



2025-2026 Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury

# **Compliance Report:**

## **Following up on 2022 and 2023-24 recommendations**

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May 12, 2026

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## INTRODUCTION

Each year, the Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury issues reports with findings and recommendations to local government entities in Santa Clara County. The agencies are required by law to provide a response to all findings and recommendations. The value of these reports is realized when government agencies meet their expressed commitments and improve transparency and efficiency.

To hold agencies accountable to their commitments, the 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury revisited previously published Civil Grand Jury reports from 2022 and 2023-24. The 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury evaluated the progress of recommendations each agency had agreed to implement and found that in many instances, a follow-up was warranted. In a majority of cases, recommendations are still in progress and have not been completed.

This report summarizes the information the 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury received from each agency in response to its follow-up requests.

## METHODOLOGY

The 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury reviewed 14 of the reports issued from 2022 to 2024 and the agency responses to those reports to determine if there were outstanding recommendations that had not yet been implemented. In those cases, the 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury requested that agencies provide documentation showing that the outstanding recommendations had been implemented or that a revised timeline had been created.

## NO SINGLE SOURCE OF TRUTH: COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA COUNTYWIDE PROCUREMENT

### **Summary of the 2023-24 Report**

The 2023-24 Civil Grand Jury (Civil Grand Jury) published a report addressing long-standing issues the County of Santa Clara (County) had with its procurement process. Specifically, the report looked at the absence of a Countywide contract management system that could allow County departments to find previously awarded contracts. The County used multiple systems, none of which provided users with the ability to search for individual contracts. There was also the absence of a policy for contractor evaluations, how contracts should be executed, and where to store them. Additionally, the report found that the County did not have a Countywide strategic procurement plan to address these longstanding issues.

The Civil Grand Jury recommended that the County:

- Consider the development of a Countywide contract management system;
- Provide employees with a contractor evaluation template;
- Develop a plan for a simple Countywide system for storing and sharing contractor evaluations;
- Develop a plan for one or more procurement systems that departments would use instead of custom spreadsheets;
- Keep all County employees engaged in procurement performance goals and how their individual performance connects to department and Countywide goals;
- Monitor and measure individual department performance;
- Develop a Countywide strategic procurement plan;
- Develop a Countywide technology plan to address the procurement shortfalls.

Including subparts, the Civil Grand Jury made 15 recommendations to the County.

### **Agency Response**

In its August 2024 response, the County stated that it would evaluate and determine whether it should adopt a Countywide contract management system capable of including a contract search system and sharing and storing contractor evaluations. Part of the evaluation would involve determining whether to continue using the existing SAP/Ariba Contract Management system or procure a different system. The County stated that it would also develop and implement a process for contractor evaluation, and a new eSourcing systems platform that would provide real-time information on the progression of contracts from the first draft to the final signature. Additionally, the County Procurement Department would develop a Countywide procurement strategic plan to

address longstanding issues pertaining to contracts, including compliance, cycle time, cost savings, and customer satisfaction.

In November 2024, the County Procurement Department recommended conducting a request for proposal (RFP) for a new Countywide procurement management system and contracting system. By June 2025, the County had implemented three of the Civil Grand Jury's recommendations.

A link to the agency response from 2024 is below:

- [County of Santa Clara](#)

### **Follow-up**

The 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury followed up with the County regarding the status of evaluating and determining a Countywide contract management system. The County decided to fully deploy its current contract management system, Ariba, instead of issuing an RFP. Additionally, the County's medical system, Santa Clara Valley Healthcare (SCVH), updated its Pathways Materials Management system (PMM) and implemented a sourcing solution specific to hospital systems. The County determined that it would also integrate SCVH procurement and contract functions into Ariba. The Countywide integration of Ariba will be implemented in four phases to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2026.

The County will also implement a new Countywide SAP/Ariba Supplier Lifecycle Performance (SLP) feature to manage the entire supplier relationship in one place. This is targeted for the first quarter of 2027, after the final consolidation of all service contracts within Ariba in 2026. The County is working with SAP/Ariba technical and functional support to accomplish not only this integration, but also to streamline the processes for approvals, invoicing, and payment.

On April 1, 2025, the County implemented a new eSourcing system, Biddingo, which streamlined the process of connecting with suppliers and the ability to monitor the progression of a contract from beginning to end.

The County expects to submit its strategic plan to the Board of Supervisors for approval in Spring 2026. Policy updates will also be included in the strategic plan.

## FLAWED INFORMATION, FLAWED DECISIONS: THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE, AND OVERSIGHT AT THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

### **Summary of the 2023-24 Report**

The 2023-24 Civil Grand Jury (Civil Grand Jury) investigated the September 2022 sale of an office building at 3553 North First Street in San José by the Santa Clara County Housing Authority (SCCHA) that resulted in the loss of \$16.2 million in public funds. The investigation revealed that:

- Executive management of SCCHA presented incomplete and misleading information to their Board of Commissioners (Board);
- Executive management failed to develop and present analyses of other viable options for the use or repurposing of the property to the Board;
- The Board failed to exercise its fiduciary responsibility to protect the assets and financial stability of the SCCHA.

In addition, the Civil Grand Jury found:

- Executive management did not have a long-term plan with measurable objectives that would enable its Board to assess the impact of their decisions on SCCHA's operational, staffing, and space requirement needs;
- The Board could not articulate its role and responsibilities as SCCHA Commissioners;
- The County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors lacked specific qualifications for job requirements that support the recruitment, nomination, and appointment of SCCHA Commissioners;
- The Board of Supervisors has been remiss in filling SCCHA Board vacancies.

To address its findings, the Civil Grand Jury report made three recommendations to the SCCHA to improve processes regarding financial information provided to the Board and long-term planning. It made four recommendations, including subparts, to the County of Santa Clara (County) regarding the selection and training of SCCHA Commissioners.

