



October 19, 2020

City of San Jose Mayor and City Council

Re: Comment on 10/20/20 Agenda Item 3.8: Trash at Homeless Encampments

Dear Mayor Liccardo and Councilmembers:

Upon the Shelter In Place order, the encampments along our waterways have put significant pressure on nature and wildlife, including fish, birds, and riparian vegetation. Trash, fecal material (including toilet paper), and food waste continue to accumulate along the banks and in the water. Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful and the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society staff and volunteers observed that many homeless people along the creeks push their trash into the creek so their space is cleaner. Additionally, fires set by homeless people to clear trash or vegetation for their camp site have resulted in an adverse and cumulative effect on nature. It has become unpleasant, even unsafe, for the public to visit trails and enjoy our city's natural assets along our creeks.

We sincerely appreciate the effort by the City of San Jose to provide trash and sanitation services, for example through the Homeless Sheltering and Support efforts. Tragically, during the pandemic, the public health threat to the creek and its environs has increased dramatically. If we are to allow homeless individuals to continue living along our creeks, we must ensure that our waterways and the Bay that the streams flow to are clean. And we must do more to help encampment dwellers to move to available temporary housing.

The proposed allocation of \$3,000,000 to the three vendors to provide sanitation services is much appreciated. However, we should focus the use of these funds on our abused waterways. Furthermore, San Jose should follow the example of other cities (e.g., Sacramento and Oakland) that are working to distance encampments from parks and natural resources by moving people 100 feet from the riparian corridors of the creeks.

Thank you for your attention to this continued situation.

Deb Kramer  
Executive Director

Shani Kleinhaus  
Environmental Advocate

Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society