

# **Fireworks Enforcement Post-Fourth of July 2017 Status Report**

**Public Safety, Finance, and  
Strategic Support Committee**

**Item (d) 3**

**August 17, 2017**



# Status report discussion

## Council Direction in April 2017

A. Publicity Campaign and Outreach

B. Fire Department

C. Police Department

D. Code Enforcement

E. Park Rangers

F. Department of Transportation

**Interdepartmental  
Enforcement  
Efforts**

G. Reporting Tool/Online Citation Process

*See also Supplemental Memo*

H. Challenges

I. Future Considerations / Improvements

# Council direction in April 2017

- 1. Less “fireworks are illegal/dangerous” and more emphasis on how residents can work together**
- 2. Improve and promote the online reporting tool, plus clear information on use of 311 and 911**
- 3. Use targeted, ethnic outreach**
- 4. Begin enforcement by mid-May**
- 5. Use volunteers for tasks that professional dispatch personnel to not have time to do**

# A. Trilingual publicity campaign

Concurrently working on flood recovery, staff:

- Improved, publicized online form
- Increased Spanish language outreach
- Used new tactics to engage residents
- Conducted dozens of media interviews
- Planned: NY Eve and Lunar NY celebrations (to include Chinese)



# Publicized professional events



## Provide safe, legal alternative

1. Rotary Fireworks, Discovery Meadow, Downtown SJ
2. Fun Festival and Fireworks at Almaden Lake Park
3. SJ Giants Independence Day, Municipal Stadium
4. Events in neighboring cities



Can we find sponsors for more professional events?

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Make alternative celebrations the new norm!

# Improved and amplified messages

2016

2017



Greater emphasis on consequences, reporting tool

## AMPLIFICATIONS

- More banners, with Spanish and Vietnamese: 2016, 33 banners; 2017, 88 banners
- Doubled the Spanish language radio and TV ads
- Social media Facebook campaign plus Mercury News ads
- New tactics

# New: Block party fee waiver

## Permits Issued

2015 - 33

2016 - 31

2017 - 40

- Allowed up to 50 waived permits
- Revenue loss - \$7,000
- Neighborly bonding - priceless

**Save \$175. Get a free Block Party Permit!**



Residents sign agreement that they won't use fireworks.

Staff visit site day-of-party to remind hosts of fireworks rules.

# New: Lawn signs and school signs

## LAWN SIGNS

- 3,000 produced; ~2,500 picked up
- Introduced “respect” theme
- Attracted significant media attention
- Cost \$14K & are re-usable

*Sign at Mt. Pleasant High School is STILL UP!*



## SCHOOL SIGNS

Contacted ESUHSD, some schools placed messages on street-facing sign boards





# B. Fire Department Efforts

## OUTREACH / EDUCATION

- Met with neighborhood leadership groups
- South Bay fire agencies press conference
- Nextdoor messages from Fire Marshal
- Firefighter story time at multiple libraries
- Posted banners at 33 fire stations
- Spanish-speaking firefighter participated in Univision 30-min. interview

*Story-telling time included a safety message about illegal fireworks use*



*County Supervisor Cindy Chavez joins SJFD Chief Curtis Jacobson at South Bay Fire Agency Press Conference*



# B. Fire Department Efforts - continued

## ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

### ON JULY 4

- Paired with 3 Police teams, block party sites, Kelley Park patrol
- 5 field citations, confiscated 40lbs of fireworks
- 17 service calls for illegal fireworks, 8 fires caused by fireworks

### AFTER JULY 4

- 50lbs of voluntarily disposed fireworks collected
- Participated in media interviews on proper disposal

# C. Police Department Efforts

## OUTREACH / EDUCATION / CONFISCATIONS / CITATIONS

- 62 hot spots patrolled 448 times
- Contacted 30+ schools, presented at 35 community meetings
- Educated 39 block party hosts
- 793 courtesy contacts with the public
- Confiscated 2,700lb of fireworks, issued arrest warrant
- 9 citations in the field, responded to 30 calls for service
- With Fire staff, supported rangers at Kelley Park
- Placed banners at Police Stations

# D. Code Enforcement Efforts

## ONLINE FORM COMPLAINT PROCESSING

- Reassigned 1 contract inspector, assigned 4 support staff to process complaints
- Coordinated with Fire staff on complaint processing
- Issued 141 warning letters (with Fire, totaled 161 letters)
- Staff collectively spent 56 hours at a cost of ~\$2,700.

