Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga— should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFPs to do so.

Response

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

The Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety is participating in a virtual consolidated dispatch effort through software hosting with the Town of Los Gatos. Additional discussions are being held to determine whether a consolidation effort or a co-located effort could be more cost effective in the current economic environment. Many of the above listed costs would require up front funding that could result in significant delay for savings to be realized. A proper analysis and funding determination would require extensive efforts to locate suitable facilities, development of communications systems, establishing a phone system and utilization of a Computer Aided Dispatch system. There would be significant impact to Records Management systems and Mobile Data systems that are currently deployed in the disparate agencies.

In January 2011, City Managers from Sunnyvale, Mountain View, Palo Alto and Los Altos have begun further analysis to determine the feasibility of consolidated services. One of the services being reviewed is a joint communications center. Through discussions with the listed agencies efforts could take between 5-7 years.

Finding 2

Radio equipment has not been standardized and impedes effective countywide communication and emergency dispatch.

Response

The respondent agrees with the finding.

Sunnyvale recognizes this issue and is one of the lead agencies with City of Santa Clara in the first phase of implementing a countywide interoperable radio project. Under the Silicon Valley Radio Interoperable Authority, the cities in Santa Clara County will be able to utilize a state of the art P25 radio system.

Recommendation 2

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale; all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch—Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga; the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office; and Santa Clara County, should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology.

Response

The recommendation has been implemented.

Sunnyvale recognizes this issue and is one of the lead agencies with City of Santa Clara in the first phase of the implementation of a countywide interoperable radio project. Under the Silicon Valley Radio Interoperable Authority, the cities in Santa Clara County will be able to utilize a state of the art P25 radio system.

If you have any comments or questions, please contact me at (408) 730-7473.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melinda Hamilton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Melinda" being more prominent than the last name "Hamilton".

Melinda Hamilton, Mayor