



## OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

250 Hamilton Avenue, 7th Floor  
Palo Alto, CA 94301  
650.329.2392

Neelima Palacherla  
Executive Officer  
Santa Clara LAFCO  
777 North First Street, Suite 410  
San Jose, CA 95112

Dear Neelima Palacherla,

The City of Palo Alto has received and reviewed the Santa Clara Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) Countywide Fire Service Review Report. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the City's consideration of all recommendations listed for the Palo Alto Fire Department Table A and B, recommendations 2, 2B, 8, 8E, 31, 24, and 25.

### **Table A #2 & #2B Unit Utilization Hours (Pages xiii, 24, 25, 276 finding 5-5)**

**Recommendation** San Jose, Palo Alto, Gilroy and CCFD all have units with UHUs over 10%. These agencies should add additional resources to effectively manage the call volume and improve response time performance

Palo Alto Units (Pages 261)  
E61 (10.7%), M61 (22.3%), M62 (18.5%), and M64 (19.1%)

The City would need to add resources or reduce call volume to meet response time standards.

**Palo Alto Response** Palo Alto Fire Department staff will evaluate resource needs to support a reduction in UHU and work with the City's Budget Office to develop a feasible financial and implementation strategy as part of the Fiscal Year 2025 budget planning process. The ability to advance such a strategy will depend on funding available.

### **Table A. #8 & #8E Facility Replacement & Maintenance Planning (Pages 270, 277)**

**Recommendation** Five of the seven stations are over 50 years in age and/or were identified as not meeting the needs of a modern fire station: (Station 1: 57 years), (Station 2: 27 years), (Station 4: 69 years), (Station 5: 55 years), (Station 6: 50 years), and Station 8. The city's current five-year Capital Improvement Plan only identifies Station 4 for replacement.  
It was not apparent if an additional plan was in place for the other older stations.

Station 6 is owned and maintained by Stanford University. Palo Alto has worked to update its facilities, including seismic protection, however,



[CityOfPaloAlto.org](http://CityOfPaloAlto.org)

Stations 1, 2, 5, and 8 are nearing “end of life” and should be included in a plan for replacement.

Establish a comprehensive facility replacement plan and a maintenance plan for fire stations.

**Palo Alto Response** Palo Alto’s Public Works Department is in the process of finalizing a new City-wide facilities condition assessment report for all City facilities, including all fire stations. Following its completion, the City will use the report to evaluate the needs for individual fire stations and will develop recommendations for a plan for capital improvements and/or replacements as appropriate.

**Table A #31 Mountain View, Palo Alto, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, and CCFD (Pages 75, 279 finding 5-19)**

**Recommendation** Exploring options for alternative structures such as joint powers authorities combining two or more neighboring agencies (Mountain View, Palo Alto, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, and CCFD), could potentially bring efficiencies and value-added services to Mountain View and other smaller fire service providers in Santa Clara County. Creating a larger entity with a unified structure can offer benefits such as increased accountability, improved efficiency, and enhanced effectiveness in delivering fire services to the community. While Mountain View’s services are satisfactory and appear to be sustainable, there can be opportunities to pool resources, share expertise, and optimize operations, leading to improved service delivery.

Explore Joint Powers Authority or sharing resources in collaboration with Mountain View.

**Palo Alto Response** The decision to combine with a neighboring fire agency would have to come from the direction of the governing bodies over the identified agencies. The City is satisfied with the proven effectiveness of the current auto-aid and mutual-aid agreements with neighboring fire departments. Efficiencies have been utilized with Mountain View with a shared computer automated dispatch system.

**Table B. #24 &#25 D. Land Use Consideration (Pages 88-89, 279 finding 5-20)**

**Recommendation** Lucille M. Nixon Elementary School and Escondido Elementary School are located outside of the City of Palo Alto city limits but inside its SOI and USA. Lucille M. Nixon Elementary School is entirely surrounded by the Stanford University property, and Escondido Elementary School is surrounded on three sides by the university property. Palo Alto FD provides contract services to Stanford University’s property; however, the two schools are excluded from the contract service area, meaning the schools lack a formally identified fire and emergency medical provider. Given the nature of the use of the property with structures and students, there is a need to ensure adequate fire and emergency services are provided to the two properties.

It is recommended that the City of Palo Alto and Palo Alto Unified School District form an agreement for fire and emergency medical services at two elementary schools that lie outside of local fire service provider and are excluded from the City’s contract service area with Stanford University.

**Palo Alto Response** Palo Alto does not recognize a service gap with Lucille M. Nixon and Escondido Elementary Schools as both schools are within the City of Palo Alto service area. PAFD responds to all emergency incidents and provides fire inspections at all Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) schools.

The City of Palo Alto appreciates the in-depth assessment of Countywide Fire and Emergency Services and is will continue to consider the recommendations to improve the services we provide to protect the life, safety, and property of the City and Stanford University.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ed Shikada', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ed Shikada  
City Manager  
City of Palo Alto