



# CITY OF SAN MATEO

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## Agenda Report

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Agenda Number: 6

Section Name: {{section.name}}

Account Number: 10-1511

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**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** Drew Corbett, City Manager  
**PREPARED BY:** City Clerk's Office  
**MEETING DATE:** October 17, 2022

**SUBJECT:**

Grand Jury Report: "A Delicate Balance between Knowledge and Power: Government Transparency and the Public's Right to Know" – Response Letter

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the letter responding to the August 9, 2022 report by the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury entitled, "A Delicate Balance between Knowledge and Power: Government Transparency and the Public's Right to Know" and authorize the Mayor to send the response letter on behalf of the City Council.

**BACKGROUND:**

On August 9, 2022, the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury released a report regarding how San Mateo County jurisdictions meet the requirements of the California Public Records Act (PRA), which requires that inspection or disclosure of governmental records be available to the public upon request. With the advent of electronic communications and the potential that cities may be facing increased complexity and potential burdens in the processing of requests for public records, the Civil Grand Jury sought to understand the impacts on cities responsiveness to PRA requests. This report focused on four main areas: 1) City's policies and procedures for handling requests; 2) the types of record requests received; 3) the training of key employees, elected officials, and appointed officials about PRA related matters; and 4) how legal changes may be impacting cities regarding fulfilling PRA requests.

The Civil Grand Jury made five findings and five recommendations after they completed their study. The findings and recommendations, which can be reviewed in the Grand Jury Report (Attachment 2) on page 21, had to do with establishing PRA policy and procedures; using commercially available software and a public portal for accountable tracking and transparency; PRA having a prominent place on the City's website; having a Records Clean-up Day; and having a PRA request form available online. The five recommendations were directly linked to the findings and provided deadlines for the City to cure each identified deficiency area or implement recommended best practices.

The Civil Grand Jury found that the City of San Mateo had no deficiencies in its PRA processes and uses commercially available software for processing PRAs and additionally holds annual records clean-up days. The Grand Jury had no recommendations for the City of San Mateo to fulfill. However, the City is still required to submit a letter to the Civil Grand Jury no later than November 9, 2022, stating its agreement or disagreement with the findings and timeframe for implementation of the recommendations. The proposed letter is submitted as Attachment 1.

**BUDGET IMPACT:**

There is no budget impact for this administrative action.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:**

This response letter is not a project subject to CEQA, because it is an organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5).)

**NOTICE PROVIDED**

All meeting noticing requirements were met.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Att 1 - Response Letter

Att 2 - Grand Jury Report

**STAFF CONTACT**

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