



Memorandum

TO: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: Jon Cicirelli

**SUBJECT: COYOTE CREEK TRAIL SAFETY
PILOT PROJECT STATUS REPORT**

DATE: August 22, 2022

Approved

Date

8/31/22

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report on the Coyote Creek Trail Safety Pilot Project and direct staff to return with an annual report in fall 2023.

OUTCOME

This status report provides the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee an update on the Coyote Creek Trail Safety Pilot Project.

BACKGROUND

The vision of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (the Department) is Healthy Communities that Inspire Belonging. In pursuit of that vision, the Department plans to develop and effectively manage a 100-mile paved off street trail network. The City's trail network already has more than 62 miles of developed trails, and another 40 miles of trail in planning and development.

On November 7, 2021, the Department held a ribbon cutting for a new segment of the Coyote Creek Trail system between William Street and Phelan Avenue. This trail system is one of the longest multi-use trail systems in the South Bay region. This segment contributed to the 400th mile of the Bay Area Ridge Trail and future segments will connect to Berryessa BART and Alviso. Funded in part by the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities grant program, in coordination with the City of San José Housing Department and Catholic Charities, the multi-jurisdictional Coyote Creek Trail links parks, jobs, shopping, and new affordable housing along Senter Road. This trail segment was built in conjunction with a 162-unit affordable housing development at 2450 Senter Road, known as Renascent Place.

During this trail segment's development, staff held two community meetings, one in July 2020 and one in November 2020, to help shape the trail and trail programming. Staff received

community concerns that issues such as encampments, private cars, and glass impacted safe use of the trail. When the construction contract for the Story Road to Phelan Avenue segment was awarded by the City Council on September 1, 2020, the City Council provided further direction to staff to 1) provide ongoing quarterly updates on the Coyote Creek Trail Project to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee, and 2) continue coordinating with the San José Police Department on the Trail Safety Plan.

In response to community and City Council feedback, Department staff developed a Trail Safety Pilot to make meaningful improvements to community safety along the 2-mile, class I multi-use trail segment along Coyote Creek Trail in collaboration with other City departments, other organizations, and stakeholders. The Trail Safety Plan deploys the San José Conservation Corps under the oversight of Park Rangers to improve safety along Coyote Creek Trail from William Street to Phelan Avenue by dissuading misuse of the trail and enhancing trail user perceptions of safety. With funding support from the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities grant and the City's Resilience Corps, the San José Conservation Corps' primary role has been to be "eyes on the trail" and to provide visitor services, report repair and maintenance issues to the Department, and perform light landscaping and maintenance along the trail to maintain clear lines of sight and a clean landscape that welcomes visitors and supports a sense of safety through maintenance of the environment. The San José Conservation Corps has a regular presence along the trail and has been tasked to observe and report conditions to proper authorities for emergencies or to a consortium of service partners for non-emergencies, including Park Concerns, BeautifySJ, Homeless Concerns and Park Rangers, as appropriate, based on a service matrix that the Department developed.

The San José Conservation Corps provides two teams, the Trail Safety Patrol Team and the Trail Safety Strike Team. The Trail Safety Patrol Team provides a presence on the trail, fixes or reports trail hazards, provides information to the public and resolves trail issues that can be rectified in 20 minutes or less. The Trail Safety Strike Team repairs safety hazards, removes litter and debris (such as paper, glass, shopping carts, tree limb, or other obstructions), collects debris and alerts City staff of items too cumbersome to be removed by corps members. Corps members track issues and locate them with a GIS-enabled web map.

Additionally, and notably, the City and Santa Clara Valley Water District also established a Coyote Creek Trail Patrol Program for a 3-mile stretch between William Street and Tully Road on a one-time basis, with each organization providing \$400,000 in funding for an initial term of one year starting January 1, 2022. The trail system creates an inviting destination for runners, walkers, cyclists, nature lovers, and others who previously were unable to frequent the area. The future Phelan Avenue to Tully Road trail reach is expected to be completed in a few years. The portion of creek near the trail reaches is presently the site of numerous homeless camps along its banks. The trail's design was guided by principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. An outreach effort was conducted to contact unhoused persons and offer them housing and other services. Nevertheless, a law enforcement presence on the trail was deemed necessary to ensure that the users feel safe and enjoy the time they spend there. As the trail lies mostly within the San José Police Department District Lincoln, the busiest patrol district in the City,

typical patrol units could not reasonably be expected to maintain a sustained presence on the creek trail due to their need to respond to calls for service. Thus, through a partnership agreement with Santa Clara Valley Water District, the San José Police Department provides two police officers working 10 hours each day, seven days per week, who ride bicycles for this assignment to access the trails and cover ground quickly.

ANALYSIS

The Coyote Creek Safety Trail Pilot has provided positive initial results, as illustrated in the first report that the Department and San José Police Department staff provided to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee on April 14, 2022.¹

The following table provides actions taken by service category by police officers in the Coyote Creek Trail Patrol before and since the April 2022 initial report:

	2022							
Service Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Totals
Trail Use Contacts	194	187	171	125	192	131	189	1,189
Unhoused Assistance Contacts	82	82	81	58	60	53	75	491
Criminal Citations	9	16	13	13	14	18	25	108
Vehicle Impounds	0	17	17	11	16	19	15	95
Warrant Arrests	8	11	7	0	13	5	9	53
Arrests	1	6	2	4	3	0	3	19
Parking Citations	0	4	0	0	2	1	3	10

In addition to these reported activities, staff has received community feedback that the mere presence of police officers has made trail users feel safer.

The following table depicts concerns reported and actions taken by the San José Conservation Corps before and since the April 2022 initial report:

¹ <https://sanjose.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5525307&GUID=76859233-6FC8-4F0F-9AA0-89ADF371C722&Options=&Search=>

	2021		2022							
Service Category	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Totals
Cleanliness	13	14	8	3	3	2	6	6	6	61
Encampment	8	1	1							10
Structures Issues	2	3	1				1	1	1	9
Vegetation Management	2			4					1	7
Signage Issues						2			1	3
Trail Surface Issues		1								1
Vehicle Issues		1				1				2
911 Requests										
Visitor Services									1	1
Monthly Totals	25	20	10	7	3	5	7	7	10	94

Since the initial report in April, there has been turnover and attrition among the Department staff and the San José Conservation Corps supervisory staff. This turnover has resulted in joint trail inspections happening less consistently than originally planned. City staff and San José Conservation Corps supervisory staff have committed to better coordination in performance of trail inspections to verify that hazards along the trail are being addressed, as appropriate, and that the activity reflected in the above table has the intended outcomes.

Staff will also consider results from the upcoming 2022 Trail Count, scheduled for the week of September 12-16, 2022, and trail user survey results to evaluate the efficacy of the Trail Safety Pilot and potential changes to the model.

CONCLUSION

The Coyote Creek Trail Safety Pilot Project, in coordination with the Department, the San José Police Department, and San José Conservation Corps has provided a visible presence and increased safety along the Coyote Creek Trail from Phelan Avenue to William Street.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The Department will provide the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee an annual update on the Coyote Creek Trail Safety Pilot Project in the fall of 2023.

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Subject: Coyote Creek Trail Safety Program Update

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CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE

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

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the September 8, 2022 Neighborhood Services and Education Committee meeting.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the San José Police Department, the City Attorney's Office and the City Manager's Budget Office.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

CEQA

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

/s/

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Director of Parks, Recreation
and Neighborhood Services

For questions, please contact Avi Yotam, Deputy Director, at avi.yotam@sanjoseca.gov.