



COUNCIL AGENDA: 11/15/2022

ITEM: 7.1

FILE NO: 22-1665

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Toni J. Taber, CMC
City Clerk

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: November 15, 2022

SUBJECT: BeautifySJ - Neighborhood Blight Reduction Status Report

Recommendation

As recommended by the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee on October 13, 2022, accept a status report on BeautifySJ - Neighborhood Blight Reduction evaluation plan and results for graffiti, litter removal, illegal dumping, and Dumpster Days.

CEQA: Not a Project, File No. PP17-009, Staff Reports, Assessments, Annual Reports, and Informational Memos that involve no approvals of any City action; and File No. PP17-008, General Procedure and Policy Making resulting in no changes to the physical environment. (Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services)

[Neighborhood Services and Education Committee referral 10/13/2022 - Item (d)3]



Memorandum

TO: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE **FROM: Jon Cicirelli**
Director

SUBJECT: BEAUTIFYSJ NEIGHBORHOOD BLIGHT REDUCTION STATUS REPORT **DATE: September 26, 2022**

Approved

Date

10/05/2022

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the BeautifySJ Neighborhood Blight Reduction Status Report for 2022 and:

- 1) Cross-reference the report to the full City Council on November 15, 2022.

OUTCOME

The Committee will be knowledgeable of the trends, opportunities, successes, and challenges that the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services BeautifySJ – Neighborhood Blight Reduction programs experienced and delivered in 2021-2022. This memo is not focused on the Encampment Management efforts of BeautifySJ, which will be reported separately to the City Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2017, the City Council under the direction of Mayor Sam Liccardo launched the BeautifySJ initiative with a call to action to clean the City's public spaces. Since then, the initiative has grown into a substantial core service to focus City efforts on addressing blight and supporting beautification efforts through various programs. To further enhance the efforts, BeautifySJ began a consolidation, expansion and alignment of key programs and services in 2021-2022. As part of these efforts the program grew from 16.5 FTEs to 73.5 FTEs in 2022-2023 including the addition of the Encampment Management Team. The core neighborhood blight reduction programs have continued to respond to issues but can be further enhanced by incorporating best practices as part of service delivery.

Moving forward the program has an opportunity to increase effectiveness by utilizing the comprehensive Three Es approach - Education, Eradication and Enforcement. This best practice model is used by several large cities such as Los Angeles and Sacramento California to combat

blight. Currently, City resources focus on the eradication and removal of blight, with some one-time resources for an education and outreach campaign in 2022-2023 and very limited enforcement resources. Incorporating the Three Es approach into BeautifySJ can help to reduce illegal dumping and graffiti and balance the needs for ongoing and increased response to blight. The current operations prove that the City can efficiently pick up litter, trash, and illegal dumping and remove graffiti but have little impact on preventing it.

This memorandum provides an update on BeautifySJ Programs for the past two fiscal years and seeks feedback on utilizing the Three Es approach to service delivery.

