

Individual City Department Approaches to Addressing Vehicle Concern Service Requests

Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services – Beautify SJ

The BeautifySJ Program in the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department provides cleanup/sanitation services to approximately 175 encampment locations throughout the City. The BeautifySJ Program responds to work orders received related to trash or biowaste near lived-in vehicles that are submitted via the San José 311 Vehicle Concerns portion of the app or via the Encampment Response Coordination System¹⁶. The program responds to work order requests to remove trash and assess vehicles to proactively determine whether they should be added to the Encampment Management trash collection route. In 2024-2025 BeautifySJ Program expanded the biowaste collection services via the BeautiySJ Recreational Vehicle Pollution Prevention Program or RVP3 from 150 vehicles the previous fiscal year to 600 vehicles in the current fiscal year. The program focuses on preventing black and grey water from spilling into streets, onto sidewalks and being discharged into storm drains. From July 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025, the program collected 367,250 pounds of biowaste from lived-in vehicles located in 62 vehicle encampment service sites. It is important to note that BeautifySJ proactively collects trash from lived-in vehicles that are on a trash route as part of the Encampment Trash Program.

In addition to providing biowaste collection services, BeautifySJ staff engages with residents residing in lived-in vehicles to educate them on the City of San Jose's Encampment Code of Conduct; reviews protocols related to bagging trash and not storing items outside of vehicles; and coordinates with DOT to implement the OLIVE Program. Additionally, these engagements support the City's overall strategy of connecting residents to resources and the Housing Department's Outreach Team.

Housing

When a report is submitted through San José 311 for a lived in or occupied vehicle, it is routed to Housing (Homeless Response Division). The report is assigned to either Homefirst or Path (contracted outreach partners)- depending on the location. The outreach team works to respond within 30 days, prioritizing vehicles located in OLIVE priority areas and BSJ abatement priority areas. The assigned outreach team works to accomplish one of three actions in moving towards resolution;

1. Contact made/referral provided
2. Unable to make contact/person refused engagement
3. Vehicle is no longer at the reported location

¹⁶ Encampment Coordinated Response System
<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/parks-recreation-neighborhood-services/report-an-encampment>

Generally, during the point of engagement, the outreach team provides information on housing options, housing availability, while enrolling (or updating) homelessness databases and providing hygiene products to continue fostering positive interactions and relationships. Once one of the three options has been completed, the case is closed out.

Planning, Building, Code Enforcement – Private Property

When a report is received through SJ311, Code Enforcement reviews the report for completeness. If the report lacks sufficient information for Code Enforcement to act, the report is closed. If sufficient information is included in the report, a Code Enforcement case is created, and a letter is mailed to the property owner requesting they voluntarily address the vehicle issue that has been reported. A letter is also mailed to the reporting party requesting they respond within 21 days to confirm the vehicle issue has been addressed. If a report is received by the reporting party that the vehicle has not been addressed, the case will be assigned to an inspector to begin the enforcement process.

While customers now can report concerns on private property via SJ311, they may also still report their concern directly to Code Enforcement. Since the launch of the vehicle concern system, Code Enforcement has received 481 SJ311 reports for vehicle concerns on private property.

Police

Stolen Vehicles

When vehicle concerns are entered into the SJ311App with a license plate number, the number is checked against a list of stolen vehicles reported to the Department of Justice. If the vehicle plate entered matches a plate on the list an email is automatically generated and sent to a specific mailbox at the San Jose Police Communications Center. A Communications Specialist assigned to monitor the mailbox retrieves the email and creates a police event to send a Community Service Officer or Police Officer out to the given location to determine if the vehicle is still there, still listed as stolen and if so, will recover the vehicle and attempt to return it to the registered owner. The SJ311 App has flagged 138 vehicles to San José Police Communications as stolen in the first 3 quarters of FY 24-25.

Narcotics and Prostitution

When vehicle concerns are entered, and the reporting party chooses the option of narcotics and/or prostitution, their complaint is forwarded via email to the Covert Response Unit for narcotics (375 referrals) and the Special Victim's Unit for prostitution (148 referrals). The emails are retrieved by the unit's Police Forensic Analysts and assessed for information.