### **Agency Response**

SCCHA disagreed that management presented misleading information to its Board and declined to implement a recommendation that the Board require management to have financial documents

for the Board validated by experts to ensure they provide an unbiased evaluation. It agreed to implement the remaining two recommendations to include performance targets and measurable objectives in its next five-year plan, as well as an assessment of space needs and associated funding requirements. The development of a new five-year plan was initially scheduled to begin in 2025.

The County disagreed with two other recommendations regarding the selection of SCCHA Commissioners. It agreed with and implemented a recommendation regarding timely documentation of appointments and partially agreed with a recommendation regarding training for SCCHA Commissioners. The County now provides new commissioners with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines, but has noted that applicable training should be provided by SCCHA, not the County.

Links to the agency responses from 2024 are below:

- [Santa Clara County Housing Authority](#)
- [County of Santa Clara](#)

### **Follow-up**

There was only one outstanding issue as of July 2025 that involved the SCCHA's new five-year plan. The 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury contacted the SCCHA to request the plan that the agency initially anticipated would be completed in July 2025 and the section of that plan that addressed space needs and associated funding. Due to a number of factors, the plan had not yet been completed. SCCHA shared a new timeline for its 2026-30 plan: the goal was to adopt a refreshed plan by March 2026. At its March 5, 2026, meeting, the SCCHA Board approved a resolution adopting a 2026-30 strategic plan. Information provided in the agenda and during the meeting was not sufficient to determine if the outstanding recommendations have been addressed or if that will follow during the plan's implementation phase.

## DISTRICT ADrift: LEADERSHIP ISSUES AT SAN JOSÉ UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

### **Summary of the 2023-24 Report**

The 2023-24 Civil Grand Jury (Civil Grand Jury) investigated San José Unified School District (SJUSD) operations and found:

- High turnover among principals and assistant principals at schools and management-level employees at the district office;
- A lack of commitment to addressing the student mental health crisis with consistent, accessible mental health services;
- Gaps in school site safety planning, causing unnecessary risks to student safety;
- An inability or unwillingness to conduct thorough and prompt employee investigations;
- Problematic management hiring practices;
- SJUSD Board of Education (Board) meetings that were among the least accessible of any large district in the area: they were only audio recorded, not livestreamed, public comment was limited to those attending in person, and the website did not include links to critical presentations made at meetings.

The Civil Grand Jury made 11 recommendations, including subparts, that SJUSD:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the wellness centers at secondary schools;
- Provide a long-term sustainable funding plan, and an accelerated implementation plan with a clear timeline to achieve the fully staffed wellness centers at all secondary school sites;
- Create a staff position to lead and coordinate all safety planning and emergency response activities across SJUSD, and implement best practices for school safety plans;
- Ensure that naloxone hydrochloride (Narcan) is widely available at all secondary school sites and train all school site and district office staff in its use;
- Implement online viewing of Board meetings with remote comments during meetings, video recording of meetings, and online access to all Board presentations.

### **Agency Response**

SJUSD declined to implement eight recommendations.

SJUSD agreed to reintroduce a staff position, the assistant manager of risk management, before the start of the 2023-24 school year, and to analyze roles and distribution of responsibilities related

to safety planning and emergency response to determine what, if any, additional changes were warranted.

SJUSD partially agreed to ensure that Narcan is widely available at all secondary school sites, indicating it had already been working to identify the appropriate staff to train to administer Narcan and manage it with the legal requirements schools must follow.

Finally, SJUSD partially agreed to implement online viewing of Board meetings, indicating the district would explore the financial and operational costs for implementation.

A link to the agency response from 2024 is below:

- [San José Unified School District](#)

### **Follow-up**

The 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury followed up with SJUSD requesting the job or position description for the assistant manager of risk assessment, written evaluations or analyses related to safety planning and emergency response, and a list of any changes to safety planning and emergency response.

SJUSD provided the job description for the position of assistant manager of risk assessment, and the 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury confirmed that this position is filled.

SJUSD also referred the Civil Grand Jury to six recorded meetings with the Board of Education and provided time stamps to direct a listener to the correct discussion. SJUSD's response was insufficient to determine the status of its school safety site plans and emergency response updates. However, the 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury reviewed the written minutes of those Board meetings from the SJUSD's website, indicating that SJUSD is still working on its safety plans.

The 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury also determined from the SJUSD website that health staff were trained in opioid awareness and naloxone administration, and that naloxone was delivered to all school sites ([SJUSD](#), 2025). Additionally, livestreaming of Board meetings is available through Webex and can be accessed through the SJUSD [website](#) (SJUSD, n.d.).

## **FAIL TO PLAN; PLAN TO FAIL: COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA'S DOOMED HISTORY BOOK**

### **Summary of the 2023-24 Report**

The County of Santa Clara (County) Office of the County Executive (County Executive's Office) mismanaged a history book writing project, wasting more than \$1 million. In 2018, the County extended an existing grant-writing contract with a non-staff County grant writer to create a history book. The Contractor had no academic background or experience publishing long-form historical nonfiction.

In the course of this investigation, the 2023-24 Civil Grand Jury (Civil Grand Jury) found many concerning issues, including the scope of the project, the historical period to be covered, and that the length of the history book was not clearly defined. Additionally, the County made no plans for publishing the book, the normal contractual checks and balances were ignored, and the project had no milestone deliverables.

Over the next two years, the County Executive's Office paid the Contractor over \$1 million based on minimally detailed monthly invoices, while no one in the County Executive's Office managed the contract or reviewed the work-in-progress. In 2022, the Contractor turned in a manuscript that the County deemed unpublishable, and the County has determined it will not seek legal recourse to recover the \$1 million.