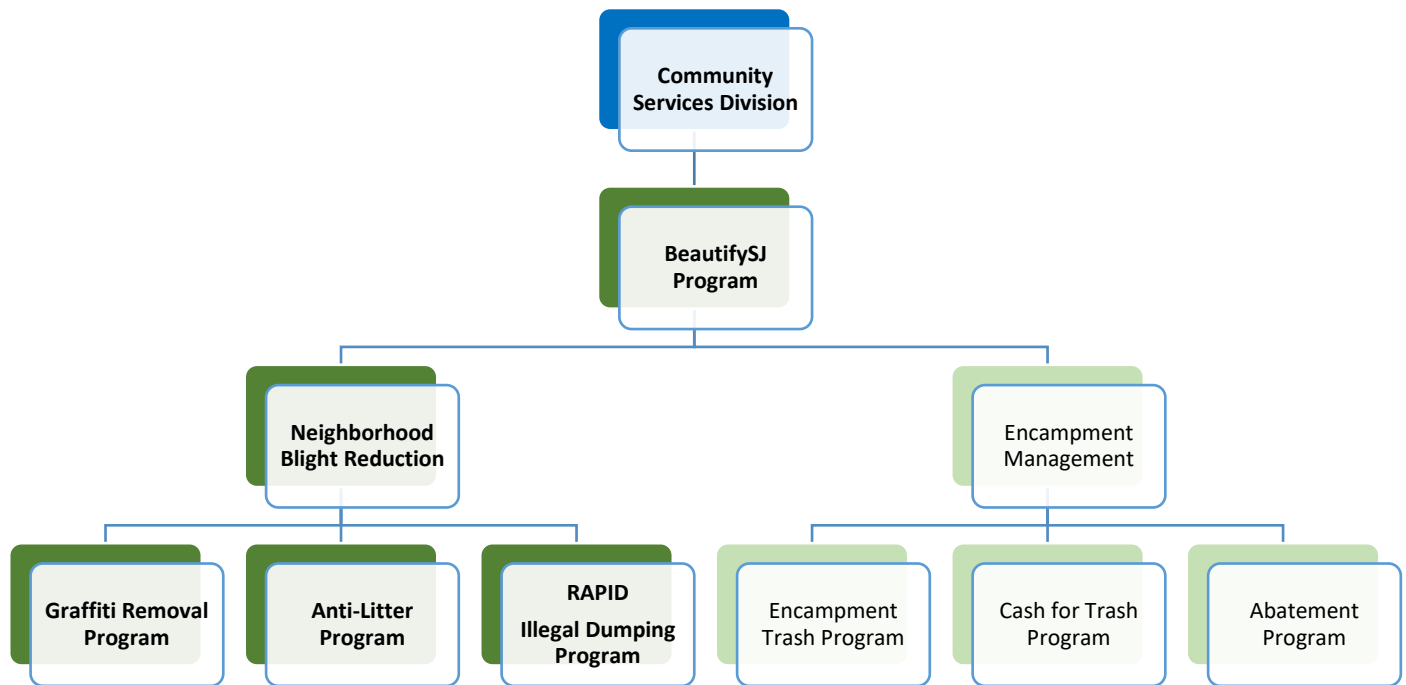
BACKGROUND

Since its initial launch over five years ago, the BeautifySJ initiative has changed dramatically to meet the growing demand to remove and dispose of illegal dumping, graffiti, and litter as well as to service homeless encampments with regular trash removal and disposal. During the last fiscal year, programs in two departments were consolidated into the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services (PRNS). The RAPID program (Responding And Preventing Illegal Dumping) was shifted from the Environmental Services Department to BeautifySJ and has created greater efficiencies. In addition, the Encampment Abatement program shifted from the Housing Department to PRNS. These movements required the creation of the new Community Services Division in PRNS which added: 42.5 new positions as part of 2021-2022 budget actions; shifted nine staff positions from other Departments to PRNS; launched the encampment management strategy; consolidated long-standing PRNS/BeautifySJ programs such as Graffiti Removal, Anti-Litter, Neighborhood Dumpster Days; and the Neighborhoods Commission. As a result of the above, BeautifySJ has expanded from 16.5 positions to 73.5 positions in 2022-2023.

BeautifySJ Organizational Chart

This expansion, consolidation and alignment has allowed BeautifySJ to better respond to neighborhood issues; increasing proactive trash/illegal dumping pickup; the ability to respond to increased graffiti; improved coordination with interjurisdictional partners; and the ability to address trash at encampments citywide. This consolidated model led to the removal of 9.2 million pounds (4,595 tons) of trash/debris from neighborhoods from January 2021 – December 2021, encampments, streets, sidewalks and along waterways.

This new organizational structure provides the Department and BeautifySJ the ability to leverage resources across divisions and programs, use data to refine performance metrics and service delivery, and the ability to better direct resources to neighborhoods most impacted by blight.



While the new BeautifySJ Program structure has been more efficient in addressing blight, the program has an opportunity to increase effectiveness by utilizing the comprehensive Three Es approach; Education, Eradication and Enforcement. This best practice model is used by several large cities within the State of California and throughout the nation to combat blight. BeautifySJ is a member of the Regional Illegal Dumping Task Force which is an advocate for utilizing the three Es approach to reduce the impacts of blight throughout the region. Currently 99.1% of all budgeted funds are directed towards Eradication – to put it simply, *we have mastered the processes for picking up trash and painting over graffiti.*

The 2022-2023 budget includes one-time funds in the amount of \$200,000 to develop a multi-lingual culturally appropriate outreach and education campaign to address blight. While the appropriation of these funds is an important step, to truly address blight, the program will need ongoing dedicated funding for Education. Additionally, there are no budgeted resources for Enforcement – which is needed to combat both illegal dumping and graffiti. Utilizing the Three Es approach to funding BeautifySJ can support the long-term goal of a clean, beautiful city.

