

Your City, Our Community

SAN MATEO NEWS

Fall 2026

Message from the City Manager

There is a lot happening across San Mateo this fall — with important work underway, continued investments in our community, and plenty of progress to celebrate.

Financial sustainability remains a top priority as the City works to address a structural budget deficit while maintaining the services our community relies on every day. That work has become more urgent as San Mateo faces an estimated $12.9 million shortfall in State Vehicle License Fee (VLF) funding this year. We continue working with our regional and State partners toward a permanent solution while controlling costs, carefully managing City resources and implementing the Fiscal Sustainability Plan.

This November, voters also will consider City Council Members for Districts 1, 3 and 5, and two citywide ballot measures: Measure H, a quarter-cent local sales tax measure, and Measure F, which would update the City Charter. You'll find information about candidates and both measures, along with voting resources, in this issue.

Even as we navigate these challenges, we remain committed to investing in the places and services that make San Mateo a great place to live. From parks, streets and transportation improvements to the new Central Park playground, East Hillsdale Park upgrades and upcoming updates to the Martin Luther King Jr. Center, our capital projects reflect that commitment.

You'll also find updates on public safety, sustainability, winter activities and the Main Library's new café.

And we recently had the pleasure of honoring former Mayor, Assembly Member and State Sen. Jerry Hill with the unveiling of honorary Jerry Hill Street at City Hall — a fitting tribute to his decades of service to San Mateo, the County and California.

Thank you for staying informed, getting involved and helping make San Mateo such a strong community.

Alex Khojikian
City Manager

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November 3, 2026
Statewide General Election
San Mateo's District Election for City Council Districts 1, 3, and 5 | Citywide Ballot Measures Measure H & Measure F

What You Need to Know About the Nov. 3, 2026, Election

Elections for Districts 1, 3 and 5

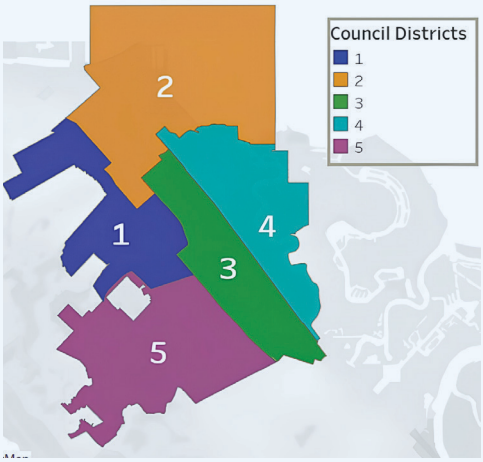
The City made the switch to district-based elections for Council Members in 2022. This November, an election for Districts 1, 3 and 5 will be held. If you're not a registered voter in those districts, you won't see City Council candidates on your ballot; however, you will still have state and federal candidates, along with two citywide ballot measures.

City Council Candidates:

- **District 1 -** Taso Zografos, Lisa Diaz Nash
- **District 3 -** Seema Patel, Robert G. Newsom Jr.
- **District 5 –** Dave Johnson, Adam Loraine, Dana Yates Sahae

Names are listed in the order according to the randomized alphabet drawing performed by the California Secretary of State.





Campaign Finance Dashboard

The City's **Council Campaign Financing Dashboard** gives residents an easy way to explore campaign finance information for San Mateo City Council candidates. The interactive tool includes contributions by location and contributor, candidate expenditures and more.

It is the first campaign finance tracking tool of its kind in San Mateo County and is designed to make election information more accessible and transparent.

Visit www.cityofsanmateo.org/elections to access the dashboard.

Ballot Measures

All San Mateo voters will consider two citywide ballot measures:

- **Measure H** is a ¼-cent local sales tax measure increase, which would generate approximately $7 million annually, with revenue going into the General Fund and available for City services and operations.
- **Measure F** updates the City Charter. The proposed revisions would reflect the City's transition to district elections, update procedures for scheduling Council meetings and filling Council vacancies and revise or remove other outdated provisions.

Ballot measure arguments, rebuttals, and the City Attorney's Impartial Analysis of these measures can be found on the City's website at www.cityofsanmateo.org/ballotmeasure.