# E. Park Ranger Efforts

## PATROLS

- Canvassed City parks
- Monitored Alum Rock Park for fireworks use and fires
- Confiscated 40lbs of fireworks at Kelley Park from 2 groups
- Patrolled professional fireworks show areas late at night
- Worked 12-hour shifts; OT cost estimated at \$10,000



# F. Dept. of Transportation Efforts

## **PARKING COMPLIANCE AND TRAFFIC CONTROL SUPPORT**

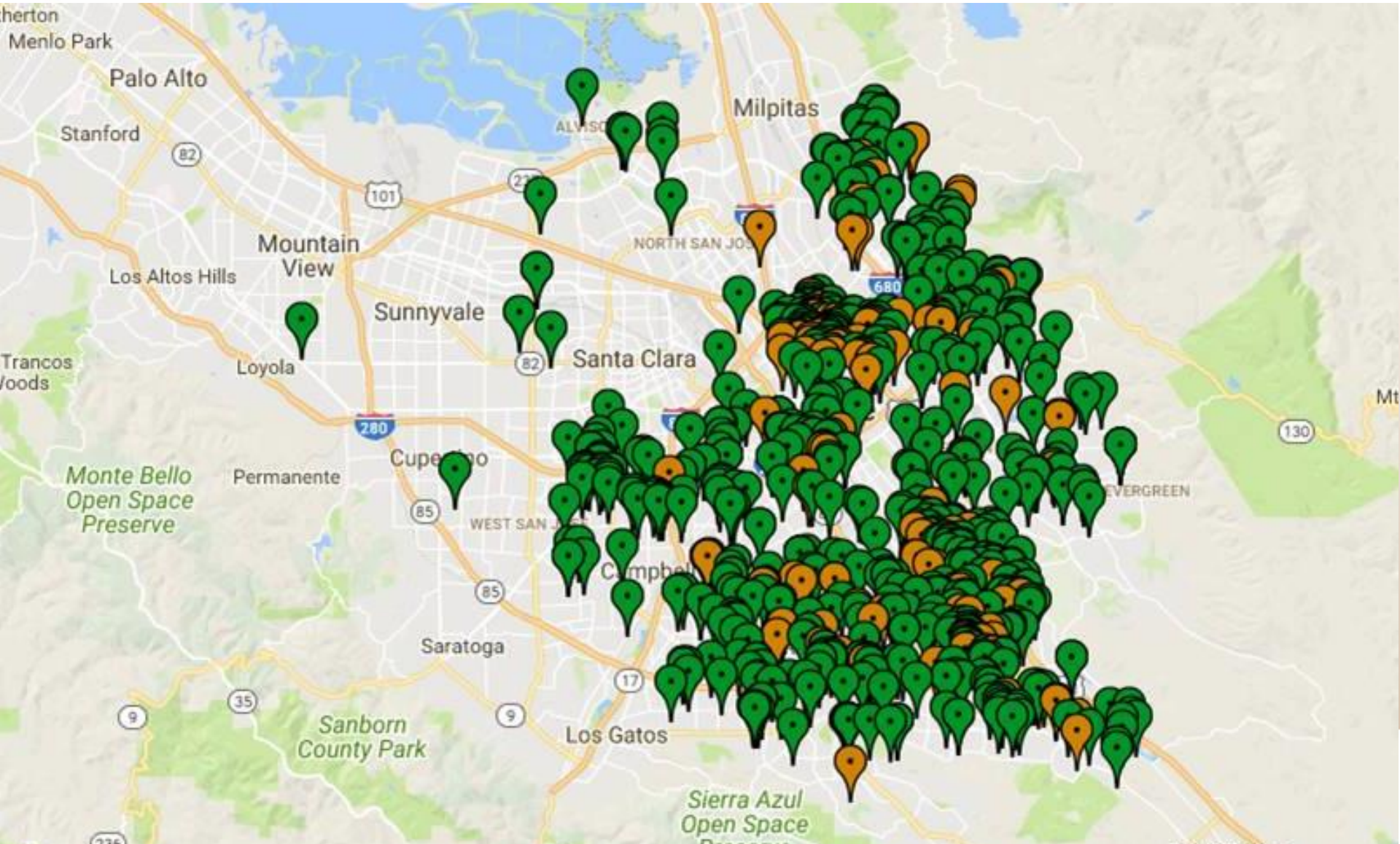
- 28 Parking and Traffic Control Officers (PTCOs) on duty at sanctioned events and other large gatherings
- Responded to 31 Police calls re parking violations
- Called in 3 reports of illegal fireworks use to Police
- Incurred \$6,750 in additional expenses to provides services