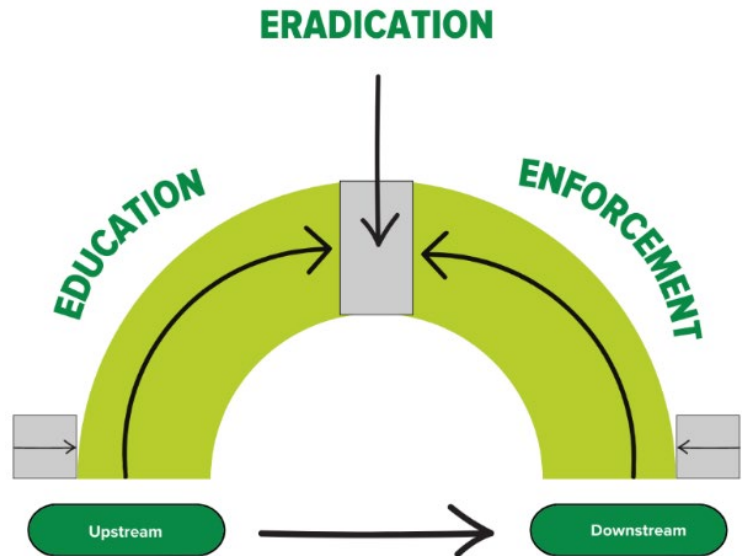
ANALYSIS

Over the past two years, the BeautifySJ Neighborhood Blight Reduction programs have made strides in delivering services, while both expanding and consolidating programs. During the

COVID-19 shelter-in-place, the programs not only continued the delivery of services but found innovative approaches to ensure staff safety and program continuity for priority programs. Below is an update on the BeautifySJ Neighborhood Blight Reduction Programs and how they align with the Three Es best practice model. Program updates related to the BeautifySJ Encampment Management Program were discussed at the May 3, 2022, Council meeting.¹

Education and Outreach

In 2021-2022, a Public Information Representative was added to the Community Services Division to support media inquiries and the overall communication strategy as part of the expansion. In 2022-2023, one-time funding in the amount of \$200,000 was added to support a multilingual outreach and education campaign. These funds will be targeted to both educating residents on how to access services and what they can do to support blight reduction efforts. To be effective, ongoing education will need to be implemented to educate San José residents.



An Education and Outreach Plan for fall 2022 - spring 2023 using mixed (traditional and digital) media platforms to build awareness of neighborhood blight reductions programs including graffiti removal, anti-litter efforts, neighborhood beautification efforts, and illegal dumping removal will be implemented. The plan will include multilingual content in at least three languages (English, Spanish, and Vietnamese) for social media, printed materials, and advertisements to reach communities across the City. The outreach plan will focus on ads through traditional media (print, radio, and television), outdoor advertising, in-person outreach events, printed material, and targeted social media posts around hot spot areas for illegal dumping. The plan is balanced in that it will use both high-tech (digital media and ads) and high-touch (printed materials, resource fairs, school presentations) to engage with residents throughout San José. The 2022-2023 education and outreach plan is funded via one-time American Rescue Plan Funds. Non-Personal/Equipment funding to continue education and outreach will be considered as part of the development of the 2023-2024 budget.

¹ May 3, 2022 Council Meeting: City Roadmap - Encampment Management and Safe Relocation Policy
<https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=10860685&GUID=3BEB1411-FBEC-4F19-9163-CC120C6ED303>

Eradication Programs

Anti-Litter Program

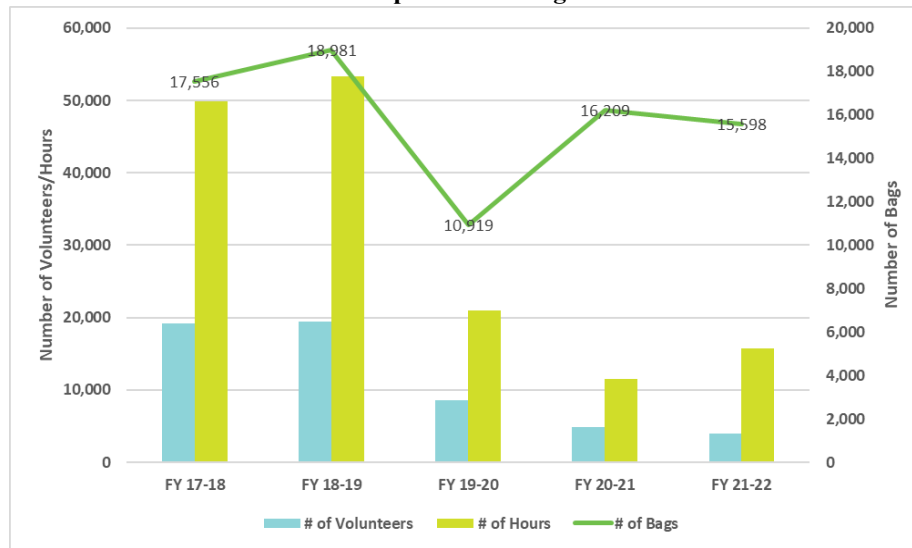
The Anti-Litter program, a volunteer-driven program includes community engagement, school outreach and education, coordinating community litter events, working with creek, inter-jurisdictional partners and Council Offices to address areas of the city most impacted by litter. For example, in July 2022, BeautifySJ, the Valley Transportation Authority and Caltrans coordinated to clean up trash on impacted freeway offramps. In 2018-2019 the Anti-Litter Program had one of its most successful years with volunteers contributing over 53,000 volunteer service hours, a 10% increase from the previous year. These service hours are an extremely valuable contribution to the program, as a volunteer hour in California is currently valued at \$29.95 per hour².

