

Memorandum

TO: SMART CITIES AND SERVICE
IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

FROM: Khaled Tawfik

SUBJECT: BEAUTIFYSJ ENCAMPMENT
SERVICES STATUS REPORT

DATE: August 23, 2022

Approved

Date

8/23/2022

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report on BeautifySJ Encampment Services and a joint management system approach to encampments and homelessness response, including cross-department coordination of services, performance data and analysis, and reporting as part of the approved City Initiatives Roadmap for 2022-2023.

OUTCOME

The Committee will provide feedback on the status of BeautifySJ Encampment Services (Encampment System) and work towards a joint management system approach to encampments and homelessness response, including cross-department coordination of services, performance data and analysis, and reporting as part of the approved City Initiatives Roadmap for 2022-2023.

BACKGROUND

BeautifySJ launched in 2017 as a call to action to unite residents to reclaim public spaces by bringing together thousands of volunteers to address blight and by supporting the efforts of citizens to beautify their neighborhoods. Beginning July 2021, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services expanded the BeautifySJ Program model to include encampment management and illegal dumping with pre-existing responsibilities for litter, graffiti removal and volunteer engagement.

The 2021-2022 fiscal year was a year of transition as encampment management and abatements, shifted from an emergency response to a regular support operation with significant attention to hiring new positions, training staff, moving locations, and developing new systems and partnerships while maintaining and growing service levels. The encampment trash system was initially developed as an Emergency Operations Center branch, which then identified and

served approximately 200 encampments. It was focused on a singular service delivery of trash removal, separate from other service needs and outcomes for unhoused individuals.

At the May 3, 2022, City Council meeting, Council directed staff to return to the Smart Cities and Services Improvement Committee with recommendations for developing an internal City system that will track outreach and services to encampments¹. The Encampment System should be readily accessible to City departments and Council offices, and should include the following:

- a. A history of contacts and interactions between City personnel and the encampment;
- b. Outcomes from each interaction;
- c. Follow up actions and referrals to other City departments; and
- d. Wherever possible, details of outreach efforts from the County and our community partners.

Based on initial staff research, no city or county in the United States has yet developed a sophisticated internal encampment management and homelessness data integration system at scale. However, several cities or counties have deployed systems that include components of what the City identified as requirements. This cross-departmental effort represents an opportunity to bring Silicon Valley innovation forward to help solve one of the defining challenges of our time – reducing and ultimately eliminating homelessness while efficiently managing the range of impacts to City operations that arise from externalities related to homelessness.

Homelessness Data Integration

In the time since the initial Council direction, staffs identified requirements for a robust homelessness response management system that integrates multiple systems and data sources to enhance coordination, analysis, and efficiencies. The Encampment System will not replace the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which is run by the County's Continuum of Care. Rather, it will be designed to support efficient interfaces for users that interact with BeautifySJ and associated staff.

To maximize the usefulness of this system, it must capture data about engagement with unhoused people, improve coordination among departments that provide related services, and seamlessly interface with the county HMIS where possible. Further, the ability to automatically connect people to City-funded outreach or their existing case managers can dramatically improve coordination across the system, enhancing the ability to manage encampments while partners continue to increase housing supply and homelessness prevention resources. Finally, there are substantial new requirements in the next Stormwater Permit regulations related to understanding the scope of unhoused persons and issues impacting waterways within the City. The Encampment System will improve the City's ability to understand and address related issues, enabling the City to adjust the size of its homelessness outreach system by providing greater

¹ 5/3/2022 City Council Meeting, City Roadmap – Encampment Management and Safe Relocation Policy—
<https://sanjose.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5559753&GUID=942D1854-066E-4E55-93C8-5722E76C1622>

clarity about the nature, geographic locations, and scope of unsheltered homelessness experienced by San José residents.

ANALYSIS

Staff from the City Manager's Office, Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services–BeautifySJ Program, Housing Department, Department of Transportation, Police Department, Fire Department, Environmental Services Department, and Information Technology Department teamed to identify encampment data needs and key workflows required by the respective departments. This process informs the development of the BeautifySJ Encampment Management data structure and business system. The Encampment System and project will be separate but connected to the more specialize Vehicle Blight System and project. However, staff identified the need for an interface between the two systems to support vehicle needs and complaints related to homeless encampments—e.g., removal of inoperable vehicles, services for those residing in vehicles, and occasions of blight.

There are four key aspects to the project approach:

- a. A **Plan** consisting of specific requirements and key features of the Encampment System, including data requirements, departmental workflow designs, and submittal and reporting requirements.
- b. The **Budget** required by City staff to build and then sustain the Encampment System.
- c. The **Procurement** of products and services required to deliver the Encampment System and all prioritized requirements.
- d. A phased **Implementation** approach consisting of an initial release, training and support, stabilization and refinement, and subsequent iterations that produce valuable new features and reports over time.

