

Case Study

How San Mateo County Brought IT, Staff, and Vendors Together With One Flexible Support Model on Accela



Meet Jess

An IT leader who knew her team could do more with the right support

Jess Marks Irving supervises a four-person IT team at the County of San Mateo that supports Accela across Building, Planning, Sustainability, and Public Works. When Jess joined, she inherited a complex implementation that needed attention.

The Building module had been overhauled but still needed fine-tuning. The Planning module hadn't been touched in years. And there was a growing backlog of fixes that staff had been living with for too long. Jess needed support to stabilize the platform, rebuild trust with departments, and find a sustainable way to keep improving.

The Challenge



A growing backlog, unpredictable support, and an IT team caught in the middle

Jess's team knew what had to change, but their support model wasn't built for the kind of work they needed to do. Their current vendor operated on time-and-materials and focused on large projects, not the steady stream of small configuration changes San Mateo County needed. That left Jess's team trying to close the gap on their own.

Small changes with big price tags: Configuration needs piled up, each with a cost. Jess was constantly asking questions like, "Is it worth \$700 to fix this dropdown?"

Tickets that went nowhere: Without a structured release process, tickets stayed open for months or years. Staff had no idea when, or if, their requests would be addressed.

No prioritization structure: Without a clear process for prioritizing changes, the loudest departments got attention while others waited. And without visibility across the organization, updates in one division sometimes affected another before anyone caught it.

Stuck playing telephone: IT was caught in the middle, relaying questions back and forth between department staff and the vendor, and absorbing the frustration from both sides when details slipped or things were unclear.

A support model built for big projects: The vendor was set up for large implementations, not small, ongoing operational improvements. If it didn't fit into a major project scope, it was tough to move forward.



**COUNTY OF
SAN MATEO**

Population: 764,000

Location: San Francisco Peninsula

Product: GovPath SideKick+
Managed Services for Accela

Challenges

- IT team spending more time coordinating between staff and vendors than improving the system
- A time-and-materials (T&M) support model that made every small fix a budget decision
- A growing backlog of configuration updates with no structured way to address them
- Unpredictable timelines and tickets that sat open for months or over a year

Solutions

- GovPath SideKick+ managed services with SLA-backed response and resolution times
- A structured monthly release cadence replacing unpredictable T&M delivery
- Biweekly department meetings and monthly governance for clear prioritization
- A dedicated partner willing to challenge ideas and share best practices

The Solution

A managed services partner that turned Jess's team into leaders, not middlemen

Jess knew her team needed better support, but was skeptical of managed services vendors. She needed a partner she could trust with the following:

- 1 Tailored responses based on their actual needs, not the same script every client gets
- 2 Someone to share their expertise and help her define best practices, not a "yes man"
- 3 Clear SLAs showing exactly what would be in scope and what type of timelines to expect

After a long vetting process, Jess found that GovPath's SideKick+ managed services was the support model her team needed.

How GovPath helped San Mateo County clear their backlog and unify departments

Predictable monthly releases

GovPath introduced a structured monthly release cadence, replacing the unpredictable timelines of the old model. Jess's team now sends out release notes to staff each month, making progress visible across the organization for the first time.

Collaborative prioritization across departments

With less time spent on coordination, Jess launched biweekly meetings with each division. For the first time, every department has a regular seat at the table. Changes get prioritized collaboratively, and requests flow through a structured backlog instead of ad hoc emails.

Structured governance and accountability

Through SideKick+, the GovPath team provides monthly governance meetings and yearly success reviews, giving Jess's team transparency into current projects, what's coming next, and how the partnership is performing. SLAs are tracked and consistently met or exceeded.

Dual implementation and managed services support

SideKick+ runs alongside a separate GovPath professional services team handling the Planning module re-implementation. That means project work stays focused and operational improvements keep flowing, without one slowing down the other.

A partner who tells it like it is

Jess specifically wanted a partner willing to push back and share what has worked with government teams in similar situations. GovPath brought best practices and honest recommendations, rather than saying yes to requests they knew wouldn't produce the desired result.

The Results

Before SideKick+	After SideKick+
~ Four releases per month	15+ releases per month
Tickets open for months; some for over a year	SLAs consistently met or exceeded
IT stuck coordinating between staff and vendors	IT leads biweekly meetings with each division
No prioritization structure or way to avoid conflicting or redundant efforts	Clear project prioritization and visibility across every department

"GovPath unlocked our team's time to make changes that we knew we needed to make.

Everybody has that list of things they know would be so great to fix.

Since bringing GovPath on, we've been able to do those things a lot faster."



Jess Marks Irving

IT Supervisor,
County of San Mateo



Get the support you need to Lead The Way to better public services

If your team is spending more time managing vendors and juggling tickets than actually improving your systems, you're not alone.

GovPath SideKick+ gives you predictable delivery, structured governance, and a partner who's invested in your long-term success.



Reach out to learn more about SideKick+.

info@govpath.tech or visit govpath.tech