



CITY OF MILPITAS
OFFICE OF MAYOR JOSE ESTEVES

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

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

Dear Judge Loftus:

On October 18, 2011, the City of Milpitas received your June 15, 2011 letter referencing the 2010-11 Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Final Report, **“Can You Hear Me Now?” Emergency Dispatching in Santa Clara County.**

This letter serves as our response to the Grand Jury’s report, per 933 (c) of the California Penal Code, which requires the governing body of any agency or department which has been the subject of a Grand Jury report to respond to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury.

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 the 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:

- The City of Milpitas agrees with Finding 1, only in part.
- The City of Milpitas believes Recommendation 1 requires further study and analysis.

The complete study and analysis of regional dispatch is a high priority for county police and fire chiefs as evidenced by multiple meetings on the topic in the past 12 months; meetings in which the City of Milpitas continues to participate. 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.

Whether regional dispatching will reduce costs and improve the efficiency of Milpitas emergency responses requires further study and analysis.

The City of Milpitas maintains excellent emergency response times compared to other agencies now served by consolidated dispatch centers. The current Milpitas Communications Center’s CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system is internationally recognized as state of the art, and contributes substantially to our consistently fast response rates to calls for service. For instance, subsequent to the installation of our new CAD system in 2006, in recent years

our police department's emergency response times have consistently been under three minutes (2:47 in 2010), comparing favorably to the Santa Clara County Sheriff's 2010 response times of 4:08 in Cupertino, 4:48 in Saratoga, and 7:55 in Los Altos Hills; these three cities are served by a consolidated dispatcher center, County Comm.

In 2010, the City of Milpitas evaluated outsourcing the dispatch function and determined that savings for the first year would likely be less than \$500,000, with smaller or no savings realized in subsequent years due to expected increased operating costs, largely beyond City control. A significant concern for any municipality considering the outsourcing of dispatch services is this loss of local control in regard to costs and effectiveness, and the prohibitive start-up costs associated with reestablishing a municipal communications center should there be dissatisfaction with escalating costs or reduced effectiveness of a regional consolidated communications center.

The City of Milpitas maintains a Police and Fire 9-1-1 dispatch center which is located within a seismically re-enforced facility and is immediately adjacent to the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC). This allows for real-time, person-to-person communications between EOC chiefs and dispatchers as may be required or necessary during major emergencies or other significant events. The City of Milpitas would lose this significant advantage for any emergencies subsequent to the outsourcing of our dispatch services to a physically remote regional communications center.

Finding 2

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

Recommendation 2

Jurisdiction 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 the 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 City of Milpitas agrees with Finding 2
- The City of Milpitas believes Recommendation 2 requires further analysis.

A county-wide interoperable radio system is in the planning stages and the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Authority (SVRIA) is preparing an RFP 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.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding our response, please feel free to call Dennis Graham, City of Milpitas Chief of Police, at (408) 586-2502.

Sincerely,



Jose S. Esteves
Mayor
City of Milpitas

Cc: City Council
City Manager Thomas C. Williams
Fire Chief Brian Sturdivant
Police Chief Dennis Graham