In 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, the Anti-Litter Program canceled all events due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and associated Santa Clara County public health orders. COVID-19 restrictions contributed to fewer volunteer-based activities, school and community activities, and education and engagement opportunities. This resulted in a 42% decrease in the amount of litter collected and a 40% decrease in program volunteerism compared to 2018-2019.

The Anti-Litter Program staff is focused on re-engaging the community to increase program volunteerism. As part of the volunteer relaunch, staff began to host outreach events with participating school groups, attend neighborhood associations to encourage volunteerism and work with a multitude of business and inter-jurisdictional partners to increase program engagement. For the current fiscal year, a portion of the funding for education and outreach will be directed towards increasing volunteerism. Through these efforts, previous volunteers are returning, and new groups are becoming engaged. Chart #1 below provides information on neighborhood litter efforts.

² Independent sector – value of a volunteer hour: <https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/#:~:text=In%20its%20newest%20Value%20of,increase%20from%202020%20to%202021.>

Chart 1: Fiscal Year Comparison of Neighborhood Litter Efforts

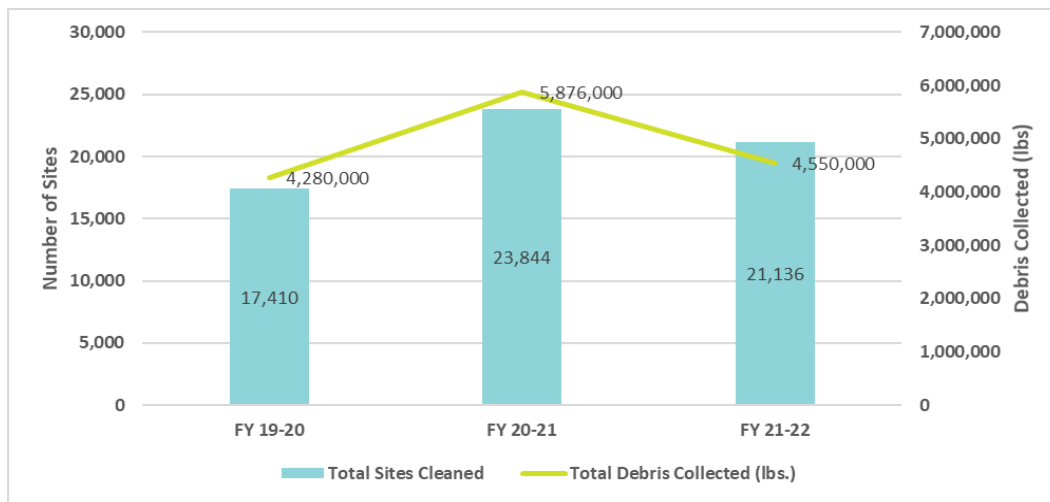


Removing And Preventing Illegal Dumping Program - RAPID

In 2021-2022, the RAPID Illegal Dumping Team transitioned nine maintenance staff from the Environmental Services Department to the BeautifySJ unit. To further augment the Illegal Dumping Team, a strike team of four maintenance staff was added in 2021-2022 to provide additional flexibility to quickly address priority dumping issues. This allowed for increased proactive monitoring in areas most impacted by illegal dumping.

In 2021-2022 RAPID responded to reported illegal dumping within five business days (4.3 days), however the continued increase in illegal dumping made it challenging to achieve a quicker response. For example, in 2021-2022 RAPID responded to 21,136 illegal dumping incidents of which 28% were abated without needing to be reported. The RAPID Team also monitors 180 illegal dumping hot spots. Hot spots are areas with 13 or more clustered illegal dumping incidents within a year. In 2020-2021, the program experienced a 21% increase in illegal dumping from the prior year. The addition of the Strike Team in 2021-2022 has improved the program's proactive efforts within 16 residential neighborhoods and 17 alleyway locations experiencing high-volume illegal dumping. Chart 2 below outlines the total number of work orders addressed and debris collected.

