



# **San Jose Conservation Corps:**

**The Corps Provides Essential Services To Residents, However The City Can Better Monitor Performance And Promote Workplace Safety**

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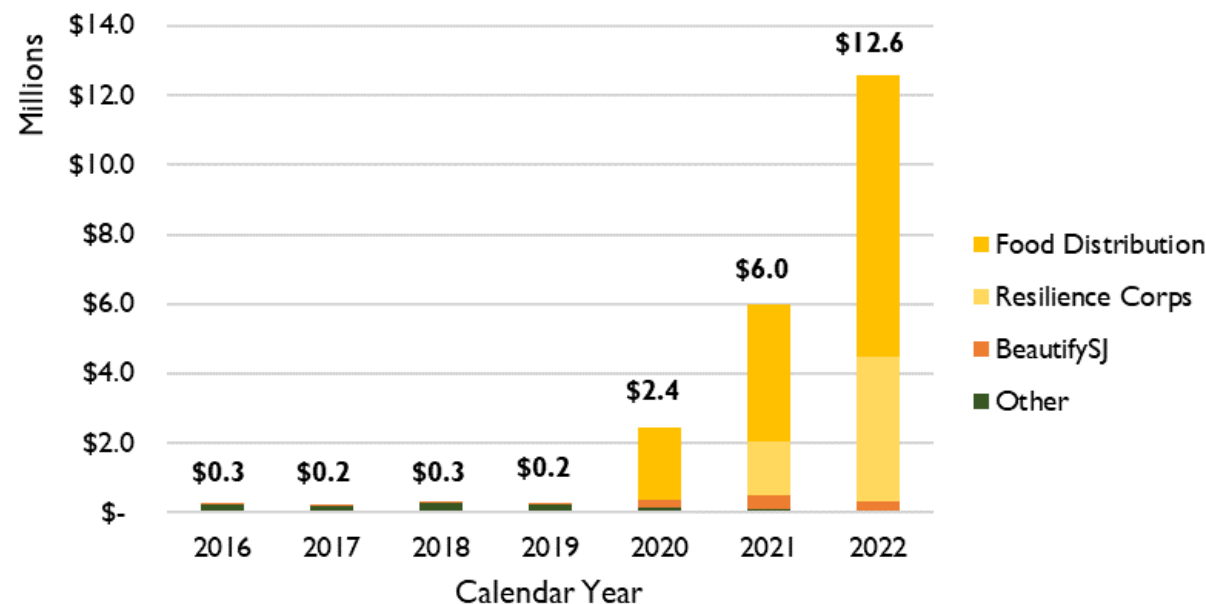
A Report from the City Auditor  
Issued April 2023

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/auditor>

## Background

- The San Jose Conservation Corps is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that connects young adults from under-resourced communities with job training and educational opportunities.
- The City has contracted with the Conservation Corps since its inception in 1987 for park maintenance, cleanup programs, and other projects.

**City Expenditures for Conservation Corps Have Grown to \$12.6 million in 2022**



Source: Analysis of transaction detail for the Conservation Corps from the City's Financial Management System. Note: BeautifySJ funding spans over multiple programs.

## Background

The San Jose Conservation Corps works in three primary program areas:

- **Resilience Corps Environmental Pathways** – Providing living-wage jobs for young adults, focusing on environmental impact projects in City parks and trails.
- **BeautifySJ** – Trash clean-up and collection work at trails and encampments for residents experiencing homelessness.
- **Food Distribution** – Helping fill and distribute boxes of food through the Second Harvest Food Bank.





## Finding I: The City Can Refine Performance Tracking and Improve Contract Monitoring.

Program	FY 2021-22 Expenditures	Overview of Reported Program Results
<b>Resilience Corps Environmental Pathways</b>	\$4,305,662	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruited 106 Corps members, 89 percent from low-resource census tracts.</li> <li>Corps members worked 72,000 hours across 29 locations in the city and received 13,200 hours of training and professional development.</li> <li>Retained 80 percent of Corps members and achieved a positive outcome rate of 74 percent.</li> </ul>
<b>Food Distribution</b>	\$8,053,195	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>218 Corps members worked at Second Harvest Food Bank, providing 170,400 hours of food boxing and support.</li> </ul>
<b>BeautifySJ Homeless Encampment Cleanups</b>	\$270,073	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed 370 clean-ups at encampments, trails, and other sites.</li> <li>Filled and collected 3,900 trash bags and distributed 1,600 empty bags to residents experiencing homelessness.</li> <li>96 Corps members worked 4,700 hours in BeautifySJ programs.</li> </ul>

Source: Auditor analysis of City contracts with the Conservation Corps, the City’s Financial Management System (FMS), performance reports, and invoices.