Find a **list of Vote Centers and Drop Boxes** in San Mateo on the **back cover of this newsletter!**



General Election Voting Open Now through Nov. 3, 2026

Voting in the upcoming General Election began on Oct. 5, 2026, and continues until Election Day, Nov. 3, 2026. You have several ways to cast your ballot:

- **By Mail:** Use the postage-paid return envelope.
- **At a Drop Box:** Find a convenient location near you.
- **In Person:** Visit any San Mateo County Vote Center.

Vote Centers are open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Nov. 2. On Election Day, Nov. 3, polling hours are from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The County of San Mateo Registration & Elections Division opened as a 30-Day Vote Center on Oct. 5 (weekdays only) and will be open seven days a week starting Oct. 24. It will be closed Oct. 12 for Indigenous Peoples' Day/Columbus Day. Additional 4-Day Vote Centers open Oct. 31 and run through Election Day.

San Mateo Prepares for El Niño Storm Season

On Sept. 21, 2026, Governor Newsom declared a state of emergency, which helps local agencies like the City move faster to strengthen readiness before severe weather this year.

San Mateo is taking additional proactive steps beyond its routine efforts to prepare its stormwater system for wet weather and encourages residents to take steps now to protect their homes and families.

The City began dredging at Marina Lagoon this summer to remove up to 2,000 cubic yards of sediment where Leslie and Borel creeks enter the lagoon. Work is expected to be complete by early October.

Removing sediment improves water flow and helps the stormwater



system handle heavy rainfall, reducing flood risk.

The City conducts storm system maintenance throughout the year and routinely cleans its 6,000+ catch basins. Between July 2025 and September 2026, the City also cleaned more than 2,700 storm pipes. Crews also will remove vegetation from the 16th and 19th Avenue channels, inspect and clean trash racks and stormwater capture devices, and conduct preventive maintenance at City pump stations.

The City also updated its Storm Drain Master Plan, which identifies areas at risk of flooding and potential capital improvements. Residents can help inform future projects by sharing information about past flooding through the City's Historical Flood Reporting tool, available at **www.cityofsanmateo.org/historicalfloodtool**. The tool is for historical flooding information only, not active flooding or emergencies.

Why the City's Property Taxes Can Be Uncertain

The City entered the new fiscal year in July, facing a projected $16.9 million General Fund budget gap, due partly to uncertainty around a portion of property tax revenues known as Vehicle License Fee (VLF) In-Lieu funding.

This funding stems from a 2004 State agreement to swap direct VLF revenue to cities and counties with property tax revenue. The amount cities receive is tied to the property tax distribution system and how the State funds schools.

Non-basic aid school districts receive additional State funding that contributes to San Mateo County's VLF pool, while basic aid school districts do not. Over the last seven years, several school districts have shifted from non-basic aid to basic aid status, reducing State funding flowing into the County's property tax distribution system and creating a growing shortfall in VLF funding owed to the County and its 20 cities.

Historically, when the property tax revenue available to fund the State's VLF obligation fell short, the State provided additional funding to make the County and its cities whole. For the first four years of the recent shortfalls, the State ultimately provided full funding. For the first time in fiscal year 2025-26, the State funded only 67% of San Mateo's fiscal year 2023-24 shortfall, leaving $2.2 million unfunded.

When the City adopted its FY 2026-27 budget, it did not know whether the State would provide funding to cover any of San Mateo's $6.9 million VLF shortfall. Staff conservatively assumed no additional State funding.

Thanks to State legislators and County and City advocates, the State ultimately provided $4.4 million towards San Mateo's VLF shortfall. At the same time, however, the County determined that additional school districts had changed basic aid status, causing San Mateo's fiscal year 2025-26 VLF shortfall to increase significantly — from about $7.1 million to $12.9 million. This larger-than-expected shortfall has reduced the City's current property tax revenue estimates and increased the amount that will depend on State action to restore VLF funding San Mateo would otherwise receive.

For more information visit **www.cityofsanmateo.org/financialsustainability**.



New Café Opens as Main Library Turns 20

There's a new spot to grab a coffee, meet a friend or settle in with a good book at the San Mateo Main Library. PLUR Café is now open on the third floor, adding a new gathering place as the library celebrates its 20th anniversary.

