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PRESS RELEASE

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Cupertino, Partner Cities' Counter Proposal Funds Officers, Not Undefined Overhead

Cities seek full transparency before accepting new overhead costs

CUPERTINO, CA – The Cities of Cupertino, Saratoga, and Los Altos Hills have submitted a counterproposal to Santa Clara County outlining a phased alternative to the County's recently proposed 39.6% increase in law enforcement contract costs. The County's proposal, presented on December 31, 2025, would increase Cupertino's annual contract cost from \$19.0 million to \$26.5 million beginning July 1, 2026, an increase of \$7.5 million.

The sudden, one-year increase would place a substantial strain on Cupertino's budget and could create long-term structural deficits. In response, the three contract cities have developed a proposal that moves responsibly toward full cost recovery while avoiding immediate, unsustainable impacts on local services and taxpayers.

The counterproposal fully funds the increases tied to deputies on the street while rejecting the County's undefined overhead charges until they can be transparently justified. The Cities' plan phases in direct officer cost increases and sets a firm timeline to create a clear, Government Code 51350-compliant cost-allocation model, ensuring taxpayers aren't forced to absorb vague add-ons that lack sufficient detail for validation.

Key elements of the Cities' counterproposal include:

- 12% initial increase effective July 1, 2026, reflecting updated Deputy Sheriff salary and benefit costs.
- Joint development of a fair, Government Code 51350-compliant cost-allocation model by September 1, 2026.
- Three-year phased implementation of remaining overhead and cost-allocation charges.

· July 1, 2029 and beyond: Full cost recovery, with future salary and benefit changes incorporated.

To support continued collaboration, the mayors and city managers of Cupertino, Saratoga, and Los Altos Hills have formed an ad hoc committee to coordinate negotiations and ensure transparency across all three jurisdictions. As part of this ongoing process, Saratoga held a study session last week to review the proposal and gather community input. Should negotiations not result in a fair agreement, the cities have begun exploring alternative models for delivering law enforcement services.

“Public safety is our top priority, and Cupertino is committed to funding it. But a 40% contract increase based on opaque ‘in-house’ math is an unreasonable burden on a donor city. Our residents already provide over \$100 million annually in property and sales taxes to the County—funds that already pay for the County’s administrative overhead. We are not being subsidized; we are being asked to pay twice for the same services,” said Mayor Kitty Moore.

As discussions with the County continue, Cupertino, Saratoga, and Los Altos Hills have worked together to create a website that provides residents with clear, accessible information about the issue. The site explains how sheriff service contracts work, outlines the proposed cost increases, and answers frequently asked questions about how these changes could affect city budgets. The website can be found at <https://sheriff-contract-facts.com/>.