The Civil Grand Jury made four recommendations to the County:

- Expand existing contract guidelines to explicitly cover contract extensions;
- Analyze ways to improve its policies;
- Evaluate current contracting policies for needed safeguards;
- Implement a practical contract search system for the public to view all contracts, including non-competitive Board contracts and extensions.

### **Agency Response**

The County agreed with all findings and stated that three recommendations had been implemented. It said the fourth recommendation, to implement a practical contract search system for the public to view all contracts, was pending the purchase and implementation of a new enterprise resource planning system (ERP).

A link to the agency response from 2024 is below:

- [County of Santa Clara](#)

## **Follow-up**

The 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury followed up on the status of the new system, and the County responded that, due to cost and competing priorities, rather than moving to an ERP software system, it is in the process of fully deploying its current contract management system (Ariba). Implementation of Ariba is estimated to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2026.

The County further stated that due to the size and scope of Countywide contracting, a sizable percentage of its contracting portfolio included proprietary content or information that required redaction; that to review each contract for redactable information and remove it would consume a disproportionate amount of legal resources and therefore, providing a public link to all contracts was impracticable. The County concluded that if the public were interested in viewing a specific contract, groups or individuals could submit a California Public Records Act (CPRA) request.

## NO STRINGS ATTACHED: COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA BOARD INVENTORY ITEMS

### **Summary of the 2023-24 Report**

The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors (BOS) annually approves millions of dollars in one-time funding referred to as “inventory items” to various 501(c)(3) nonprofits ancillary to the established budget process. The stated purpose of the inventory item program is to create a positive impact in the community and fill an important gap by supporting small, start-up nonprofits that would otherwise struggle to get funding through normal channels. The County’s adopted 2023-24 fiscal year budget included approximately 200 such inventory items totaling \$8.1 million.

The 2023-24 Civil Grand Jury (Civil Grand Jury) investigated and published a report finding that grant recipients and award amounts did not support the BOS’ stated purpose, and that the inventory item process had no known BOS authorizing resolution, no consistent operational rules or controls, no permanent funding limits, and no specific accountability process. Further, the absence of a consistent set of application requirements for inventory items—including the organization’s mission, the funding purpose, and expenditure and progress reporting—created uncertainty about whether the BOS was fulfilling its responsibility to provide oversight of the appropriateness and productiveness of public fund expenditures.

The Civil Grand Jury made five recommendations for the County to:

- Put direction and management of the inventory item grant program under the County Executive’s Office;
- Use a common online application process for all applicants, regardless of supervisorial district, to include information about the organization’s size and mission, annual and proposed program budget, the amount being requested, a description of how funds will be used and what County priorities they support, the amount of County funds already received by the organization, and measurable outcomes for the proposed program;
- Create a consistent set of rules and guidelines for review and approval of inventory item awards that meets their goal of supporting smaller organizations, to consider limiting inventory item grants to organizations that do not have an existing contract with the County, and setting an annual cap on total inventory item grants that each supervisorial district can award;
- Require recipients to provide annual progress reports and financial reports, and, if needed, the County should audit the organization’s expenditure records;
- Eliminate the current inventory item program entirely if the County disagrees with the indicated four recommendations.

## Agency Response

The County rejected all five recommendations. The County believed the management of its inventory items grant program was best administered by the Office of the Clerk of the Board, and that its online grant application process did not require a significant amount of work on behalf of the applicants to apply for and potentially receive funds. The County also maintained that the BOS continues to evaluate guidelines for the inventory grants. For many smaller grants, the County believed extensive tracking of fund usage might place a significant burden on recipient organizations and reduce the effectiveness of the grants. Finally, the County indicated that full BOS approval was required to award funding regardless of an individual Supervisor's discretion to select entities as proposed recipients of inventory grant items.

A link to the agency response from 2024 is below:

- [County of Santa Clara](#)

## Follow-up

In light of the County's rejection of all recommendations, the 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury did not conduct a follow-up.

## **A DISJOINTED SYSTEM: COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED CLIENTS**

### **Summary of the 2023-24 Report**

The 2023-24 Civil Grand Jury (Civil Grand Jury) investigated the systems and programs in Santa Clara County that are available for people with behavioral health disorders in the criminal justice system. The Civil Grand Jury found that while the County of Santa Clara (County) was committed to keeping low-level offenders with behavioral health disorders out of jail and in treatment, the programs and systems for support and treatment operated independently and lacked coordination.

One of the consequences of a lack of coordination has been that an individual may spend a longer time in custody where their illness could worsen. Another consequence has been that there has not been a person for the individual to connect with once released from custody. In many cases, treatment is voluntary, and much of the responsibility for initiating and maintaining supportive care has been left up to the individual. When released from jail to a treatment facility, many individuals will, therefore, make the decision to discontinue treatment and leave the facility. This has resulted in many reverting back to a cycle of arrest for a low-level offense, detention, release and re-offense.

Some of the services and programs the County provides to assist and support individuals with behavioral health disorders are:

- Behavioral Health Services Department (BHSD), which provides mental health and substance use treatment services;
- Custody Health Services (CHS), which provides health and behavioral health services to the incarcerated;
- Pre-Arrest Representation and Review (PARR), a program through Office of the Public Defender that provides legal representation specifically to people with behavioral health disorders earlier in the process than what is typical;
- Forensic, Diversion, and Reintegration Division (FDR), which addresses the behavioral health needs of individuals with mental health, substance use disorders, or both, in the criminal justice system;
- Collaborative Court, which is a specialized program that may serve adults with serious behavioral health needs.

The Civil Grand Jury recommended the County look for ways to collaborate among departments by:

- Developing a system for discharge planning earlier in the process following arrest;
- Providing ways for personal connections to be established between the individual and service providers upon release;
- Providing access among agencies Countywide to the individual's history and needs records;
- Providing judges in Collaborative Court with electronic copies of a client's status report prior to appearance in court;
- Improving the screening process to better diagnose an individual's needs;
- Developing a system to coordinate client medical appointments and court appearances.