Chart 2: Fiscal Year Comparison of Illegal Dumping Program Performance



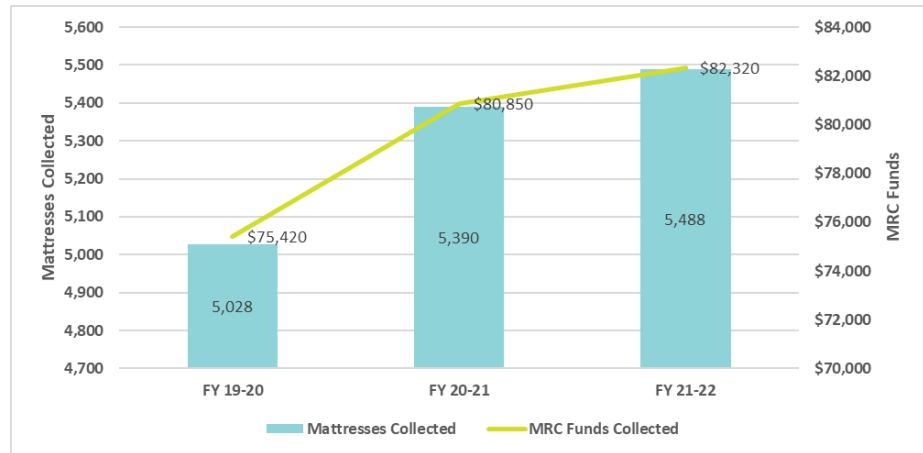
The City has participated in the California Mattress Recycling Council's illegally dumped Mattress Collection Initiative since 2016. In 2021 the BeautifySJ Program collected 5,488 mattresses, resulting in the reimbursement of \$82,320 for these efforts. The funds are reinvested to support the illegal dumping program.

In 2021, the City was the recipient of a California Mattress Recycling Council grant which provided funding for five (5) additional cameras. These cameras have added to the overall inventory as the three original cameras are past their useful life. As part of the Mattress Recycling Council grant agreement, a pilot study project focusing on illegal dumping of mattresses within selected multi-family dwelling neighborhoods was conducted. The project studied the effectiveness of the use of camera deterrents combined with multilingual outreach of the City's free unlimited Junk Pickup program and Mattress Recycling Council's take-back programs (free drop-off at select locations). This grant funded \$80,000 for the five cameras, equipment, and \$19,225 for outreach and staff support.

While cameras cannot be placed at all 180 hotspot locations, they do provide increased monitoring and citations to those who illegally dump. Since October 2016, five-hundred and fifty-one (551) warning notices have been issued and one-hundred and seventy (170) illegal dumpers have been cited. To be more effective, the program would require a minimum of ten (10) additional cameras and pertinent staff to adequately maintain and schedule camera placement, monitor illegal dumping activity, and partner with Code Enforcement staff to issue citations. Chart #3 below provides information on the mattresses collected.

Chart # 3: Fiscal year comparison of mattresses/funds collected

A geospatial analysis of annual San José illegal dumping data was used to identify, quantify, and map locations for camera placement in this study. The pilot study showed that implementing both targeted outreach and camera deterrents reduced illegally



dumped mattresses within the selected pilot study areas by 32% compared to the previous year. During this pilot study, staff observed that zero (0) illegal dumping incidents, with or without a mattress, occurred within 300 feet of the camera placement. BeautifySJ is assessing how to fund the continuation of this model.

While great strides have been made to address illegal dumping over the past years, there is no indication that there will be a reduction in dumping soon. In 2017, the RAPID program purchased three (3) camera sets to address increased illegal dumping in hot spot areas. Similar to the mattress study, a geospatial analysis was used to identify and quantify locations for camera placement. The placement of these camera deterrents at identified high-volume illegal dumping hot spots effectively reduced illegal dumping activity within a 150-foot vicinity by an average of 31%.

