



1 North San Antonio Road
Los Altos, California 94022-3087

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 8, 2026

TO: The Honorable Julie A. Emede, Presiding Judge, Santa Clara County Superior Court

FROM: Gabe Engeland, City Manager

SUBJECT: **RESPONSE TO THE 2026 SANTA CLARA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORT “*POTHOLE DAMAGE: IMPROVING CLAIMS PROCESSES WITHIN SANTA CLARA COUNTY*”**

The City of Los Altos submits the following specific responses as requested on page 15 of the 2026 Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Report “Pothole Damage: Improving claims processes within Santa Clara County” related to the Findings and Recommendations set forth in the Report.

Findings and Recommendations

Finding 1:

Jurisdictions within Santa Clara County rejected 92% of pothole claims from 2020 to 2025 due to reasons including missed deadlines, incorrect jurisdiction, and lack of prior notice.

Response 1:

Respondent, City of Los Altos, neither agrees nor disagrees with the finding as the City is unable to verify the data provided.

Finding 2:

Claims are often rejected because the claimant filed with the incorrect jurisdiction, which can happen because jurisdictional lines are often unclear or poorly communicated. The claims websites of all jurisdictions within Santa Clara County lack information about how to determine if a road is in its jurisdiction.

Response 2:

Respondent, City of Los Altos, agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 2a:

All jurisdictions within Santa Clara County should include a link to a map or list of roads they maintain on their claims website.

The jurisdictions should implement this by December 15, 2026.

Response 2a:

Respondent, City of Los Altos, has already implemented this recommendation.

Recommendation 2b:

All jurisdictions within Santa Clara County should update their claims websites to identify roads that are commonly mistaken as being in their jurisdictions.

The jurisdictions should implement this by December 15, 2026.

Response 2b:

Respondent, City of Los Altos, has already implemented this recommendation.

Finding 3:

Fifteen jurisdictions – the County, Campbell, Cupertino, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San José, Santa Clara, and Saratoga – have websites with deficiencies that make it difficult to file a claim.

Response 3:

Respondent, City of Los Altos, agrees with the finding as it pertains to the City of Los Altos.

Recommendation 3a:

Eleven jurisdictions – the County, Campbell, Cupertino, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, San José, and Saratoga – should update their websites to provide clear instructions and information about how to file a claim in addition to a link to the claim form.

The jurisdictions should implement this by December 15, 2026.

Response 3a:

Respondent, City of Los Altos, has already implemented this recommendation.

Recommendation 3b:

Fourteen jurisdictions – the County, Campbell, Cupertino, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San José, and Santa Clara – should incorporate useable software on their websites that can translate claim forms into multiple languages or provide claim forms in multiple languages based on the demographics they serve.

The jurisdictions should implement this by December 15, 2026.

Response 3b:

Respondent, City of Los Altos, determines this recommendation requires further analysis to determine whether translation services are warranted for the City of Los Altos. As well, respondent, City of Los Altos, will need to determine the cost for such translation services as this recommendation represents an unfunded mandate for the City. The analysis of this recommendation will include what languages may need translation services within the City of Los Altos and how much such services will cost the City. This analysis will be completed by December 15, 2026.

Finding 4:

When pothole claims are rejected, claimants filing claims against the County, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Mountain View, Palo Alto, and San José receive a notice that provides little or sometimes no explanation for the rejection. Although jurisdictions within Santa Clara County are not legally obligated to provide a reason for rejection, the lack of clarity in the decisions made on the claims can add to a claimant's frustration.

Response 4:

Respondent, City of Los Altos, partially agrees with the finding. Respondent, City of Los Altos, partially disagrees with the statement that "the lack of clarity in the decisions made on the claims can add to a claimant's frustration" as it is speculative.

Recommendation 4:

The County, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Mountain View, Palo Alto, and San José should update their rejection letters to specify whether the decision was due to lack of timeliness, incorrect jurisdiction, lack of prior notice, or other reason and to provide a specific contact to call or email if the claimant has further questions about the reason for rejection.

The jurisdictions should implement this by December 15, 2026.

Response 4:

Respondent, City of Los Altos, has already implemented this recommendation.