

5 South Bay Cities Share One Broken Website Template

Sites reviewed: fremont.gov, sanjoseca.gov, santaclaraca.gov, sunnyvale.ca.gov, redwoodcity.org
Prepared by: ZenMasterWorks · Date: August 2026

Methodology & scope: This audit is built entirely from publicly available information — each site's content as returned to a standard, non-JavaScript-executing fetch, the kind search engine crawlers and some accessibility tooling use. No production or staging access was requested or used for any of the five cities. Every finding was independently re-verified in August 2026.

The Pattern

Fremont, San José, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, and Redwood City each run their own website, procured and maintained independently. Yet all five return the identical fallback message — "Please enable JavaScript in your browser for a better user experience" — as the only content visible to a fetch that doesn't execute JavaScript, on core pages like Departments, Government, and Online Services. All five share the same legacy Granicus platform fingerprint. This isn't five separate bugs — it's one vendor template, deployed five times, with the same gap in every deployment.

City	JS-only fallback confirmed	Additional finding
Fremont	Yes — /government, /about/department-director	Press Room items span 2020–2024, none more recent
San José	Yes — six pages, see dedicated audit	Full single-city writeup published separately
Santa Clara	Yes — /our-city/departments-a-f	"Last Updated: 09-11-2019" — nearly 7 years stale
Sunnyvale	Yes — /city-services/online-services	—
Redwood City	Yes — /departments	Footer claims JS is required "for accessibility" — the opposite is true

Findings

CRITICAL

Five independent government sites share the same JavaScript-only content gap

Core informational pages — departments, government structure, online services — return only the fallback text "Please enable JavaScript in your browser for a better user experience" when fetched the way a search crawler or non-JS-executing tool would. Each city's homepage renders fine; the gap is specific to interior page templates shared across all five deployments of the same underlying platform.

MEDIUM

Santa Clara's Departments A-F page is dated September 2019

The page footer displays "Last Updated: 09-11-2019" — nearly seven years old as of this review, on a page listing six City departments.

LOW

Redwood City's own JavaScript notice contradicts itself on accessibility

The footer reads: "Please ensure Javascript is enabled for purposes of website accessibility." In practice, content that only renders after JavaScript executes is typically harder, not easier, for screen readers to reach reliably.

What's Genuinely Working

- Every homepage renders complete, real content without JavaScript — the gap is isolated to interior templates.
- All five cities publish extensive, genuinely useful department directories and civic resources once the page does render.
- Because the defect is shared across one vendor template rather than five separately broken custom builds, it is a single, fixable root cause.

This audit was prepared independently by ZenMasterWorks and is not affiliated with, endorsed by, or representing any of the five cities named above. Full version with live evidence links: <https://www.zenmasterworks.com/audits/audit-norcal-granicus-cluster.html>