# G. Reporting Tool/Online Citation Process

**IT/Innovation and Communications staff collaborated to improve form over last year:**

- Excellent backend data collection
- Enabled mapping of reports
- Included message that form does not enable an immediate response

# 2017 mapped incidents





# 2017 Enforcement Results

| DEPT                 | Online Reports |              | Citations Issued |                      | Verbal/Letter Warning |            | Fireworks Confiscated (lbs) |               |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
|                      | 2016           | 2017         | 2016             | 2017                 | 2016                  | 2017       | 2016                        | 2017          |
| Police               | n/a            | n/a          | 13               | 9                    | No tally              | n/a        | 32                          | 2,760+        |
| Fire                 | 347            | 538          | 3                | 5 field<br>45 online | 133<br>online         | 20         | 0                           | 40            |
| Code                 | 347            | 537          | 0                | 0                    | 64<br>online          | 141        | 0                           | 0             |
| Rangers              | n/a            | n/a          | 0                | 0                    | 26                    | 0          | 11 sets                     | 0             |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>694</b>     | <b>1,075</b> | <b>16</b>        | <b>69</b>            | <b>223</b>            | <b>161</b> | <b>853</b>                  | <b>2,800+</b> |
| <b>Amended Total</b> |                |              |                  | <b>14</b>            |                       | <b>206</b> |                             |               |

# 2017 Results - continued

## ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE

Emails, Social Media, Conversations, Staff Observances

- “It seemed quieter before the 4<sup>th</sup>”
- “It was a war zone on and after the 4<sup>th</sup>”
- “It was a little better on and after the 4<sup>th</sup>”

## METRICS

- Increased publicity: 60% increase in online reports
- Consider a community survey?
- Consider services calls as a metric

# Form and citation challenges

*(see also Supplemental Memo)*

## Form Challenges

- Expectation for enforcement response
- Adequate address isn't easy
- Usable photo/video isn't easy—or safe
- Willingness to testify is—initially—robust

## Citation Criteria Challenges

- Difficult to provide a usable image
- Multiple reporting parties criterion may need to be supplemented
- Consider follow-up phone calls in some cases to both witness and accused

## DATA

1,075 reports

797 willing to testify

89 image submissions

## ENABLED

161 warnings; 45 citations

(amended to 206 warnings)

## Citation Process Challenges

- Citation information may feel incomplete to the recipient
- Requirement to prepay fines that are appealed may feel unfair

# Form and citation improvements

*(see also Supplemental Memo)*

## Improvements to Form

*Add check boxes to form to enhance understanding:*

- I understand this form does not initiate an immediate enforcement response.
- I understand a residential address is needed to enable a citation.
- Possibly add instruction on image capture.
- Evaluate feasibility of moving form to My San Jose platform

## Improvements to Citation Criteria & Process

- Work with Attorney's Office on improved criteria.
- Evaluate inclusion of a description of the evidence on citation.
- Evaluate steps to enable deferring fine payment for those who appeal the citation.

# H.&I. Other challenges, considerations and improvements

1. Develop strategy for providing security to certain public sites
2. Hire a media buyer for the outreach campaign
3. Partner-funded video and volunteer program for school outreach
4. Multi-lingual lawn signs
5. Targeted outreach preceding New Year's Eve and Lunar New Year's celebrations
6. Increased fine period during key celebrations
7. Greater pursuit of sellers/distributors
8. Investigate Asset Forfeiture for illegal sale/distribution
9. Emergency response cost recovery
10. Volunteer education and outreach to neighborhoods and community groups