The Civil Grand Jury also recommended increasing staffing in BHSD and FDR and expanding the PARR program.

The Civil Grand Jury made nine recommendations including subparts for a total of 11 recommendations.

### **Agency Response**

In its response, the County stated that many of the recommendations required further analysis including its discharge planning, screening process, and coordination with other agencies. A pilot program in PARR was scheduled to begin to provide individuals with mental health conditions who were newly arrested and in custody with early interdisciplinary intervention.

At the time of its response, the County was also just beginning to implement the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) Justice Involved initiative program that provides 90-day pre-release services for low-level offenders with behavioral mental health disorders. The County stated that it would need time to assess the effectiveness of CalAIM to identify areas for better coordination and improvement and would work with its Information Technology department to deliver client status reports more efficiently to the courts. The County anticipated filling its vacant clinical positions in BHSD and FDR and would evaluate the Mental Health PARR Arraignment Court pilot program.

The 2024-25 Civil Grand Jury followed up on the progress of the County's responses and found that BHSD and CHS had met with several agencies focusing on collaboration. CalAIM implementation was in process, and the County was planning to analyze its effectiveness with regard to increased departmental data exchange, coordination, and discharge planning. BHSD hired a clinical social worker and was recruiting for two other positions. The PARR pilot program had begun. CHS was collaborating with the CalAIM implementation team to modify screening

questions and launched a pilot program to further explore using a block scheduling system to coordinate clients' medical and court appointments.

A link to the agency response from 2024 is below:

- [County of Santa Clara](#)

## **Follow-up**

The 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury followed up with the County requesting responses to seven recommendations that required further analysis and were to be implemented by December 2024.

In its response, the County stated that BHSD and CHS continue to meet with other agencies to coordinate strategies. CalAIM has strengthened the discharge planning process and support for those on Medi-Cal with known release dates. The CalAIM implementation team and CHS continue to collaborate on discharge planning. CHS also created four staff positions to work with HealthLink (a management system that coordinates medical records and care for individuals in custody) to provide a scheduling system for medical appointments in the jails that will not conflict with court appearances or appointments. The County does not plan to modify its federal monitor-approved mental health screening questions at intake. However, the County will incorporate the individual's historical information and needs, along with the responses to the screening questions, as part of its assessment.

Due to budget constraints at the County, the PARR pilot program will not become permanent and staffing positions at BHSD are on hold. The Office of the Public Defender will, however, prioritize representation of individuals with mental health needs.

## IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES: SANTA CLARA CITY COUNCIL

### **Summary of the 2023-24 Report**

The 2023-24 Civil Grand Jury (Civil Grand Jury) received multiple complaints concerning the unprofessional and antagonistic behavior of specific members of the Santa Clara City Council (Council) during public meetings.

The Civil Grand Jury found that Council members' behaviors reflected deep divisions, rivalry, and routine disrespect among the Mayor and Council and toward other City of Santa Clara (City) elected officials. In addition, several council members turned public meetings into spectacles by:

- Displaying abusive behavior toward members of the public;
- Engaging in political grandstanding, pontificating, and digressing from City business;
- Exhibiting a serious misunderstanding of parliamentary procedures;
- Performing outlandish antics, such as reading from a satirical cartoon book.

All of these behaviors contributed to lengthy public meetings, wasted staff time, hurt morale, and discouraged volunteerism and public engagement. The broken relationships among the members of the council and the inability of council members to work together as a cohesive group undermined the effective governance of the City. In this atmosphere, council members were unable to effectively lead the community they were elected to serve.

The Civil Grand Jury recommended that the City or Council:

- Hire a conflict resolution professional and adopt robust conflict resolution training strategies;
- Have council members attend one-on-one conflict resolution training, as well as government ethics and parliamentary procedures training;
- Adopt a formal resolution for meeting management procedures;
- Establish an independent ethics commission;
- Hire an independent ethics professional and adopt robust ethics training strategies;
- Conduct an annual employee satisfaction survey.

## Agency Response

The City responded that it agreed with all recommendations and that training was conducted. Two individuals were no longer on the Council so recommendations applying to those individuals were not completed.

Links to responses from 2024 are below:

- [Santa Clara City Mayor Gillmor](#)
- [Santa Clara City Councilmember Becker](#)
- [Santa Clara City Councilmember Chahal](#)
- [Santa Clara City Councilmember Hardy](#)
- [Santa Clara City Councilmember Jain](#)
- [Santa Clara City Councilmember Park](#)
- [Santa Clara City Councilmember Watanabe](#)
- [City of Santa Clara](#)

## Follow-up

The 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury followed up with the City regarding the annual employee satisfaction survey. The City responded that the first survey had been done and was being reviewed, and that it would be conducted biannually going forward.

## **OUTPLAYED: MEASURE J, THE CITY OF SANTA CLARA, AND THE SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS**

### **Summary of the 2023-24 Report**

Voters in the City of Santa Clara (City) in 2010 passed Measure J, which authorized a \$1.3 billion stadium in the City. As presented to voters, the stadium would deliver significant economic benefits to the City and its residents.

As promised, the City's general fund has been protected, stadium debt has been paid down, and reserves have been funded more quickly than originally planned. But the revenues promised to the City have been both modest and hard won. The San Francisco 49ers Football Company LLC (the 49ers) had been litigious, fighting the Santa Clara Stadium Authority (Stadium Authority) and City at every turn over transparency and financial issues.

The City Council/Stadium Authority Board (City/Stadium Authority), both past and present, have compounded the issues by:

- Allowing changes to the already 49ers-friendly terms in Measure J to be adjusted in the stadium's legal agreements to further and materially benefit the 49ers;
- Giving away what little leverage and control they had in settlement agreements;
- Relinquishing power to the 49ers over the last decade.