Plan – Specific Requirements & Key Features

Staff defines the Encampment System to be a cross-departmental business system that addresses work processes related to blight and homeless encampments. Services include encampment site management, illegal dumping, hazardous biowaste disposal, and public safety supportive services. The mission of the Encampment System is to build an overall work management platform for all relevant City departments to address any encampment related request or service, as well as track and measure successful completion of requests/services. The City's SJ311 application will serve as the main portal through which service requests will be submitted.

User Personas

Staff identified two main user personas:

- a. San José Residents, Councilmembers, and Field Staff from all departments to report encampment issues and check status.
- b. Staff to manage and process tickets and track performance reports.

Work Processes

The Encampment System will enable the following four specific functions:

- a. *Intake of requests*: Residents, City Council, District Office staff, and departmental staff will be able to submit requests to generate encampment service tickets.
- b. *Ticketing system*: Assign tickets to responsible team(s), provide progress and status to service requester and provide detailed information upon completing the service.
- c. *Integrations with existing systems*: Integrate the Encampment System with related process and services including SJ311.
- d. *Reporting/Analytics Tool*: The status of work orders will be compiled as a common data resource of all tickets. This “data lake” will be used to generate dashboards based on key performance indicators (KPI), as well as allow deep analysis on trends by City departments. This will enable staff and to view and download reports to better inform key encampment policy decisions moving forward.

Process Flow

Below is a process flow diagram of the Encampment System, including the intake system to the left and the backend integrations on the right:

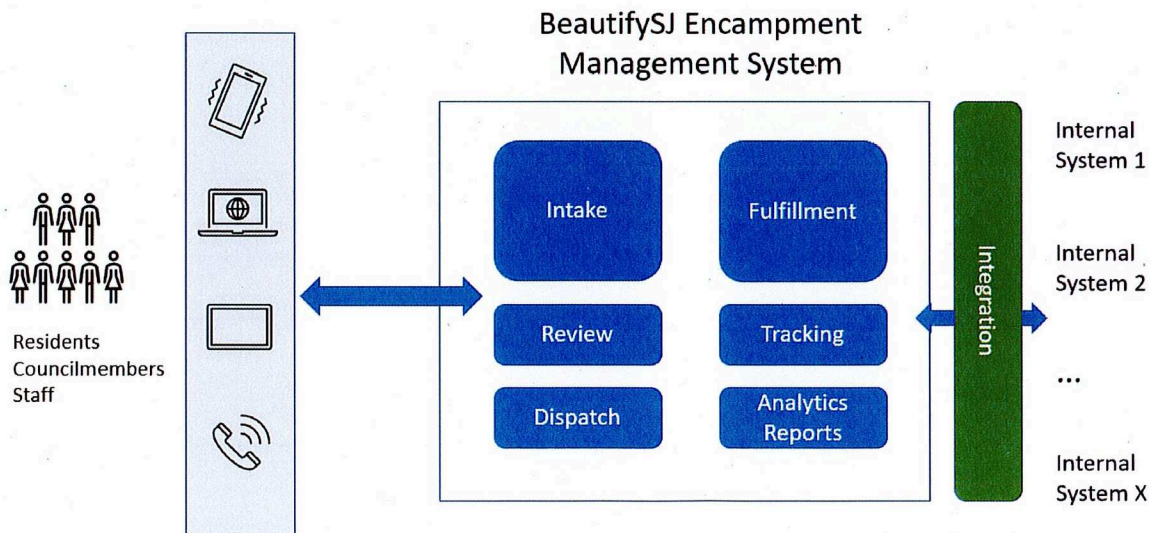


Figure 1– BeautifySJ Encampment Management System Process Flow

Key Features

The following six key features are requirements for the Encampment System that will be developed. Additional features are likely to be identified based on feedback identified in procurement and will be addressed through that process.

- a. **Intro screen** on SJ311 page for the Encampment System informing users of the scope and limitations of this service.
- b. **Mapping** allowing city staff to track specific location of encampment or blight work order.
- c. **Ability to merge tickets** to minimize duplicate requests.
- d. **Ability to reroute tickets** to different departments based on superior ability to address work order. Enable automated routing of cases to partner agencies where necessary.
- e. **Prevent bots and data theft** such as tools that automate entry of nuisance cases or that execute injection attacks to query or corrupt system data.
- f. **Ability to send notification messages upon** completing a service request to the requesting user.

Capacity Management

Staff anticipates in the range of 15,000 to 25,000 encampment service requests annually. This increased demand will impact the BeautifySJ team and associated departments. Past experience with SJ311 provides lessons that staff will need to plan for that volume, how to incorporate proactive strategies, and maintain equitable service delivery. Adjustments to required resources and service strategies will be evaluated during the first year as patterns and trends develop.

Performance Metrics

Metrics will include percentage of completed tickets within the established resolution time and customer satisfaction based on completed surveys. The metrics will also be crafted to continuously improve services and ensure equity is considered when addressing requests and ensuring accessibility for all communities.

Budget

The Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services department has \$150,000 in budget appropriated towards development of the application in the FY2022-2023 City operating budget. Once the Planning, Analysis, and Design work is complete, staff will bring forward funding requirements for the project in the City's Annual Report process. After procurement award, maintenance, support, and staffing costs will be addressed through the City budget process.

