

# Abandoned Shopping Cart Retrieval Pilot Program Status Report

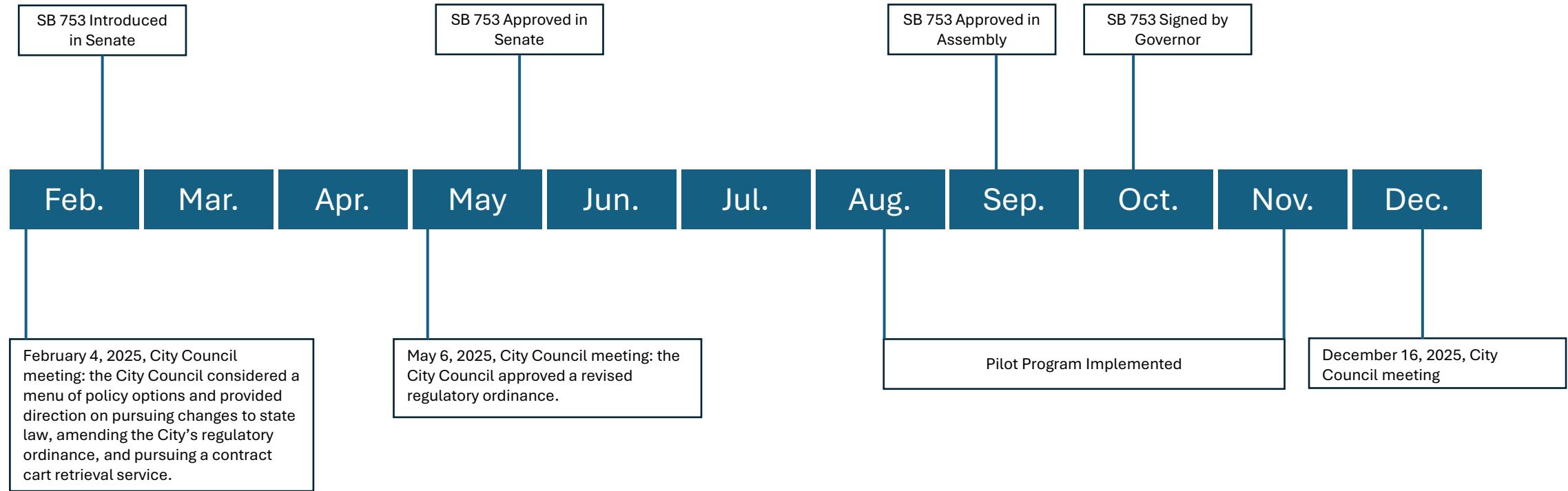
City Council  
December 16, 2025  
Item 7.2

Chris Burton, Director, Planning Building and Code Enforcement

Rachel Roberts, Deputy Director, Planning, Building and Code Enforcement

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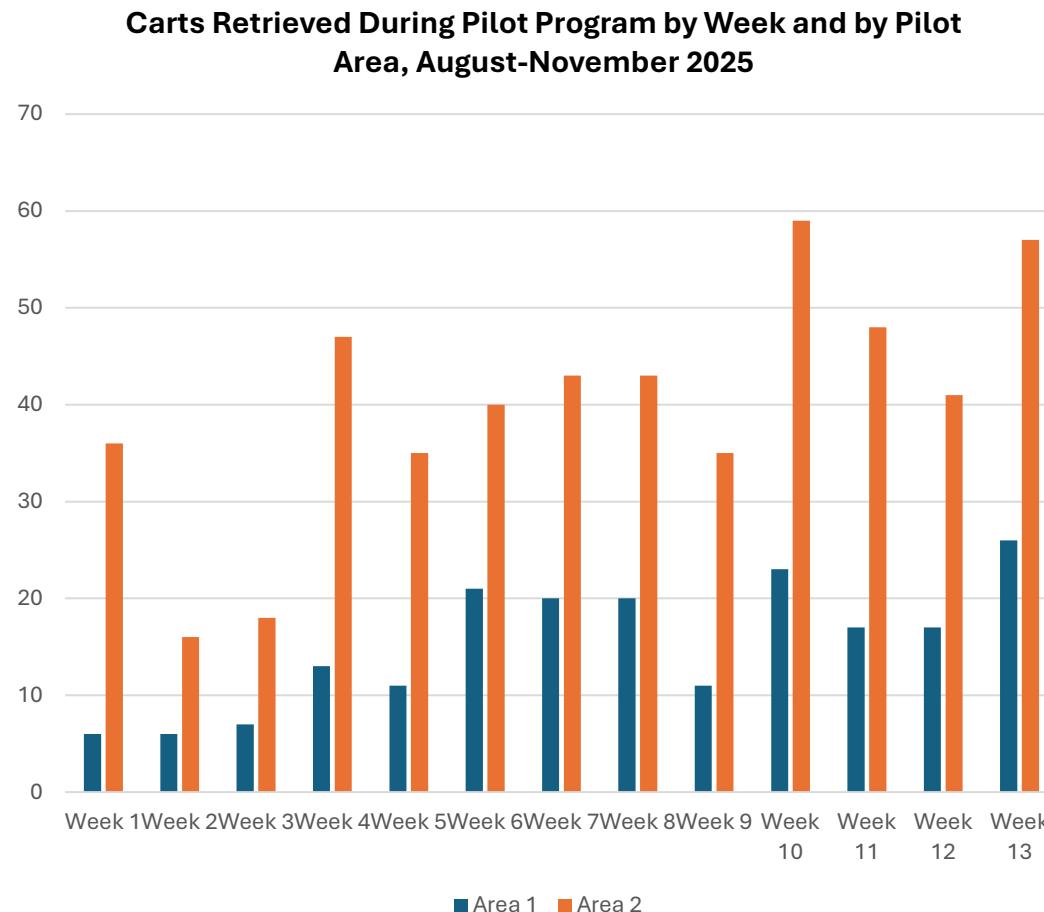
## Efforts Over the Past Year



