



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Esparza
Councilmember Peralez
Councilmember Foley

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: 09/18/2020

Approved: *Maya Esparza*

Pam Foley

[Signature]

Date: 9/18/2020

SUBJECT: Fiscal Recovery Update and Coronavirus Relief Fund Rebalancing

RECOMMENDATION

1. Accept the recommendations from the Memorandum dated September 14, 2020 from the Mayor and Councilmembers Diep, Davis, and Jimenez with the clarification that recommendation 1.b. should prioritize the “most needed” locations based on data and with an equity lens. This approach should recognize that complaint-driven responses are inherently inequitable, and that we need a data-driven response.
2. Include all of Monterey Road in the Railroad updates mentioned in 2.b. of the Mayor’s Memorandum.
3. Include the current joint maintenance schedule for the Guadalupe and Coyote Creeks in the update to Council on September 22.
4. Include as part of the September 22 update to Council an update on code enforcement activities, including how many staff are actively conducting code enforcement inspections and the percent of code enforcement services that have been fully restored to pre shelter-in-place levels.
5. Include as part of the December Study Session a plan to comprehensively address and mitigate the negative environmental impact of encampments and blight in our creeks and waterways.

BACKGROUND

We appreciate the recommendations brought forward by the Mayor and Councilmembers Diep, Davis, and Jimenez to dedicate additional, sorely-needed funding to combat blight and illegal dumping in our communities. As our city has navigated numerous crises these past six months, our staff and resources have been stretched to their limits, and focusing on emergency response

has put us well behind in our efforts to combat blight and trash in our communities. This has further strained communities already overwhelmed with the ongoing effects of the dual public health and economic crises caused by Covid-19. This additional \$3 million in funding provides us with an opportunity to finally provide some relief to our most impacted neighborhoods, and also presents an opportunity to rethink how we equitably address blight in our communities.

As we distribute our City's limited funds, equity must be incorporated into this process. It is undeniable that neighborhoods in San Jose look and feel vastly different depending on where they are situated, this is not acceptable. There are many barriers to requesting what the City has to offer, but we need to take comprehensive steps to get there. Therefore, we need to proactively find the areas that are most underserved and provide the resources necessary to create safe equitable neighborhoods throughout San Jose.

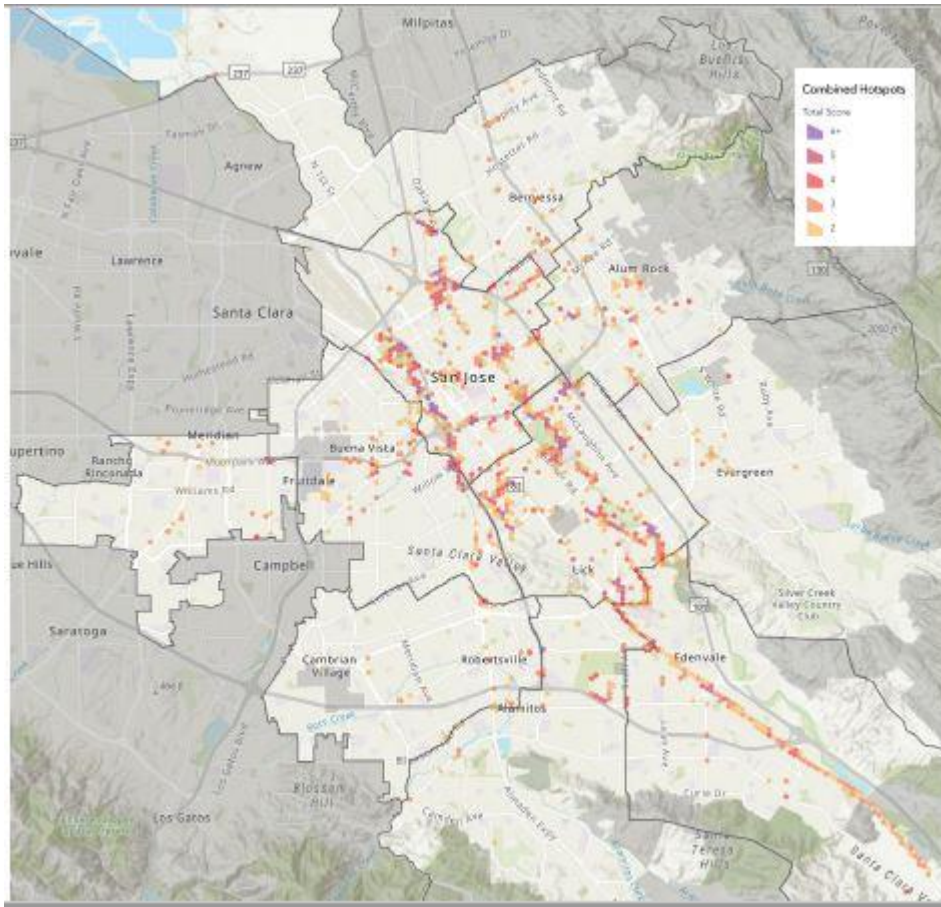
Our City has long been reliant on a complaint-based system when allocating staff and resources for blight and trash removal. This reactive model, in addition to being inefficient, is inherently inequitable, as the areas with the most complaints often do not correlate with the areas of greatest need. An equitable approach is one that recognizes this and looks objectively at the facts on the ground and allocates resources based on where the need is greatest.