PLUR Café offers espresso drinks, coffee, tea, pastries and other refreshments, with more food options planned. The café is open inside the library, Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, visit **www.cityofsanmateo.org/Library**

Prepare Before a Storm

Residents can take several steps before wet weather arrives:

- **Sign up for SMC Alert** to get emergency information.
- **Gather emergency supplies**, including medications, food, water, flashlights and batteries.
- **Clear gutters and drains around your property**, join Adopt-a-Drain, check sump pumps, secure outdoor furniture and protect valuables in areas that have flooded in the past.
- **Use the City's free, 24/7 self-service sandbag stations.** Sandbags are limited to 10 per vehicle. Find locations at the Storm & Flood Preparedness webpage.
- **Check on neighbors** who may need assistance, particularly older adults and people with mobility challenges.
- **Never drive, bike or walk through a flooded roadway.** Water may be deeper or moving faster than it appears.

For clogged storm drains, street flooding or fallen debris, call Public Works at 650-522-7300. The line is monitored 24 hours a day. For flooding or other emergencies that pose an immediate threat to life or safety call 911.

Learn more at www.cityofsanmateo.org/stormprep.

Capital Improvements Progress

Smooth Streets Program Enters Final Phase

Work is underway on the fifth and final phase of the Smooth Streets Program, a multiyear effort to reconstruct more than 22 miles of streets that have deteriorated beyond what routine pavement maintenance can address.

The reconstruction process recycles existing roadway materials in place, stabilizes the underlying soil with lime mortar and cement, and creates a stronger foundation before new asphalt is installed.

Work will continue on the final phase through 2026.

Martin Luther King Jr. Center Modernization Moves Forward

Planning is underway for updates to the King Center, with the City evaluating improvements based on community input, building needs and available funding.

The project aims to modernize the King Center and establish a resiliency center that can support residents during emergencies. Proposed improvements include upgrades to the pool and locker rooms, building entrance, roofing and drainage, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, and kitchen and food service areas.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the City's community engagement process through workshops, meetings and surveys. Your feedback shapes the project's priorities and design. Technical feasibility and funding requirements will also help determine the project's final scope and design. For more information and updates on the project, visit www.cityofsanmateo.org/MLKProject.



19th Avenue and Fashion Island Boulevard

Design is complete on the 19th Avenue and Fashion Island Boulevard Multimodal Improvements project. We are currently working through the final permits with Caltrans, and construction is expected to start in late 2027. The total project cost approximately $29 million, with over 95% of those funds coming from grants. This includes more than $20 million from the San Mateo County Transportation Authority, combined with other regional, state, and federal funding.

Intersection Safety Improvements

The City and Caltrans continue safety work at 17th Avenue and El Camino Real, where new signal timing gives pedestrians an exclusive crossing phase.

The City's recent improvements at Delaware and State streets and Palm and Ninth avenues include shorter pedestrian crossings, better visibility, new striping and other safety measures. More improvements, including permanent curb extensions, high-visibility crosswalks and ADA-compliant curb ramps are planned, with the next phase expected to go to bid in summer 2027.

Planning for Transportation and Safety Improvements on El Camino Real

San Mateo is participating in the Central El Camino Real Multimodal Plan, a SamTrans-led regional effort to identify future transportation and safety improvements along an 8.5-mile stretch of El Camino Real.

Learn more about these and other transportation projects at www.cityofsanmateo.org/transportationsafety.

Be Prepared Before an Emergency

Earthquakes, severe storms and other emergencies can happen with little warning. A few simple steps now can help your household be ready.

Build an Emergency Kit

Keep essential supplies where they are easy to reach, including water, nonperishable food, medications, a flashlight, first aid supplies, a phone charger or power bank, important documents and cash.

Plan for the needs of children, older adults, pets and people with disabilities or other access and functional needs. Consider keeping a smaller emergency kit in your vehicle.



Sign up for Alerts and Know Your Zone

Sign up for **SMC Alert**, San Mateo County's emergency alert and warning system, to receive urgent information by text, email or phone. Add important addresses, such as your home, workplace and children's schools.