By taking a passive role in oversight, the City/Stadium Authority have undermined Stadium Authority staff.

The 2023-24 Civil Grand Jury made nine recommendations to the City/Stadium Authority including retaining outside experts and consultants, commissioning a report to determine the actual economic impact of the stadium, and working with the 49ers to fulfill the promise of Measure J and procure an alternative space for community needs.

### **Agency Response**

The City/Stadium Authority agreed to implement eight recommendations and said one required further analysis. By June 2025, four of the recommendations had been completed or partially completed, and the remaining five were in progress.

A link to the agency response from 2024 is below:

- [Santa Clara City Council and Santa Clara Stadium Authority Board](#)

## **Follow-up**

The City/Stadium Authority provided the 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury with an update on its progress, noting that a consultant provided a high-level review of the 49ers' study of the stadium's fiscal and economic impacts, tenants, and events hosted between 2014 and 2023. The Stadium Authority said it intends to complete additional reviews with a consultant and to conduct a third-party economic study of the major 2026 events at the stadium. The City stated that because completion of this study has been delayed, the City hired a consultant, Canyon Oaks, to assist with the study and the report on the Forty Niners Stadium Management Company LLC's marketing plan. The City/Stadium Authority indicated that final reports will be provided to the 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury when completed. Finally, the City stated it wants to explore relocation of and/or renegotiation of the community benefits promised in Measure J. Due to ongoing construction leading up to the Super Bowl and World Cup, the City said it would re-start that effort in February 2027.

A link to the agency update from 2025 is below:

- [2025 Updated Response Letter](#)

## IF YOU ONLY READ THE BALLOT, YOU'RE BEING DUPED

### **Summary of the 2022 Report**

Following the June 2022 election, the 2022 Civil Grand Jury (Civil Grand Jury) issued a report on the choice of wording used in local ballot measure questions. The Civil Grand Jury found that the wording of ballot measure questions is unregulated at the local level and that authors writing the descriptions can create ballot questions in a manner that is confusing or misleading to voters, facilitating the authors' desired result.

The Civil Grand Jury recommended that the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors (County Supervisors) approve a resolution to require the County Counsel to review all ballot questions submitted. The Civil Grand Jury also recommended that all governing entities within the County of Santa Clara adopt a resolution to submit ballot questions to the County Counsel for review prior to submission to the Registrar of Voters unless the County Supervisors formed an independent oversight commission to review ballot questions. In addition, the Civil Grand Jury recommended that the County Supervisors request that the state legislature consider amending current law to require that County Counsel review and approve local ballot measure questions before they are voted on.

The Civil Grand Jury made recommendations to 23 agencies of which four went to the County Supervisors and three went to each of the other 22 agencies, totaling 70 recommendations.

### **Agency Response**

Only three agencies agreed, in part, to implement the Civil Grand Jury's recommendations: the County Supervisors, the Town of Los Altos Hills (Los Altos Hills), and the Town of Los Gatos (Los Gatos).

Los Altos Hills agreed to implement the recommendations only if the County Supervisors agreed. Because Los Altos Hills' acceptances were conditioned on the implementation of recommendations that the County Supervisors did not accept, the recommendations were not implemented by Los Altos Hills. As a result, a follow-up was unnecessary.

The County Supervisors agreed to implement two of four recommendations. The County Supervisors agreed to prepare a resolution asking County Counsel to review ballot measures voluntarily submitted to it for accuracy and impartiality prior to the 2024 statewide elections. In addition, the County Supervisors agreed to prepare a resolution to suggest amending current state

law to require the County Counsel to review and approve local ballot measure questions before they are voted on.

Los Gatos agreed to voluntarily submit its ballot questions to County Counsel for review prior to submission to the Registrar of Voters, unless and until the County Supervisors created an independent, citizen-led oversight commission and pending confirmation that County Counsel had the capacity to perform such review of the ballot question within five days of Los Gatos' submission. Los Gatos also agreed to adopt its own resolution or ordinance requiring submission of ballot questions to either the County Counsel or the independent, citizen-led commission for review prior to submission to the Registrar of Voters, if there was the capacity to complete the reviews within five days of Los Gatos' submission.

Links to the agency responses from 2022 and 2023 are below:

- [Town of Los Altos Hills](#)
- [Town of Los Gatos](#)
- [County of Santa Clara](#)
- [City of Campbell](#)
- [City of Cupertino](#)
- [City of Gilroy](#)
- [City of Los Altos](#)
- [City of Milpitas](#)
- [City of Monte Sereno](#)
- [City of Morgan Hill](#)
- [City of Mountain View](#)
- [City of Palo Alto](#)
- [City of San José](#)
- [City of Santa Clara](#)
- [City of Saratoga](#)
- [City of Sunnyvale](#)
- [Cupertino Union School District](#)
- [East Side Union High School District](#)
- [El Camino Healthcare District](#)
- [Foothill De Anza Community College District](#)
- [San José Unified School District](#)
- [Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority](#)
- [Santa Clara Valley Water District](#)

## **Follow-up**

The 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury followed up with the County of Santa Clara (County) and Los Gatos to determine if they had implemented the recommendations from the 2022 Civil Grand Jury report.

The 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury asked the County to provide documentation of the resolution to have County Counsel review all ballot measures. The County provided a copy of the resolution, “Resolution relating to the County Counsel Review of Local Ballot Measure Questions,” approved by the Board of Supervisors on February 28, 2023. The County also shared a copy of the approved resolution with the state legislative delegation. The County confirmed that at the time of its follow-up, officials were not aware of any legislative action pertaining to County Counsel review of local ballot measure questions.