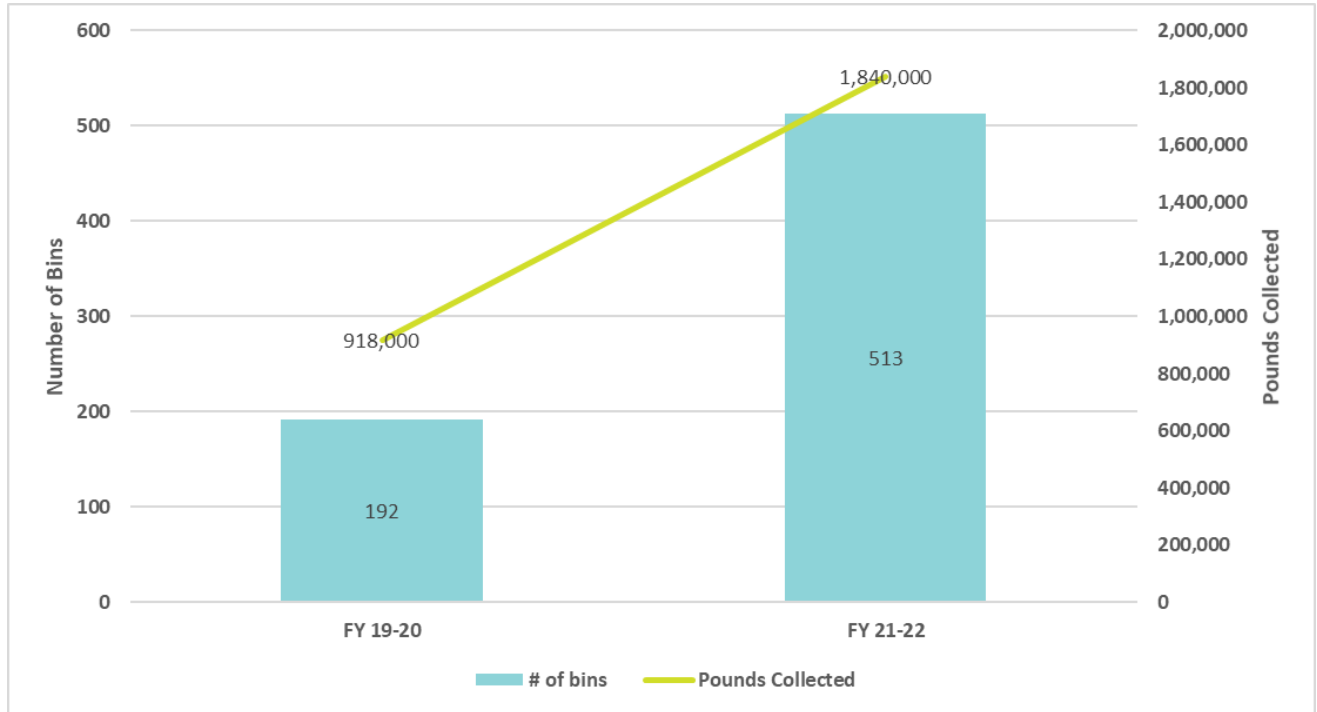
Neighborhood Dumpster Day Program

The Neighborhood Beautification Program (Dumpster Day Program) transitioned from the Environmental Services Department to PRNS in 2019. The Dumpster Day program was initially designed to provide each council district with \$18,000 for neighborhood dumpster day events and other beautification efforts. While this had been a long-standing approach, in 2021-2022, one-time funding from the American Rescue Plan Fund in the amount of \$315,000 was allocated to increase dumpster days to 100 events in areas most impacted by blight as identified through illegal dumping data. In 2022-2023 dedicated full-time staff and non-personal/equipment were added on an ongoing basis allowing for the increase in dumpster day events and trash collected.

BeautifySJ staff continues to work with Council offices and neighborhood associations to coordinate beautification efforts including dumpster day events. Additionally, BeautifySJ staff bolstered outreach efforts by implementing the use of neighborhood canvassing, the use of A-frames containing event information, and mailed postcards. In 2021-2022, the Neighborhood Beautification Program coordinated the collection of 1,840,000 pounds (920 tons) of debris

which filled 513 bins. Chart #4 below illustrates the growth of the program over the last three years.

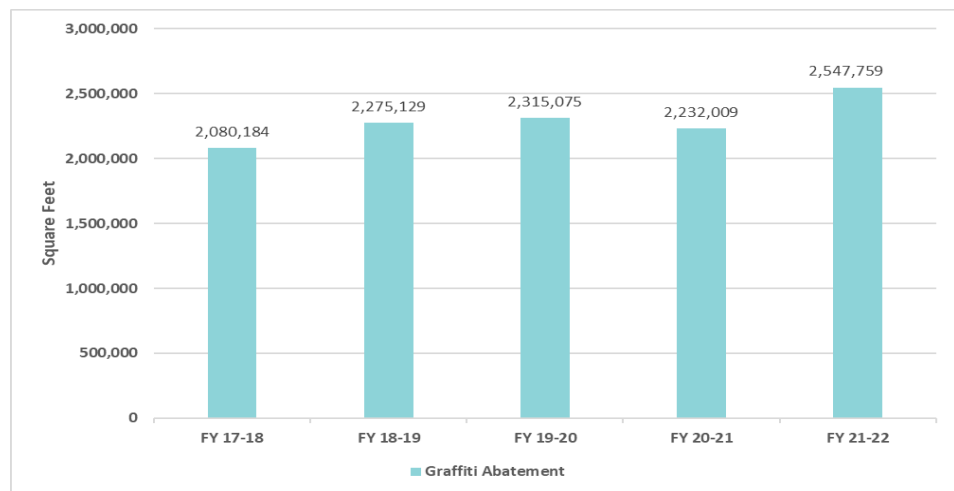
Chart #4: Fiscal Year Comparison of Neighborhood Dumpster Days



Graffiti Removal Program

Over the past 5 years, the Graffiti Removal Program has experienced a 20% increase in the number of graffiti incidents removed within the City's jurisdiction. The program is designed to respond to graffiti incidents within

three business days with an emphasis on removing



gang, offensive, and hate speech within twenty-four hours. In 2021-2022, an additional 315,000 square feet of graffiti had to be abated compared to the previous fiscal year. The increase in graffiti is a trend that several bay area cities have experienced in the past few years.