Use **Genasys Protect** to find and save evacuation zone numbers for locations important to your household. During an emergency, follow official alerts and evacuation instructions.

Prepare for an Earthquake

Before an earthquake:

- **Secure** tall furniture, televisions and other heavy objects that could fall or block an exit.
- **Move** heavy items to lower shelves and away from beds and seating areas.
- **Choose** an out-of-area contact and plan how household members will reconnect if separated.
- **Keep** sturdy shoes, flashlights and emergency supplies within easy reach.

During shaking, **Drop, Cover, and Hold On**. Drop to your hands and knees, cover your head and neck under a sturdy table or desk if possible, and hold on until the shaking stops.

Afterward, expect aftershocks, check for injuries and hazards, and stay away from damaged buildings. Shut off natural gas only if you suspect a leak.

Prepare for Wet Weather

For flood preparation, free sandbags and storm safety tips, see Prepare Before a Storm in this newsletter or visit the City's webpage at www.cityofsanmateo.org/stormprep.

LEARN MORE

- **Emergency kit checklist:** Ready.gov/kit
- **Emergency alerts:** SMCAlert.info
- **Evacuation zones:** Protect.Genasys.com
- **Storm and flood preparedness:** www.CityofSanMateo.org/StormPrep
- **Earthquake preparedness:** SMCGov.org/DEM/Earthquake-Preparedness
- **Earthquake drills:** ShakeOut.org



Central Park Adventure Village Grand Opening

The new Adventure Village at Central Park is nearing completion. The project includes a new play area for children ages 2 to 5, along with swings, climbers, slides and a musical garden. Families will also find a new picnic shelter, upgraded pathways and lighting, new restrooms, a refreshed central lawn and accessible picnic seating. For ribbon cutting celebration details later this fall, visit www.cityofsanmateo.org/CentralParkPlayground.

Winter Fun Is on the Way

Parks and Recreation is getting ready for another season of winter activities and events in San Mateo.

Winter Wonderland Returns Dec. 5

Winter Wonderland returns from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5, at Central Recreation Center and Park. Enjoy winter-themed crafts, games and activities with family and friends.

San Mateo on Ice Returns This Winter

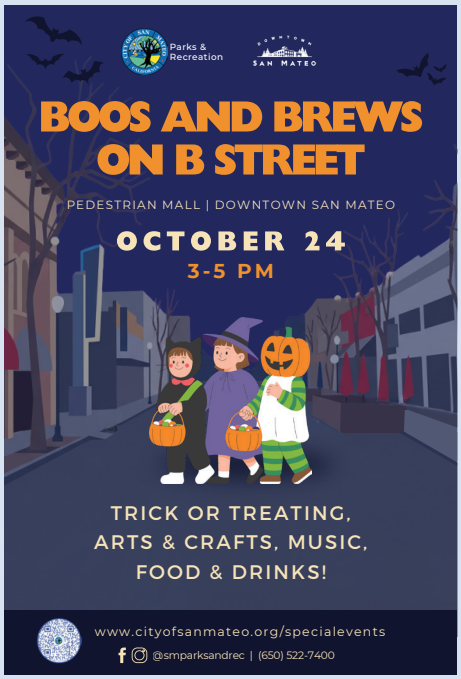


San Mateo on Ice will return to Central Park with daily recreational skating, parties, private ice time and special-event bookings on an 11,000-square-foot rink with real ice.

Skate during the day or under the stars at night, plan a family outing or gather friends for some seasonal fun.

Opening dates, hours and ticket information for the 2026-27 season will be announced soon.

Watch for the winter activity guide and find seasonal activities and events at www.cityofsanmateo.org/parks.



Planning for San Mateo's Future

Following extensive public input, the City is updating planning tools that guide how properties can be used, changed and developed in San Mateo. Residents, property owners and businesses will have opportunities to learn more and provide feedback as the work continues.

