



CITY OF DALY CITY

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September 10, 2012

Honorable Beth Labson Freeman
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
San Mateo County Hall of Justice
400 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Re: Response to 2011-2012 San Mateo County Grand Jury Report: 'Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers'

Dear Judge Freeman,

On Behalf of the City Council of Daly City I am submitting this response to the 2011-2012 San Mateo Grand Jury Report titled: 'Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers.' This response that follows was presented to and approved by the Mayor and City Council at its regular meeting on September 10, 2012.

Findings

- 1. In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding.

- 2. There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.**

Response: The City agrees with this finding.

- 3. The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding.

- 4. For those cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding.

- 5. Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low cost per call noted above for cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with standalone police dispatch function.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding.

- 6. Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.**

Response: The City agrees with this finding.

- 7. Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.**

Response: The City partially disagrees with this finding. All Public Safety Dispatchers are trained per Peace Officer Standards and Training guidelines, and receive additional professional training every two years per those guidelines.

- 8. The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding as it concerns the San Mateo County Public Safety Communications Center.

- 9. There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.**

Response: The City agrees with this finding.

- 10. No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC, have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.**

Response: The City partially agrees with this finding. The City agrees no single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. The Daly City Police Department has the capacity to expand and provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.

- 11. The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the “Green Channel” (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with ownership of the green channel. The City agrees the green channel enables interoperability among law enforcement agencies in San Mateo County.

- 12. All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding.

- 13. Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the levels of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues manageable.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding.

- 14. Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding. The City Council of Daly City has directed the City Manager to work with other San Mateo County Managers on a feasibility study regarding consolidation of police dispatch services.

- 15. All cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Grand Jury recommends to the City Councils of the Cities of San Mateo County that:

- 1. "Off-peak hour" programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.**

Response: The City has implemented this recommendation in the past, and it continues today. Policy states we have no fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.

- 2. The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.**

Response: The City has implemented this recommendation. The City Council of Daly City has directed the City Manager to work with other San Mateo County Managers on a feasibility study regarding consolidation of police dispatch services.

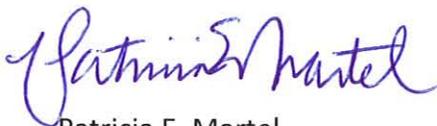
The Grand Jury recommends to the County Board of Supervisors that it:

- 1. Directs the County Office of Public Safety Communications to develop an arrangement with another facility for back-up of its law enforcement dispatch functions.**

Response: *This recommendation is directed to the County Board of Supervisors.*

Should you need any additional information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at (650) 991-8127.

Sincerely,



Patricia E. Martel
City Manager

PEM/ap