Procurement – Strategy & Options

Staff released a Request for Information (RFI) on August 1, 2022, to better understand current encampment management system offering in the market as well as their associated costs. The goal of the RFI is to identify availability of the following solutions and functions:

- a. Accept service requests from SJ311 and allow City Staff to create and submit requests and access reports.
- b. Develop service routes based on mapping features.
- c. Track provided services, volume of removed items, etc. as applicable to the request e.g., at homeless encampments (trash pickup, litter bag distribution, removal of inoperable vehicles, responses to encampments for fire, criminal activity).
- d. Handle service request information to allow staff to determine service needs and the type of resources that should be deployed.
- e. Track Outreach activities including social & human services provided at service locations i.e., the number of people housed or moved to shelter/interim housing, people assisted or connected to other social services (physical and mental healthcare, benefits, etc.), .
- f. Track individuals who receive services— e.g., capture the number of people at a given homeless encampment location, relevant information they may be willing to share, and referral tracking.
- g. Draw boundaries of service locations in the field to avoid duplication.
- h. Access to reports and queries.
- i. Identify information suitable for public consumption.
- j. Track other participating agencies, volunteer efforts, etc.
- k. Provide role-based permission levels and the ability to customize to allow access to only specific reports and information.
- l. Allow intelligent routing of work order requests to the City department(s) responsible based on categorization.

Implementation

The Encampment System will be developed using a mixed agile methodology. This will allow the City to build and maintain the best, most user-friendly system responsive to the needs of our residents and community. It will consist of the first released version of the Encampment System with the requirements identified above included, and then subsequent iterations of the Encampment System based on user feedback. This implementation approach will drive continuous improvement of the Encampment System and a bias towards incorporating the most innovative features to address encampment services and needs more efficiently, effectively and equitably. City staff recommend pursuing the following product roadmap:

Initial Release Priorities (by end of FY 2022-2023)

- SJ311 integration to process service requests;
- Encampment System procured and customized with City key features and needs;
- Encampment trash programs, biowaste services, escalated actions (including encampment abatements), geolocation of encampments and unhoused residents needing support, and engagement services for referral to housing, medical, other providers; and
- Integrations with City databases and systems.

Long-Term Priorities (starting FY 2023-2024)

- Add additional intake channels such as social media and partners;
- New features based on highest priority pain points identified from users;

- Homeless Services including Outreach services, including the ability to track case notes by person and location; and
- Integration with Vehicle Blight Data system and encampment visual assessments.

Over time, the Encampment System will allow for multiple frontend intake systems for residents, City staff and Council to submit service request and multiple features that address the various pain points identified from all user personas.

Key Resources & Maintenance

Developing this application and identifying encampment data needs will be a cross-departmental effort between staff from the City Manager's Office, Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services-BeautifySJ Program, Housing Department, Department of Transportation, Police Department, Fire Department, Environmental Services Department, and Information Technology Department. Each department will provide one resource to be a daily staff member involved in the development of the application, and an executive committee will be comprised of department leaders. As the system is being developed and implemented, City staff will assess the increased demand for services and how best to align or increase resources to reduce impacts to service delivery. Maintaining the application over time will be a partnership between Information Technology and Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services. The Products-Projects Manager overseeing this application will be responsible for identifying areas of continuous improvement, new features & removing pain points experienced by the system's users.

CONCLUSION

All major cities are struggling to address the unprecedented increase in homelessness and blight in their communities in recent years. San José is no different.

The BeautifySJ Encampment Management System initiative is a cross-departmental solution to capture City encampment needs and address them effectively, efficiently, and equitably in that approach. The proposed BeautifySJ initiative highlights the City's vision for building a robust and user-friendly system that enables staff to provide outreach services to our unhoused residents and manage urban blight associated with encampments. The system connects with the separate Vehicle Blight solution prioritized by Council in the City Roadmap.

The outlined approach to plan, budget, procure, and implement a shared system will facilitate collaboration among City departments and partners, as well as ensure all services related to encampment management and blight needs are coordinated and handled in a unified way. Staff intends to release the core system by the end of Fiscal Year 2022-2023 and add other priorities over time, investing to make the most resident-centric and responsive platform possible. Staff will track and report on metrics evaluating performance to targets, customer satisfaction, and continuous improvement per the City Council's and Committee's feedback and direction.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

City staff will report back to the Smart Cities and Service Improvements Committee after the initial release of the system and present initial user feedback, performance metrics, and potential improvements.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE

The recommendation in this memo has no effect on Climate Smart San José energy, water, or mobility goals.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

This report was not presented at a Commission.

CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP17-009, Staff Reports, Assessments, Annual Reports, and Informational Memos that involve no approvals of any City action. (Information Technology)

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Manager's Office, the Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services Department, the Housing Department, the Environmental Services Department, and the Information Technology Department.

/s/

KHALED TAWFIK
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER
Information Technology Department

For questions, please contact Dhruv Hemmady, IT Products-Projects Manager, Information Technology Department, at dhruv.hemmady@sanjoseca.gov.