Historic Resources

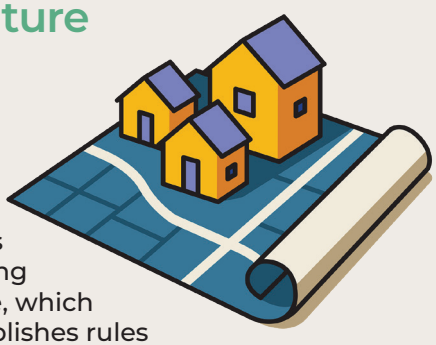
New guides and resources to explain San Mateo's updated historic codes and policies are being prepared, including whether a property is considered a historic resource, what that means and what requirements may apply to proposed changes or improvements.

A virtual **community meeting will be held at 6 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 22, 2026,** to review the new information and answer questions.

Learn more at www.cityofsanmateo.org/historicresources.

Zoning Code Update

Work also is underway on a comprehensive update to the



City's Zoning Code, which establishes rules for how land and buildings can be used and developed throughout San Mateo.

For residents and property owners, the code can affect what can be built on a property, how a building may be expanded or changed, where different uses are allowed and what standards apply to new development.

A draft is expected to be released for public review next spring. The next info session will be a **Planning Commission Study Session on Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2026, at 7 p.m.**, with meeting information posted online.

Learn more and sign up for updates at **strivesanmateo.org**.

Police Department Sets Priorities for Next Five Years

The San Mateo Police Department has developed a new 2026-2031 Strategic Plan to guide its work over the next five years.

The plan was shaped by input from Police Department employees, City leadership, community members, business leaders and public safety partners, as well as resident surveys and an assessment of the department's strengths and challenges. The process identified strong community engagement and frontline service, along with pressures related to staffing, workload, population growth, traffic and changing technology.

The plan focuses on four goals:

- Deepen community trust
- Expand organizational capacity, effectiveness and wellness
- Enhance crime prevention strategies and public safety innovation
- Improve traffic and pedestrian safety

Priorities include expanding community outreach and transparency, strengthening staffing and employee wellness, using data and technology to support crime prevention and service delivery, and improving traffic safety through education, targeted enforcement and coordination with Public Works.

The Police Department's goals also support broader City priorities for public safety, community engagement, transportation and organizational health. Access the plan at **www.cityofsanmateo.org/smpdstrategicplan**.

H.O.P.E. Team Connects People in Crisis with Support

The San Mateo Police Department created the H.O.P.E. (Holistic Oriented Policing & Engagement) Team, which brings together SMPD personnel, clinicians, outreach specialists and advocates to support people experiencing mental health crises, homelessness and domestic violence. The team provides a coordinated, compassionate response that connects people with critical services and resources while addressing immediate public safety needs. Learn more below.

Mental Health Crisis Response

H.O.P.E.'s Community Wellness and Crisis Response Team pairs law enforcement with behavioral health clinicians. They co-responded to **258 crisis-related calls in 2025**, including suicide attempts, welfare checks and other behavioral health emergencies, which can help reduce involuntary psychiatric detentions.

Domestic Violence Support

In partnership with Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse, the SMPD helps connect people experiencing domestic violence with safety, legal and housing support. The program launched in August 2025 and, during its first five months alone, the domestic violence advocate responded to **37 calls for service and provided direct support to 47 individuals**.

Homeless Outreach

SMPD's Homeless Outreach Team connects people experiencing homelessness with case management and helps individuals secure permanent housing or temporary shelter. In 2025, the team **connected 553 people with case management services, helped 54 people transition into temporary shelter, and supported 11 people in securing permanent housing**.

Learn more at **www.experience.arcgis.com**

Sustainability Update

The City continues to advance its sustainability priorities through programs and planning focused on cleaner air, lower emissions and long-term climate resilience.

Make the Switch to Electric Before Gas Leaf Blower Ban Begins Jan. 1, 2027

Beginning **Jan. 1, 2027**, gas-powered leaf blowers will no longer be allowed to be used in San Mateo.

To help residents and landscaping businesses make the switch, the City offers rebates toward the purchase of electric leaf blowers and batteries. San Mateo residents can receive up to **$100**, while landscaping businesses with an active San Mateo business license can receive up to **$500**.



Electric leaf blowers are quieter and produce no tailpipe emissions and will meet the new requirements taking effect Jan. 1. Residents who use a landscaping service are encouraged to share the rebate information with their gardener.

