



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Sergio Jimenez
Councilmember Maya Esparza

SUBJECT: Annual BeautifySJ Report. **DATE:** May 3, 2019

Approved by:

Date: May 3, 2019

Recommendation

1. Direct the City Manager to allocate the necessary funding to make the program more equitable to under-resourced, diverse communities. Specifically:
 - a. Prioritize translating all educational materials and the MySanJose App into Spanish and Vietnamese and begin adaptation in additional languages; and
 - b. Prioritize Dumpster Day funding in communities currently plagued by illegal dumping where hotspots have been identified.

Background

The interdepartmental efforts of Environmental Services, PRNS, DOT and the entire Beautify SJ team have been successful in addressing concerns about litter, trash, illegal dumping, graffiti, and street maintenance. The increased demand and ability to integrate technology for service requests across the City has created an impossible situation of tremendous department workload and the unintended consequence of many neighborhoods being under served because of language barriers to reporting.

We appreciate that the Mayor has allocated additional resources to the Beautify SJ program in his March Budget Message. Unfortunately, it is evident that we need to do more to tackle the ever growing problem of blight in our City. We feel that our recommendations here will help expand the use of the MySanJose app to a broader and more diverse audience, which will help alleviate illegal dumping in areas where blight is underreported. San Jose is one of the most diverse cities in the country, with over half of our households speaking a language other than English at home. With the MySanJose app being available only in English, we are excluding a significant number of residents from participating in the program. The staff report indicates that as reporting of illegal dumping on the app has increased, proactive clean ups have decreased by 68%. This

means that areas not reporting dumping are not being serviced, even though they are known hotspots for litter and trash. This leads to the conclusion that diverse communities with language barriers are disproportionately impacted and not receiving an adequate share of resources. By translating the app into Spanish and Vietnamese and providing outreach and education to these communities, we can increase reporting in currently underserved communities. We are sympathetic to the challenges faced by staff in creating a multilingual app, but that should not deter us from prioritizing the needs of underserved communities.

Additionally, by focusing funding for dumpster days in neighborhoods where reporting is limited, we are providing residents with an environmentally safe alternative for disposing of items that often end up on the side of the road. The dumpster day program currently allocates \$18k to each Council District. Though this is an equal distribution of funds, it may not be the most equitable. In past years some Council Districts did not fully expend dumpster day funds, meaning resources went unused when they could have been invested in other communities. Evaluating how we distribute these resources will allow us to target blight hotspots and keep all of our neighborhoods safe and clean.