Large murals have assisted with preventing graffiti along large surfaces traditionally used by taggers and graffiti. Since 2018 the Graffiti Removal Program has assisted with the completion of seventeen (17) Mural projects including 30 individual art pieces located in highly graffitied areas. The team works collaboratively with the City's Public Art Program by providing data to support mural location recommendations, participates in community engagement and perform preparation and maintenance of the mural site. Installation of murals has been an effective deterrent to decrease and deter graffiti along highly graffitied areas. While the installation of murals deters graffiti at a specific location, it has not led to a reduction in graffiti overall.

To address the increase in graffiti, additional funding in the amount of \$200,000 was allocated on a one-time basis to offset the need to leave up graffiti when the program exhausts its budget. These funds are critical in addressing the noted trends below:

- A 10% increase in gang, graffiti throughout the city from the previous year. In 2021 approximately 29% (731,000 square feet) of all graffiti was gang, hate or offensive speech;
- Significant increase in political graffiti throughout the City;
- Increase of graffiti bombing incidents -- where an area is targeted and all surfaces are graffitied. Incidents are frequent along sound walls, fences, sidewalks and freeway signage; and
- Graffiti on private property (business and residential). There has been a significant increase in graffiti located on business properties since 2020. Most of the incidents were located on small businesses.

In fiscal year 2021-2022 approximately 23% of all graffiti work order requests were located on private property which is higher than in past years. The Graffiti Removal Program provided engagement and outreach to address 6,400 incidents located on private property within San José. Additionally, there were 476 reports of graffiti located on interagency property. Many small businesses throughout San José have been challenged with addressing graffiti that quickly returns once it is removed. The Graffiti Removal Program does provide a courtesy graffiti abatement for gang-related, offensive, and hate speech but there needs to be a more intentional effort to support small businesses to quickly address the graffiti and use strategies to prevent it. Staff has begun the process of researching best practices in addressing graffiti on private businesses and residential property and funding to implement best practices will be considered as part of the development of the 2023-2024 budget.

BeautifySJ Partners

BeautifySJ works closely with inter-jurisdictional and intra-departmental partners to coordinate the delivery of services and respond to concerns. Key City Departments include the Department of Transportation, the San José Police Department, Environmental Services Department, Project Hope Program and the Housing Department who work in a coordinated fashion to deliver services that address blight. BeautifySJ also works collaboratively with inter-jurisdictional partners to leverage resources to clean and beautify public spaces. Over the past three years BeautifySJ has worked to develop relationships and increase resources that are steered towards San José to reduce blight. In 2021-2022, one-time funding from the American Rescue Plan Fund was allocated to BeautifySJ for an Interagency Team that is the lead team for coordinating contracts to address graffiti, illegal dumping, and litter/trash. Since the implementation of the Interagency Team, BeautifySJ has worked with partners to remove over 2,100,000 pounds (1,050 tons) of debris from waterways, freeways, roadways and more in partnership with Caltrans, Union Pacific Rail Road, Valley Water, and Santa Clara County. BeautifySJ has also worked with our creek partners and the thousands of volunteers they have activated to remove debris from our waterways. Below is a summary of activities and the status of current agreements with BeautifySJ Partners to address graffiti, trash and illegal dumping.

- Caltrans, California Department of Transportation – Caltrans staff meets with BeautifySJ management twice per month to prioritize, coordinate and leverage resources to address areas with ongoing graffiti and reoccurring trash and debris. Currently the City is negotiating an agreement to be reimbursed for litter/trash and graffiti that is removed by the City staff from Caltrans property. Caltrans has also agreed to provide funding to support dumpster day events in neighborhoods most impacted by illegal dumping.
- Union Pacific Railroad – The City established a ten-year Memorandum of Understanding through 2030 and continues to work proactively with Union Pacific Railroad by leveraging resources to address areas with ongoing blight. During the 2022-23 Union Pacific Railroad and the City will focus efforts in areas along the railway that are most impacted by dumping and encampments.
- Valley Water – The City has a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Valley Water for an interagency encampment cleanup program along waterways as part of Valley Water’s Safe Clean Water Program. For encampment cleanups, Valley Water arranges for and supervises crews and provides compactor trucks, drivers, portable sanitation equipment, tools, and supplies. The City of San José pays for disposal of the collected debris, labor for coordination and site documentation, bio-waste handling and removal, Outreach Services and for San José Police to be on site for joint cleanups.
- County of Santa Clara – The City has entered into an agreement with the County to provide trash pick-up and encampment management services at specified locations in County jurisdictions located within San José. This includes routine garbage, debris, bio-waste, and

hazardous materials removal from occupied encampments within County Roads and Parks land. The County is reimbursing the City for all related costs.