The 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury asked Los Gatos to provide documentation of the communication it had with County Counsel. Los Gatos responded by stating it had submitted a formal response to the 2022 Civil Grand Jury’s report in December 2022, and that that response constituted its complete and official communication regarding the recommendations.

## UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT: SANTA CLARA CITY COUNCIL

### **Summary of the 2022 Report**

In 2010, City of Santa Clara (City) voters approved Measure J to build Levi's Stadium (Stadium) and lease it to the San Francisco 49ers Football Company LLC (the 49ers) as tenants, with a promise that the measure would generate new revenue for the City, create new jobs, provide taxpayer protections, and generate community funding. The Santa Clara Stadium Authority (Stadium Authority) was formed to oversee stadium operations, governed by the Santa Clara City Council (City Council) and managed by the City Manager. The Stadium Authority entered into an agreement with the Forty Niners Santa Clara Stadium Company LLC (StadCo) for a long-term lease of Levi's Stadium and contracted with the Forty Niners Stadium Management Company LLC (ManCo), an affiliate of StadCo, to manage the Stadium and non-National Football League (NFL) events. The complexities of the agreement and contractual relationships resulted in extensive litigation, audit reports, and numerous media articles.

The 2022 Civil Grand Jury (Civil Grand Jury) received numerous complaints regarding governance ethics concerning five of the seven City Council members. These Council members—referred to by the media as the “49er Five” and as the City Council Voting Bloc by the Civil Grand Jury—engaged in unethical behavior, lacked transparency in their governance, and governed as if the City Council owed a fiduciary duty to the 49ers as opposed to the City.

The Civil Grand Jury's investigation confirmed that the City Council Voting Bloc voted in favor of the 49ers and frequently met with registered 49ers lobbyists without revealing the substance of those meetings to the City Council or the public.

Additionally, the City Council Voting Bloc did not hold ManCo accountable for its financial accounting deficiencies or its inability to hold non-NFL events that would create revenue for the City. Two members of the City Council Voting Bloc, who were up for re-election, received almost \$750,000 in donations from 49ers political action committees within days after a settlement of litigation brought by the 49ers. Further, the registered 49ers lobbyists wanted both the former City Attorney and former City Manager fired, and the City Council Voting Bloc obliged. The City Council ethics guidelines were routinely disregarded and not enforced, with the City Council Voting Bloc dictating City action due to the majority they held.

The Civil Grand Jury made 19 recommendations, including for the City/Stadium Authority to:

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- Hire a certified public accounting firm to conduct a comprehensive audit of Stadium Authority finances and the financial documents submitted by ManCo;
- Advocate for a third-party referee to oversee all of ManCo's management activities and to report on a quarterly basis at City Council meetings the status of fire and safety remediation efforts;
- Allocate staff to oversee Stadium operations, including finances, management policy development, and regular website updates of the City's financial reporting documents;
- Request that the 49ers provide a report on the status of the commitments made to the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), evaluate if the FIFA World Cup poses risks to the City/Stadium Authority, and take no further action regarding FIFA until the information is made public;
- Adopt policy and procedures for elected and appointed officials to conduct operational tours of the Stadium and publish the policy and procedures on the City's website;
- Conduct an evaluation and invoke an admonition and censure policy when officials are not adhering to the proper protocols for operational tours;
- Hire an independent consultant to evaluate and publicly report on whether Council members have violated City Policy No. 050, "Gifts to Appointed and Elected Officials;"
- Add to the City Code of Ethics & Values and the Admonition and Censure Policy a procedure to enable the public to file a complaint and testify at a public hearing;
- Establish an independent Public Ethics Commission;
- Require Council members to attend additional training in good governance each year.

### Agency Response

The City of Santa Clara rejected implementation of 10 recommendations and rejected, in part, the remaining nine recommendations. The City stated that the Stadium Authority had staff assigned to oversee Stadium operations since the 2014-15 fiscal year, will evaluate if the FIFA event poses risks to the City, and will consider and review a policy for elected and appointed officials to conduct operational tours of the Stadium for adoption by July 31, 2023. Finally, the City acknowledged the challenges of ensuring that all voices are heard, even when expressed in a minority vote of any Council/Stadium Authority Board action, but disagreed that the City's rules of ethics are not working. The City also stated that its Council members receive annual training in good governance.

Both members of the City Council minority, Mayor Lisa Gillmor and Council member Kathy Watanabe, submitted their response agreeing with all the key findings and recommendations. However, as a City Council minority, they lacked the organizational majority to implement the recommendations.

The 2023-24 Civil Grand Jury confirmed that the allocation of staff to oversee Stadium operations and the evaluation of whether the FIFA event poses risks to the City/Stadium Authority were in progress. A policy and outline of procedures for elected and appointed officials to conduct operational tours of the Stadium was complete. The 2023-24 Civil Grand Jury found no evidence that council members were receiving annual training in good governance.

Links to the agency responses from 2023 are below:

- [City of Santa Clara](#)
- [Mayor Gillmor and Councilmember Watanabe](#)

### **Follow-up**

The 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury conducted a follow-up and requested the City provide documents that outline regular and ongoing training sessions in good governance, including:

- Training announcements, training dates, training times, training topics, and training participant lists for the Council from September 1, 2023, to the present;
- A list or schedule of training sessions in good governance for the Council from September 1, 2023, to Spring 2026;
- A list or schedule of future training sessions in good governance that will be held for the Council.

The City provided a list of completed and scheduled future training for the Council.

