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## Santa Clara County's Civil Grand Jury Releases FY 2018-19 Reports

*The 2018-2019 Civil Grand Jury concluded its term on June 20, 2019*

SAN JOSÉ, Calif. (July 1, 2019): The Santa Clara Superior Court announces the release of six reports for this Civil Grand Jury term.

The Civil Grand Jury considered 28 complaints that resulted in six reports. The Civil Grand Jury conducted over 100 interviews of government officials and employees during the investigations into these complaints. The 2018-2019 Civil Grand Jury volunteered hundreds of hours to ensure the efficiency of local government.

**DISCLAIMER: THE VIEWS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THESE REPORTS ARE THOSE OF THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY ONLY AND DO NOT REFLECT THE OFFICIAL POLICY OR POSITION OF THE SANTA CLARA SUPERIOR COURT.**

### 1. SHOW ME THE MONEY! WHERE YOUR PROPERTY TAXES GO

Do you know which governmental entities share the one-percent maximum property tax levy you pay every year? This is the single largest component of your property tax. Detailed steps a taxpayer can take to access this information are provided in this report.

[GRAND JURY REPORT](#)

### 2. INQUIRY INTO GOVERNANCE OF THE VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

The Civil Grand Jury concluded that the VTA Board is in need of structural change to enable it to better protect the interests of the County's taxpayers and address the many complex challenges presented by emerging trends in transportation, rapidly evolving technology and the changing needs of Silicon Valley residents. The Civil Grand Jury recommends several changes to the governance structure and operations of the VTA Board which will improve the Board's ability to effectively perform its important oversight and strategic decision-making functions.

[GRAND JURY REPORT](#)

### **3. CITY OF SANTA CLARA: PUBLIC RECORDS ACCESS, THE PAPER CHASE**

The California Public Records Act (CPRA), which provides the public with the right of access to public records, has been in effect for 50-plus years. The City of Santa Clara is in the midst of Silicon Valley with all of the area's technical acumen and resources available. However, the 2018-19 Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury found Santa Clara City's recordkeeping to be disorganized and its staffing levels inadequate to process CPRA requests in compliance with the requirements of the law.

[GRAND JURY REPORT](#)

### **4. IMPROVING SAN JOSÉ POLICE DEPARTMENT'S 9-1-1/3-1-1 CALL ANSWERING TIME: WHEN SECONDS COUNT**

The City of San José is the third largest city in California and tenth largest in the United States. The population now exceeds 1 million residents. Recent media reports have highlighted the need for improved emergency services as have the voters in passing Measure T-The Disaster Preparedness, Public Safety and Infrastructure Bond. These concerns prompted the Civil Grand Jury to investigate whether San José Police Department (SJPD) 9-1-1 emergency services are commensurate with the City's current needs.

[GRAND JURY REPORT](#)

### **5. THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS: A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH**

Santa Clara County possesses a gem in the form of the County Fairgrounds, a nearly 150-acre property in an unincorporated pocket surrounded by the City of San José. By all measures, the Fairgrounds is a valuable piece of real estate, but its aging buildings are beset with deferred maintenance and in need of many improvements.

[GRAND JURY REPORT](#)

### **6. SAN JOSÉ - UNFUNDED PENSION LIABILITIES, A GROWING CONCERN**

It has been recently reported that the City of San José's share of pension costs in fiscal year 2019 spiraled to nearly 28% of the General Fund, at approximately \$335 million, and are estimated to continue to climb. This \$335 million from the General Fund, which is the primary operating fund used to account for all the revenues and expenditures of the City of San José that are not related to special or capital funds, would otherwise have been available for essential services such as police and fire, street repairs, parks and libraries.

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