# Abandoned Shopping Cart Retrieval Pilot Program Status Report

## Pilot Program Evaluation

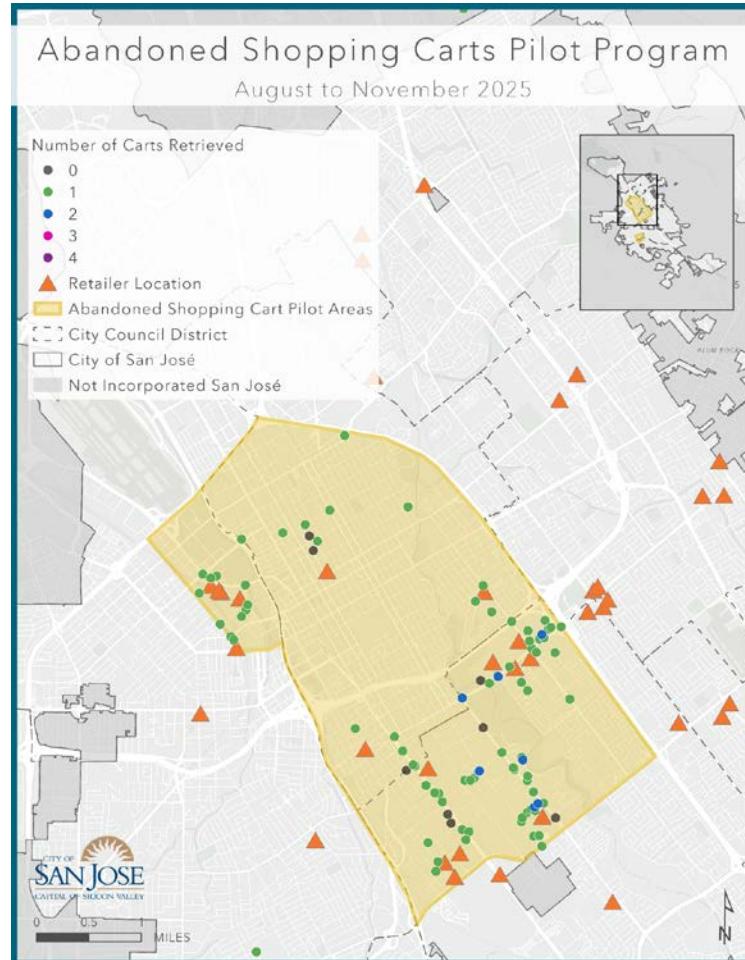
- Pilot operated from August 14 – November 14 2025
- Operated in two pilot areas
- Collected 734 carts in total
  - 202 from pilot area 1
  - 532 from pilot area 2
- Code Enforcement staff used ride-alongs to observe the contractor's efforts and work with the contractor to improve the effectiveness of the service over the course of the pilot.



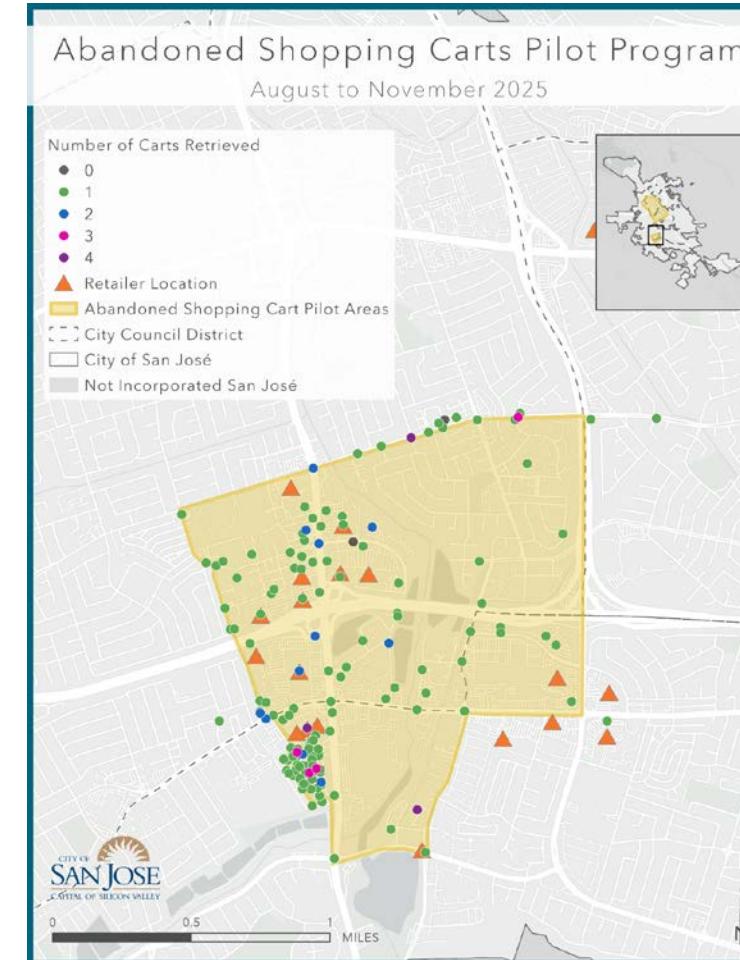
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## Pilot Program Evaluation