Learn more and apply at www.cityofsanmateo.org/leafblowers.

Planning for Sea Level Rise and Shoreline Resilience

The City is developing a Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plan to prepare for sea level rise and strengthen the resilience of San Mateo's shoreline. The multiyear planning effort will identify strategies to protect neighborhoods, infrastructure and natural resources from future flooding and sea level rise, while coordinating with broader regional shoreline planning efforts. The plan is expected to be completed in June 2028.

Community input will help shape the plan, with opportunities for residents to provide feedback throughout the planning process.

Sign up for project updates and view the existing conditions report at www.cityofsanmateo.org/adaptation.

More Places to Charge an Electric Vehicle

Electric vehicle (**EV**) drivers now have more public charging options in San Mateo. The San Mateo-Foster City School District has installed EV chargers at 11 school sites that are available to the public outside of school hours.

The chargers are open to the public on **weekdays 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.** and on **weekends 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.**

Find participating school locations and charging information at smfcsd.net.

City Adopts Updated Building Energy Reach Codes

The City Council adopted updated building reach codes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve energy efficiency. Building on San Mateo's history of climate leadership, these local standards go beyond California's minimum building energy requirements by encouraging building electrification and energy efficiency during major home renovations and cooling upgrades. The Council remains committed to transitioning existing buildings from methane gas to clean electricity.

The new reach codes will take effect once required state approvals are complete.

Learn more at www.cityofsanmateo.org/reachcodes.

Look for the Age-Friendly Business Decal

A growing number of San Mateo businesses are making it easier for older adults—and customers of all ages—to shop, dine and access services.

The City's Age-Friendly Business Certification program, which recognizes businesses and organizations that provide a welcoming, accessible experience for older adults, now includes 30 local businesses.

Residents can look for the Age-Friendly Business decal at participating businesses or find them listed in a directory on the City's website.

Age-friendly features can be simple: easy-to-read menus, reading glasses to borrow, accessible spaces, clear websites, responsive customer service and comfortable lighting and noise levels.

Many of these improvements make businesses easier and more comfortable for people of all ages.

The City launched the program after joining AARP's Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities in 2020. Trained volunteers with the San Mateo Age Friendly Coalition help businesses through the process and conduct on-site reviews covering accessibility, communications, customer service and employee experience.



Interested in becoming an Age-Friendly Business? Contact agefriendly@cityofsanmateo.org or visit www.cityofsanmateo.org/agefriendly to learn more and view the directory.

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San Mateo NEWS

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www.cityofsanmateo.org/sanmateonews

Voting Locations

Drop Box Locations

- **County Registration & Elections Division** (indoor and outdoor, drive-up) 40 Tower Rd.
- **City Hall** (indoor and outdoor, drive-up) 330 W 20th Ave.
- **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center** (outdoor, drive-up) 725 Monte Diablo Ave.
- **Parkside Aquatic Park** (outdoor) 1595 Seal St.
- **College of San Mateo (outdoor, drive-up) 1700 West Hillsdale Blvd.**

Vote Center Locations and Availability

- **County Registration & Elections Division** 40 Tower Rd.
  Available: Starting Oct.(weekdays); daily starting Oct. 24
- **City Hall, Conference Room C**
  330 W. 20th Ave.
  Available: Oct. 31 – Nov. 3
- **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, Social Room B**
  725 Monte Diablo Ave.
  Available: Oct. 31 – Nov. 3
- **Main Library, Oak Room**
  55 W. 3rd Ave.
  Available: Oct. 31 – Nov. 3
- **Hilton Garden Inn San Mateo, Orchid 1**
  2000 Bridgepointe Circle
  Available: Oct. 31 – Nov. 3
- **Wastewater Treatment Plant, Training Room 2050**
  Detroit Drive
  Available: Oct. 31 – Nov. 3

For a complete list of Vote Centers and Drop Boxes, visit smcvote.gov

We Are Hiring!

- Competitive wages
- Comprehensive benefits
- Diverse, collaborative and inclusive workplace
- Meaningful, impactful work
- Innovation in service
- Diverse career paths

Learn more
calopps.org/city-of-san-mateo



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