## GARBAGE IN, GARBAGE OUT: SANTA CLARA COUNTY PUBLIC CONTRACT DATA

### **Summary of the 2022 Report**

The 2022 Civil Grand Jury (Civil Grand Jury) reported on the issue of access to reliable vendor contract information on the County of Santa Clara Procurement Department's (County) webpage. This webpage contains all contract data handled by the Procurement Department and all active County contracts managed by other County departments. The Civil Grand Jury found, however, that much of the data entered was unreliable, incomplete, and inaccurate. There was no standardized process to input, confirm, or manage the information, and many of the errors arose because data was entered manually. The inability to access reliable information also affected those in charge of County spending. The Civil Grand Jury found that the County was not fully utilizing its existing software system, which had the capability to manage contract data. These issues resulted in a lack of transparency, where the County was unable to provide the public and vendors with access to complete and accurate contract information.

The Civil Grand Jury made 15 recommendations to the County, including:

- Mandating protocols to ensure accuracy before a contract is published on the County webpage;
- Correcting existing information and entering accurate information for amended contracts;
- Implementing mandatory employee training before information is entered into the contract management system;
- Designating a person responsible for data accuracy;
- Centralizing as much contract data as possible in one department to mitigate errors;
- Implementing a better way to identify each contract to ensure ease of access by the public for any Public Records Act request.

### **Agency Response**

In its March 2023 response, the County of Santa Clara responded that it had already implemented six of the Civil Grand Jury's 15 recommendations. This included:

- Establishing accuracy protocols and hiring a Compliance Manager to assist and facilitate those protocols;
- Adding new fields to the database to enable verification of the accuracy of contract information;

- Creating an Active Contracts report that provided a list of all active contracts, except those that could not be made available to the public due to code or legal restrictions.

The County also made it easier for the public to access contracts on the Active Contract list for any Public Records Act request and implemented contracting templates for use by other departments. The County stated that it would implement four of the recommendations in the future including ensuring that data is entered accurately and monitored for accuracy. Additionally, the County would implement mandatory contract management training for County employees before entering data into the system.

The County provided updated information to the 2023-24 Civil Grand Jury on November 30, 2023. The 2023-24 Civil Grand Jury confirmed that the County had hired a Compliance Manager and was conducting quarterly accuracy audits. The County also stated that it established protocols related to amended contracts and confirmed that online training was available for inputting contract data. The County indicated that system access for employees would be available only upon completion of mandatory training.

Link to the agency response from 2023 is below:

- [County of Santa Clara](#)

### **Follow-up**

The 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury requested an update from the County on the implementation of mandatory employee training and progress in consolidating all contracts within one Countywide management system.

In Spring 2025, the County decided to consolidate all contracts within the County's current Ariba Procurement and Contract Management System (Ariba), which will be implemented in four phases. Implementation began in 2025 and is expected to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2026.

The County's Procurement Department and the Office of Countywide Contract Management (OCCM) provide quarterly training to the Procurement Liaison Collaborative (PLC), a group of Countywide employees focused on contracting. The County provided a copy of the Quick Reference Guide Contract Management Best Practices, which is used as a resource for training, reference, and to ensure accuracy in data input. The Quick Reference Guide explains which fields are to be completed for each document, where documents are to be uploaded, and critical steps to be taken during the life cycle of the contract. Additional training and materials related to new

processes in Ariba to reduce the amount of data entry errors will be developed and provided to departments.

As of January 2026, and as part of phase one, 27% of all contracts have been integrated into the contract management system. This, however, does not include contracts associated with the County's health and hospital systems, which will be integrated toward the end of 2026. Additionally, the County has launched a procurement dashboard that departments can use to track contract activity in one place.

## **SHOW ME THE MONEY: FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY NEEDED**

### **Summary of the 2022 Report**

In California, general law cities are required to comply with California Government Code section 41004, which states that “at least once each month, the city treasurer shall submit to the city clerk a written report and accounting of all receipts, disbursements, and fund balances. The city treasurer shall file a copy with the legislative body.” This is to ensure financial accountability and public transparency through timely and accurate treasurers’ reports given to city councils, enabling them to make reliable and sound decisions.

The 2022 Civil Grand Jury (Civil Grand Jury) found that six of the nine general law cities within the County were not in compliance with this state requirement: Campbell, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Milpitas, and Monte Sereno. The City of Cupertino was initially non-compliant but took corrective action during the Civil Grand Jury’s investigation. The City of Saratoga and City of Morgan Hill were compliant prior to the investigation.

The Civil Grand Jury recommended that the non-compliant general law cities of Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Campbell, Milpitas, and Monte Sereno should come into full compliance.

### **Agency Response**

The Town of Los Altos Hills, Town of Los Gatos, and City of Cupertino agreed with the respective findings and stated that the recommendation had been implemented. The City of Los Altos disagreed with the findings and recommendations but stated that it would provide reports in the manner desired by the Civil Grand Jury, although it would not update its financial policy as recommended. The City of Milpitas, City of Campbell, and City of Monte Sereno partially disagreed with the respective findings but stated that they had implemented the recommendation to comply. The 2023-24 Civil Grand Jury reviewed reports from the City of Los Altos, Town of Los Altos Hills, Town of Los Gatos, City of Milpitas, City of Campbell, and City of Monte Sereno and verified implementation of the recommendations and compliance with Government Code section 41004.

Links to the agency responses from 2023 are below:

- [City of Campbell](#)
- [City of Cupertino](#)
- [City of Los Altos](#)

- [City of Milpitas](#)
- [City of Monte Sereno](#)
- [City of Morgan Hill](#)
- [City of Saratoga](#)
- [Town of Los Altos Hills](#)
- [Town of Los Gatos](#)

## **Follow-up**

Because compliance was previously verified, no follow up was necessary.

## **A HOUSE DIVIDED: CUPERTINO CITY COUNCIL AND CITY STAFF**

### **Summary of the 2022 Report**

The 2022 Civil Grand Jury (Civil Grand Jury) investigated the behavior of City of Cupertino (City) council members toward City staff and found that council members interfered in the day-to-day operations of the City and behaved inappropriately toward the City Manager and staff, including, but not limited to, routine disrespect and the inclination to doubt the accuracy of the staff's work. The behavior by certain council members toward staff directly violated the City's ordinances relating to the council-manager form of government under which the City operates.