## Finding I: The City Can Refine Performance Tracking and Improve Contract Monitoring.

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- The City can better measure and track performance goals in some areas.
- PRNS can improve its contract monitoring by more consistently reviewing invoices and tying payments to completed work.
- As some Conservation Corps funding has come from federal sources, the City is currently working to ensure compliance with federal rules around that funding.

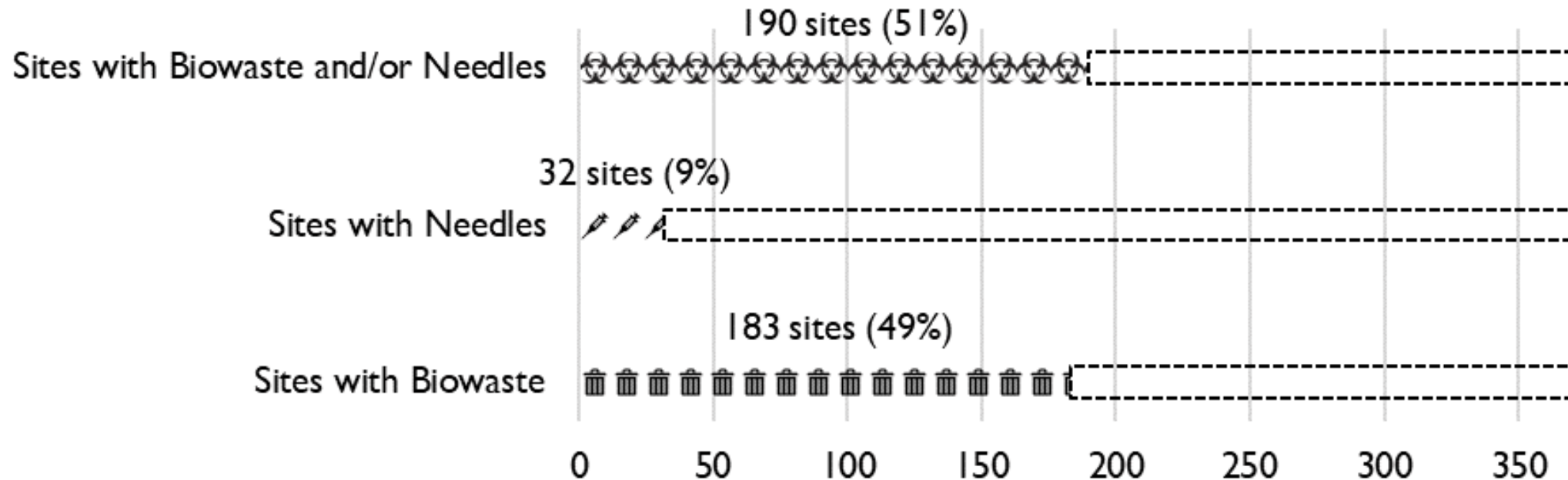
### Recommendations:

The Administration should:

- Develop metrics related to timeliness or effectiveness for the BeautifySJ work
- Establish a process to verify Resilience Corps' post-program participant outcomes
- Review Conservation Corps indirect cost breakdowns for compliance with federal guidelines

## Finding 2: The City Can Help Promote a Safer Work Environment for Corps Members.

### Hazards Were Present at Roughly Half of The Sites and Routes



Source: Auditor Analysis of BeautifySJ survey data.

## Finding 2: The City Can Help Promote a Safer Work Environment for Corps Members.

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- Not all Corps members were trained in Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or bloodborne pathogens standards.
- PRNS can improve the process to ensure follow-up service occurs at these sites.

### **Recommendations:** The Administration should:

- Work with the Conservation Corps to finalize safety operating procedures for handling biowaste and hazards
- Develop training requirements and guidance based on OSHA standards
- Establish a process for notifying other groups in the City for follow up services related to needles or other hazards



# Conclusion

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This report has five recommendations to better monitor performance and promote workplace safety.

We would like to thank the San Jose Conservation Corps and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services. We also thank the City Manager's Office; the Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs; the Finance Department; and the City Attorney's Office.

The audit report is available at [www.sanjoseca.gov/auditor](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/auditor)

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