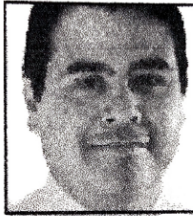


# San Jose Mercury News

September 30, 2014



**AROUND TOWN**  
SAL PIZARRO

## **WONDERS NEVER CEASE:**

Common sense invaded the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors chamber Sept. 23 when Supervisor Joe Simitian successfully led the effort to drop the \$15 to \$27 fee charged when residents pay their property taxes online. From Simitian's point of view, it didn't make sense to make people pay the county so they could pay the county.

"I'm pleased we're able to treat taxpayers fairly, and maybe drag our county a little further into the 21st century," Simitian said in a release. "Nobody 'likes' having to pay their property taxes, but hopefully this makes the experience a little less painful."

Of course, this could lead

to more people paying their taxes online and the county will have to pick up the tab for having those payments processed. But at least that's taxpayer money already in the system instead of in your pocket.

---

Contact Sal Pizarro at [spizarro@mercurynews.com](mailto:spizarro@mercurynews.com). Follow him at [Facebook.com/mercurynews.aroundtown](https://www.facebook.com/mercurynews.aroundtown) and [Twitter.com/spizarro](https://twitter.com/spizarro).

# Los Altos Town Crier

Community news for Los Altos, Los Altos Hills and Mountain View since 1947

December 21, 2016

## County will permit partial tax payments

Town Crier Report

Santa Clara County residents struggling to pay their property taxes will soon get a bit of relief. On a motion by Supervisor Joe Simitian, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors approved a plan for accepting partial payments on property-tax bills.

"As things stand now, if a person is having a rough patch and sends a property-tax payment less than the total amount owed, we send that payment back – and then threaten them with a 10 percent penalty on the whole amount if they don't pay up," Simitian said. "It seems to me that we ought to be encouraging taxpayers who are trying to do the right thing, even as they're struggling financially."

Under the existing system, the county rejects any payment less than the total amount owed on the installment. The taxpayer is then notified of the shortfall and asked to remit the balance due.

Taxpayers are currently given 10 days to remit full payment, and if they fail to do so, they are assessed a 10 percent penalty on the entire balance due.

### TAXES

fiscal year was more than \$9,900. Property taxes often represent the largest single lump-sum tax payment that many Californians make each year.

"This seemed like a relatively straightforward way to make our county government work better for our residents," Simitian said. "The obligation is still payment in full, and there will still be consequences for taxpayers who don't meet that obligation, but this change will allow people to make progress even when they can't pay the whole bill—a bit like a credit card balance."

Simitian noted that if you shop at Macy's or Target, "you know it's not rocket science."

"You pay what you can, you owe the balance, and there's still a cost associated with that remaining balance," he said. "A penalty, plus interest."

They then have until June 30 to pay their outstanding tax bill before becoming tax defaulted and accruing additional penalties of 18 percent per year. On average, approximately 5,550 homeowners default each year.

Under the new system, which takes effect next tax year, the county will allow partial payments and will only penalize taxpayers on the unpaid balance owed after that payment.

Simitian said he was particularly mindful of "folks who were struggling through the recent recession, caught up in the mortgage crisis and then told that despite their best efforts, the county refused to take a partial payment."

"We all understand that these taxes have to be paid," he added, "but let's be realistic – you can't squeeze blood out of a turnip. When people are trying to pay, let's help them pay."

Santa Clara County has the highest average home values in California, with commensurately high tax bills. The county's average property-tax bill last

See TAXES, Page 40

April 23, 2020

# County waives late fees for property taxes

The Santa Clara County Supervisors have agreed to waive late fees for property taxpayers, but they waited until after the tax deadline to try to get as many people as possible to pay up.

The supervisors unanimously agreed Tuesday to waive the 10% penalty and \$20 fee for people who paid their April 10 taxes late. They made the move in

response to the economic fallout from the COVID-19 stay-at-home order.

Supervisor Mike Wasserman said he assumes more people already paid their taxes because they knew they were due and didn't know the fees would be waived. But Wasserman said he was concerned that letting people not pay on time could have future repercussions

sions for the county since other revenue sources, such as the sales tax, will likely fall.

Supervisor Joe Simitian of Palo Alto, who proposed the idea of waiving late fees with Board President Cindy Chavez, said that the move wasn't intended to defer people's obligation to pay taxes, which was why the pro-

posal came after the deadline passed. Simitian previously told the Post that he thinks the proposal struck a good balance between helping people and protecting county funds.

He said the county government doesn't keep most of the property tax dollars. He said most of it goes to other agencies such as schools.