



**City of Guadalupe**  
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April 8, 2014

Santa Barbara Grand Jury  
1100 Anacapa Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

and

The Honorable Arthur Garcia  
Santa Maria Juvenile Court  
4263 California Boulevard  
Santa Maria, CA 93455

Dear Grand Jury and Judge Garcia,

On behalf of the Guadalupe City Council, I welcome the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury report, "What is 2-1-1? Will It Survive in Santa Barbara County?" and to the Grand Jury recommendation that the City of Guadalupe and all Santa Barbara cities should "contribute funding [to 2-1-1] in proportionate amounts."

The City of Guadalupe agrees that 2-1-1 is a valuable countywide resource. As with all funding requests, however, the Guadalupe City Council has to consider that request in relation to our available financial resources and in relation to competing funding requests.

First, let us consider the City's available resources. Unfortunately, they are small. The City of Guadalupe is the poorest incorporated community in Santa Barbara County. Similarly, the City government of Guadalupe is poor. In California, the cities that are well off financially have significant sales tax and TOT (bed tax) income. Guadalupe has no TOT income. There is no hotel or motel in town. And we have very low sales tax. Our residents do not have a lot of money to spend and they do most of their shopping in Santa Maria. Our annual sales tax revenue is approximately \$200,000. If we met the countywide average, that number would be almost \$1.2 million. Unfortunately, it is not.

Stretching these limited resources is always a challenge. With the end of redevelopment, we almost went bankrupt in FY 2011-12. We've recovered since then, but our on-going financial existence is by no means guaranteed. We have very few employees and they are the lowest paid municipal employees in the County. Our fire department exists through the use of Paid Call Firefighters. Those firefighters receive a stipends of \$60 for a 24-hour shift. That equals \$2.50/hour at straight pay, \$2.69/hour with minor benefits. In addition to full-time police officers, we rely on part-time reserve Police Officers who are paid \$17/hour, \$20.83/hour with benefits. Our part-time parks and recreation supervisor is paid \$11.08/hour, \$14.20/hour with benefits.

We are a "full service city." What that means is that we provide police and fire protection. We provide water and sewer service. Through contractors, we provide garbage and transit service. We are responsible for streets and sidewalks and parks and recreation. We are responsible for building

and planning services as well as code enforcement. Most of the services Santa Maria and Santa Barbara provide, we provide. But we do all that with less.

Our water department consists of 1.25 employees. Our sewer department consists of 2.0 employees. We have a 2.75-employee street, building and park maintenance crew. Our management team consists of our City Administrator, Finance Director, and Public Safety Director who serves as both police chief and fire chief. We have a contract City Engineer, a contract City Attorney, a contract City planner, a contract City building inspector. Our building permit technician provides firefighter coverage during the day. When the alarm rings, she locks the door to the permit office and hops on the fire truck. Our firefighters do code enforcement. The City Administrator fulfills the role of Utilities Director, Public Works Director, Community Development Director, Transit Manager, and IT Manager.

Now let's look at the specific 2-1-1 request. In the Grand Jury report, you have done no financial analysis of the 2-1-1 program. The only financial information mentioned is the \$30,000 needed to update the 2-1-1 database. Not counting the \$30,000, the current proposed annual budget for 2-1-1 is \$190,000. That's with no marketing. Take the \$190,000 basic budget and add \$10,000 on the assumption the database would need to be updated every three years, you get \$200,000.

Now let's look at the call data. Your report states that 2-1-1 received 15,000 phone calls in 2011. The number of calls is much lower today. The latest data the countywide Mayors and Managers received was 4361 calls from 1/1/13 through 9/30/13. That equates to 5815 for the year. Only 51 of the calls from January through September came from Guadalupe. Since no marketing is included in the above budget, there is little chance the call numbers will improve. Divide \$200,000 by 5815 and the cost per call equals \$34.39.

For Guadalupe \$34.39 means one call to 2-1-1, 12.78 hours of paid call firefighter protection, 1.65 hours of reserve police officer protection, or 2.42 hours for our parks and recreation coordinator. (I mention parks and recreation because Guadalupe has more children per capita than any other city in Santa Barbara County.)

Given our low financial resources, our priority is for fire protection, police protection, and parks and recreation services for our youth. Unfortunately, our priority is not 2-1-1 even though 2-1-1 is a worthy program.

On behalf of the City Council of Guadalupe, thank you once again for the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury report and recommendation.

Sincerely,



Frances A. Romero, Mayor