**Pilot Area 1 Cart Retrieval Location Map**



**Pilot Area 2 Cart Retrieval Location Map**



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## Pilot Program Evaluation

### Top 10 Retailers Among Carts Retrieved in the First 10 Weeks of the Pilot

Retailer	Pilot Area 1	Pilot Area 2	Total
<b>Costco</b>	72	132	204
<b>Whole Foods</b>	2	135	137
<b>Walmart</b>	29	79	108
<b>Safeway</b>	5	78	83
<b>Target</b>	18	7	25
<b>Real Produce</b>	1	17	18
<b>Trader Joe's</b>	1	16	17
<b>Sprouts</b>	3	8	11
<b>La Plaza</b>	10	0	10
<b>TJ Maxx</b>	0	9	9

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## Pilot Program Evaluation

### Key Conclusions

Collected a significant number of carts.

- *Code Enforcement's staff used ride-alongs to help the contractor improve effectiveness.*

Pilot Area 2 saw more carts retrieved than Pilot Area 1.

- *Difference in retrieval could be because Area 2 is a smaller geographic area with a high density of carts.*

Retailer data could be useful.

- *Tracking retailers with high cart abandonment rates could inform and improve Code Enforcement's oversight of Cart Management Plans.*

Relatively small number of carts had trash or belongings.

- *A small number of carts could not be collected because they contained personal belongings or trash, highlighting the need for coordination across departments.*

Multiple reasons why carts are abandoned.

- *Data suggests cart abandonment may be due to carts being used by unhoused individuals and carts being used to transport purchases from nearby stores to apartment complexes within the pilot areas.*

More interdepartmental coordination still needed.

- *Many improvements were made during the pilot but more streamlining and solving for gaps would be needed for permanent program*

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## Pilot Program Evaluation

### Cost Analysis

Pilot Costs		3-month Pilot	Annualized
<i>Total Pilot Cost</i>		\$ 32,239.26	\$ 128,957.04
<i>Cost Per Service Zone</i>		\$ 16,119.63	\$ 64,478.52
<i>Number of Service Zones</i>		2	
<i>Opportunity Costs</i>	87 staff hours No activity for the Fee for Service Abandoned Shopping Cart Program in October/November= • 62 proactive/complaint driven inspections • 10 citations • 30 Abandoned Cart Prevention Plan Reviews	~1740 staff hours 372 proactive/complaint driven inspections 60 citations 120 Abandoned Cart Prevention Plan Reviews	

Start Up Costs for City-wide Program		City-wide Program Cost Recovery Fee Estimates	
Citywide Cost \$	563,112	Annual Estimated Carts Retrieved	12,821
+ 1.0 FTE Analyst I/II \$	123,330	Fee Cost per cart \$	100.00
<b>Proposed City-wide Cost Estimate \$</b>	<b>686,443</b>	<b>Estimated Fee Revenue \$</b>	<b>1,282,053.33</b>

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## State Legislation



New State legislation gives the City the ability to operate a cost recovery cart retrieval program, but does impose a few requirements:

- **Notice Required:** Cities and counties must provide retailers with 48 hours notice before retrieving a cart.
- **Inaccessible Carts:** City cannot recover costs to retrieve “inaccessible” carts.
- **Cost Recovery Fee Cap:** Cost recovery per cart is capped at \$100. Staff believes that it’s possible to develop a service with per cart fees below that limit.

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## Proposed Workplan

- **Complete Customer Survey**
- **Review Lessons Learned/Potential Ongoing Improvements**
- **RFP Process:** A request for proposal (RFP) will be needed to select a contractor to provide the service on an ongoing basis.
- **Funding:** Funding for start-up costs would need to be allocated. Staff will seek cost recovery, but initial funding is needed to start and staff the program, for example to oversee interdepartmental coordination, vendor oversight, and retailer billing.
- **Proposed Timeline:** If start-up funding is likely in Spring 2026 via the Proposed Budget, staff will aim to complete the RFP by June to enable service implementation soon after Fiscal Year 2026-2027 begins.



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