Furthermore, high turnover in key management and leadership positions caused the City to lose employees with significant capabilities and experience, which adversely impacted the City's ability to effectively operate. Additionally, the City left unaddressed key findings and recommendations by its internal auditor, Moss Adams LLP (Auditor), such as deficiencies in internal financial controls and existing operating policies and procedures.

The Civil Grand Jury made eight recommendations to address the findings. These recommendations include developing good governance training and hiring a consultant to help improve staff morale and the work environment. To oversee ethics violations, one recommendation called for the establishment of an independent ethics commission. Additional recommendations include implementation of a work plan from a May 2022 Fiscal Policy Inventory and Gap Analysis Report from the City's Auditor, as well as the continued use of annual internal audits.

### **Agency Response**

In a response sent in February 2023, the City stated it had already addressed two of the eight recommendations and planned to complete or identify opportunities for improvement for the remaining recommendations within the following two years.

A link to the agency response from 2023 is below:

- [City of Cupertino](#)

In a follow-up response to the 2023-24 Civil Grand Jury, the City stated that an investigator was hired to validate the findings from the original report that led to actions to improve staff morale. (Civil Grand Jury, Continuity Report, 2024).

## **Follow-up**

In response to a request from the 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury, the City provided documentation detailing the City's progress. Multiple levels of training in good governance have been provided to staff and council members and an external Enterprise Risk Assessment Report from 2024 details efforts made to identify and address issues of governance. A schedule of the work plan was provided showing significant progress in almost all areas of governance with the remaining items scheduled to be completed by the end of 2025-26 fiscal year. Although an independent ethics commission was not established, the City reported that it completed improvements to its ethics policy and procedures manual adopted in March 2024. Finally, facilitators were retained to support conflict resolution and reinforce effective governance in 2023 with further training in 2025.

## CONSERVATORSHIP: A CASE FOR ZEALOUS ADVOCACY

### Summary of the 2022 Report

The 2022 Civil Grand Jury (Civil Grand Jury) investigated the legal services that the County of Santa Clara Public Defender Office (PDO) provides to conservatees in probate conservatorships.

A conservatorship is a legal mechanism in which a court appoints a conservator to manage the finances and/or personal affairs of an individual, known as a conservatee. Conservatees constitute a very vulnerable part of the Santa Clara County community because they have mental or physical limitations. It is vital that the PDO be prepared to fulfill its role of zealous advocacy. The conservatee loses control of the way they live and control of their assets once a conservator is appointed.

At the time of the report, the PDO had been appointed to represent proposed conservatees in approximately 300 new petitions per year. Additionally, the PDO was the attorney of record for approximately 3,000 probate conservatees. There was one attorney to handle all the probate cases, although most were not actively monitored once they had been adjudicated.

Through its investigation, the Civil Grand Jury learned there are no case management standards, established performance standards, or established training or monitoring programs.

The Civil Grand Jury made 13 recommendations, including:

- Developing a tracking system, data analytics, case reviews, and management;
- Researching ideal caseloads and staffing required;
- Developing cross-training;
- Creating performance standards and quality management standards;
- Consulting with a third party to evaluate current policies and processes for conservatorship defense and develop a strategic plan for best practices.

### Agency Response

The PDO agreed with 12 recommendations and partially agreed with one recommendation. It reported in February 2023 that some of the work to improve its case management system was already underway, that it had started evaluating additional data tracking categories to establish metrics, and that it had requested additional attorney and social worker staffing in the 2023-24 budget.

A link to the agency response from 2023 is below:

- [Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors](#)

The 2023-24 Civil Grand Jury followed up with the PDO, which requested that it be allowed to revisit two of the recommendations after January 1, 2024 (Civil Grand Jury, Continuity Report, 2024). The budget request for one additional attorney and one additional social worker was not granted. As a result, the PDO stated that implementation of three recommendations had not occurred. The PDO could not provide a new implementation date at that time.

## Follow-up

The 2025-26 Civil Grand Jury requested that the PDO provide documentation regarding the following:

- Use of data analytics to establish metrics to track data since January 2024;
- An internal audit and report of adjudicated case;
- The adoption of a proactive case management model;
- A user manual with procedures for implementing and evaluating performance and quality standards for conservatorship attorneys;
- The contract for a third-party evaluation of existing policies and procedures.

In its response, the PDO noted that it had initially anticipated expanding its probate team to include multiple attorneys and support staff. It noted that due to sustained budget reductions, its probate team consists of one senior attorney and one paralegal with part-time support from the social work team. As a result, the PDO has been unable to implement many of the recommendations including procuring a contract for a third-party evaluation, completing an internal audit of adjudicated cases, or providing a proactive case management model. It does not have a revised timeline because many of the items are contingent on improved fiscal conditions. However, the PDO now:

- Has a “thorough, detailed, and user-friendly manual” created by a retired public defender and probate specialist;
- Provides a training to San Andreas Regional Center, which provides services to limited conservatees to improve communications;
- Is in the process of tailoring a new database system to the needs of the probate team, which should allow data tracking by May 1, 2026.

## CONFLICTS

Members of the Civil Grand Jury are conflicted from a Civil Grand Jury investigation if, as a result of prior or current employment or associations, investment in public or private enterprise, financial interest, bias, or personal relationship, they are subject to recusal from participating in a matter before the Civil Grand Jury. One juror recused themselves from this matter.

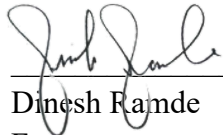
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# COMPLIANCE REPORT

This report was **ADOPTED** by the 2025-2026 Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury on this 12th day of May, 2026.



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Dinesh Ramde  
Foreperson