We have requested that all of Monterey Road be included in the staff update on railroads, based on our experience in 2019 in which the city removed a staggering 800,000 pounds of trash in 2019 along the railroad corridor. This corridor is adjacent to many vulnerable industrial areas, as well as many mobile home parks which are extremely vulnerable to fires, and we risk an unfathomable loss of life if we fail to address the blight along these corridors. Below are two photos from one such fire on November 26, 2019, taken along the UPRR corridor adjacent to the Pepper Tree Estates Mobile Home Park.



In the City Manager's September 1, 2020 report to Council, staff presented preliminary data based on staff observations, community complaints, as well as over 328 visual surveys conducted along 83 visual assessment routes covering 195 miles of road. This data aggregates encampment and blight hotspots, and provides a critical basis for us to adopt a data-driven

response to blight in our communities. Below is staff's hotspot map illustrating areas of particular concern within the city:



Source: Presentation, Item 3.1 City Council Meeting 9/1/2020

The service model previewed by staff on September 1st determined over 150 hotspots by pinpointing where encampments, blight, and illegal dumping intersect. These 150 sites would receive high, frequent levels of service, as part of a multi-tiered approach to addressing blight. Many of the highest points of intersectionality fell under District 3 and District 7 considering our two districts is home to the highest number of encampments and homeless individuals. With the suspension in abatements, there has been a substantial increase in requests for service to remove trash around encampment sites. The proposed allocation must target the areas with the highest need and rely on dynamic datasets to proactively drive decisions around resource allocation. This gives us a critical opportunity to develop a more equitable and effective response to blight, and we need to ensure that staff has the resources required to fully develop and utilize this data for a systemic approach.

We also need to work effectively with our partner agencies, including the County, Valley Water, and Caltrans as we continue to develop this proactive approach to blight. We know that many of the major hotspots are located along the Guadalupe and Coyote Creek, and for that reason we are asking that we include the current joint maintenance schedule for both of these sites in any creek update that staff provides on September 22. This is not simply a matter of aesthetics and

beautifying our communities, blight can pose serious dangers to our residents, as illustrated below, by this photo taken by a community member last week near Story Road and 101, and negatively impact the ecological environment of our many federally protected species within all waterways.



Fire near Story Road and 101, September 9, 2020



Guadalupe River, September 11, 2020 -Illegal dumping and encampment remnants

While we appreciate the Mayor's inclusion of a code enforcement update as part of the December study session, we have had many concerns in our communities around sanitation, rodent infestations, and extreme hoarding that pose serious health and safety risks for residents that require a more urgent response timeline, and so we ask staff to provide this update to Council during the September 22 meeting.

Developing and delivering a truly equitable, data-driven service model will require sustained investment, sustained engagement, and a thoughtful approach that will set us up for success. We can—and must—do right by all of our residents, especially those living in the communities enduring the worst of this crisis.

The signers of this memorandum have not had, and will not have, any private conversation with any other member of the City Council, or that member's staff, concerning any action discussed in the memorandum, and that each signer's staff members have not had, and have been instructed not to have, any such conversation with any other member of the City Council or that member's staff.