- **Creek Cleanup Partners** – The City funds three key partners, South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition, Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful, and the Trash Punx to work with volunteers to remove litter and trash from creeks and neighborhoods most impacted by trash. In 2021-2022 these partners collected 672,000 pounds (336 tons) of trash with residents volunteering 7,742 hours.
- **Jobs Training Partners** – The City of San José has funded and helped amplify job training efforts for young adults and transitional job training programs through grants and agreements with Goodwill of Silicon Valley and the San José Conservation Corps. These programs provide an opportunity for cleaning and beautifying our City through trash pick-up, weed abatement, trail safety patrols, partnerships with creek partners, and neighborhood groups to help clean waterways and trails while providing life skills to youth and young adults and adults transitioning to a return to the work force.

Enforcement

Currently, there are no dedicated enforcement resources appropriated to the BeautifySJ Program to address graffiti or illegal dumping. To be effective in addressing and reducing illegal dumping throughout the City, dedicated resources would need to be allocated. This would allow the program to prioritize enforcement to reduce illegal dumping citywide. Below is additional information related to citations and warning letters in response to illegal dumping.

Since 2017, San José residents and businesses have had the opportunity to forward evidence of illegal dumping to the City's Report.Dumpers@sanjoseca.gov email account. Prior to the programs transition to PRNS, the Illegal Dumping program received support from Environmental Inspectors, who monitored, vetted, and enforced reports received through the Report.Dumpers@sanjoseca.gov email account. Beginning in October 2020, reports are vetted by BeautifySJ when staff is available, and forwarded to Code Enforcement for review and enforcement as appropriate.

Currently, the process for illegal dumping is to submit reports to Code Enforcement to assess and determine the level of citation that will be issued. Below is the disposition of illegal dumping reports received through the Report.Dumpers@sanjoseca.gov account since Fiscal Year 2016 - 2017. The tables below provide additional information related to citations and fines collected.

Table 1 – Illegal Dumping Warning Notices and Citations

Department	Time Period	Warning Notices	Citations
Code Enforcement	July 2017 – June 2022	70	123
Environmental Services Dept.	October 2016 – October 2020	509	72
Total		579	195

Since Fiscal Year 2016-2017, 41% of all citations issued have received partial payment or have been paid in full as seen in Table 2 below. Citations that go unpaid are moved through a collection process by the Finance Department.

Table 2 – Illegal Dumping Citation Payment Status

# of Citations since 2016*	# of Citations Paid/Partial	Total Amount Charged	Total Amount Paid	Outstanding Balance
195	81	\$375,554	\$119,432	\$256,122

CONCLUSION

The BeautifySJ Program has made significant strides in consolidating key blight reduction programs within the new PRNS Community Services Division. This includes expanding services to address blight in neighborhoods and aligning programs and services within the BeautifySJ Unit with internal Departments and inter-jurisdictional partners. These efforts have proven to be an important step in coordinating the delivery of services and achieving the long-term objective of a cleaner city. However, there continues to be ongoing challenges with addressing illegal dumping and graffiti. Adopting and investing in the Three Es comprehensive approach of Education, Eradication and Enforcement will provide BeautifySJ with a holistic, effective model that works to prevent and enforce in addition to removal and eradication. This approach to blight reduction would also allow the program to develop a multi-year strategic plan and develop long-term outcome measures. Moving forward, BeautifySJ will seek additional funding to address both education and enforcement needs as part of the 2023-2024 budget development; continue the alignment of programs and services; and bring forth priority issues to the Neighborhood Services City Service Area.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

BeautifySJ will provide key program priority updates via the Neighborhood Services CSA on issues impacting service delivery and neighborhood livability. The program will continue to provide annual reports.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSÉ

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

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Neighborhood Services and Education Committee Agenda website for the October 13, 2022 meeting.

COORDINATION

This memorandum was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, City Manager's Budget Office, and the City Manager's Office.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

The BeautifySJ Annual Report will be presented at the Parks and Recreation Commission on October 5, 2022.

CEQA

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

/s/

JON CICIRELLI
Director of Parks,
Recreation, and Neighborhood Services

For questions, please contact Andrea Flores Shelton, andrea.floresshelton@sanjoseca.gov, Deputy Director, Community Services Division of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services.

The principal author of this memorandum is Olympia Williams, BeautifySJ Division Manager. For questions, please contact Olympia.williams@sanjoseca.gov