



TOWN OF LOS GATOS

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September 13, 2011

FILED

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

September 13, 2011

This report addresses the fire discipline and is less specific to the Town, except to the degree that the Town receives fire safety services from the Central Fire District.

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.

The Santa Clara County Central Fire Protection District has responded to the Grand Jury directly on this finding and individual recommendations. The Fire District disagrees with this finding and offers a lengthy explanation of how management has worked to improve efficiencies and work cooperatively with their labor organizations.

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.

Town Response

Agree. The recommendation has been implemented.

The Central Fire Protection District has separately responded to the Grand Jury documenting its actions to create standards for response across all the cities served by the district. As the Town receives services from the Santa Clara County Fire Protection District independently and separately, opportunities for individual municipal customization of fire response standards are all but non-existent. The Town is working with the Fire Protection District to obtain additional emergency management and other services in consideration of significant property tax revenues provided to the Central Fire Protection District from Los Gatos.

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.

The Santa Clara County Fire Protection District has separately responded to this finding and partially disagrees citing a lack of sufficient detail to fully address the issue.

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.

Town Response:

Agree. The recommendation requires further analysis.

As the Town receives services from the Santa Clara County Fire Protection District independently and separately, opportunities for individual municipal customization of fire response standards are all but non-existent. There is value in the emergency response of firefighter-paramedics to non-police emergencies as the response time can be shorter than the response time of an ambulance. The Town will hold discussions within the next six months with the Central Fire District to explore how to lower operating costs in non-police emergencies.

The Town is working with the Fire Protection District to obtain additional emergency management services in consideration of significant property tax revenues provided to the Central Fire Protection District from the Town of Los Gatos.