CITY OF SAN JOSE
CAPITAL OF SILICON VALLEY

Memorandum

TO: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: Jon Cicirelli
Khaled Tawfik

SUBJECT: BEAUTIFYSJ ENCAMPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES STATUS REPORT

DATE: June 8, 2023

Approved _Angel Rios_   Date 6/1/23

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report on the Encampment Management Services and Homeless Data Integration System project for homelessness response, including cross-department coordination of services, data and analysis, and reporting as part of the approved City Initiatives Roadmap for Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

BACKGROUND

The initial Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods Services (PRNS) – BeautifySJ Program ("BeautifySJ") was an initiative to clean up, restore and engage with the San José community through volunteerism. The grant program launched in 2017 and in fiscal year 2021-22 went through a consolidation, expansion, and alignment of programs to effectively address blight and manage homeless encampments. BeautifySJ provides encampment management service in coordination with the Housing Department's Homelessness Response Team. Through this coordinated approach, it was determined that a new tool was needed to provide more efficient delivery of services, better data tracking, and the ability to assess and refine existing services.

At its May 3, 2022, meeting, the City Council directed staff to return through the Smart Cities and Services Improvement Committee with recommendations for developing an internal City application that will track outreach and services to encampments[1]. The Smart Cities Committee was dissolved, and this item was placed on the Neighborhood, Services and Education Committee work plan.

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[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&Options=&Search=

The newly developed application should be readily accessible to 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
    d. Wherever possible, details of outreach efforts from the County of Santa Clara 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 application to address the scale of the problem. This cross-departmental effort, the Encampment Management & Homeless Data Integration System (System) will be a web and mobile application enabling City staff to create encampment-related work orders, track their status and completion, aggregate all City encampment data, and provide reports and analytics on City services provided. It represents an opportunity to bring Silicon Valley technology innovation in its capital to help solve one of the defining challenges of our time – reducing and ultimately eliminating homelessness. This effort does not duplicate nor replace the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), the region's single system for coordination of serving unhoused people. The HMIS will continue to be the system of record for that work, the Encampment Management & Homeless Data Integration System is a management and analytical tool, not a case management tool.

ANALYSIS

In November 2022, the City initiated a Human-centered design (HCD) approach to provide analysis in the following two areas:

    1) *Persona Definition and Stakeholder Interviews*: Establish the exhaustive list of user personas of the Encampment Management System to determine each persona's specific requirements. A persona is a type of user of the System with similar needs and ways of engaging with the System.
    2) *Process Flow Design*: Design the entire user process flow, from intake of encampment service requests, to determining how requests are routed to the responsible department(s), to closing the loop for the initial requester.

The HCD effort requires a high degree of collaboration between the key stakeholders of the services and systems to identify collective needs and requirements at every stage of the service delivery process and prioritize features that address these needs. This collaborative effort involved the direct providers of encampment-related services, the Housing Department, BeautifySJ, as well as departments that have more indirect involvement, including the Police Department, Fire Department, Environmental Services Department, Department of Transportation, Airport Department, Library Department, Information Technology Department,

and the City Manager's Office. The City had not previously taken such a coordinated approach to identifying gaps and building solutions to Encampment Services. This intra-departmental coordinated strategy was used to design the encampment management data integration system and is in alignment with the approach used to re-design the vehicle blight service delivery strategy.

Persona Definition and Stakeholder Interviews

During the week of November 14, 2022, the City conducted a series of interviews and focus groups with identified personas. The City identified six personas to be included in the scope of this project. In advance of these meetings, the City provided a set of questions for each persona group. In addition, a set of interview questions were created to engage residents in a quick survey at pop-up locations, such as supermarkets. Demographic information was collected using paper forms for in-person meetings and a survey was used for remote participants. Six different persona types (housed residents, unhoused residents, council members and council staff, business owners, City staff and housing advocates) were included in the interview process. Key takeaways were the need for an interdepartmental system and database within the City to have visibility into reported problems, assigned responsibility and actions taken (City staff), not having adequate information about encampments to provide a complete and credible response (Council members), and lack of clarity about where to report health and safety concerns about an encampment (housed residents).

Process Flow Design

In December 2022, the City facilitated collaborative design sessions to capture the current encampment-related workflows for the Fire Department, Police Department, Department of Transportation, Environmental Services Department, Housing Departments, Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department, Library Department, and Airport Department related to encampments. During the diagramming process, department subject-matter experts (SMEs) identified opportunities for improvement in their current processes that were used for a future state design. The SMEs selected to participate in these design sessions were City staff knowledgeable about encampment-related service delivery for their department, including an intimate understanding of the current process as well as future needs. It became clear through the design process that the current state of the City's approach to encampment management involved manual processes, lack of data sharing and transparency across departments, as well as an inability to aggregate reporting on services provided. By engaging the various department SMEs in the same room, the collaborative design sessions were able to identify process redundancies and silos among different departments, and increased broad awareness of existing processes and services provided by each department, resulting in a coordinated process design consisting of the following three components:

1) *Intake process*: The channels through which encampment-related complaints will be captured from City staff or residents. Note that residents will have the ability to report an encampment through a web form built in SJ311, but it will not be initially advertised via SJ311 to the public to prevent overwhelming the system.
2) *Encampment Management & Homeless Data Integration System*: The system used by City staff to convert complaints into work orders, collect related data, and provide key data about encampments and run reports.
3) *BeautifySJ & Housing Processes*: The field work related to encampments performed by the PRNS and Housing departments. For the time being, all other City departments are assumed to be encampment service referrers while BeautifySJ and Housing are service providers.

Attachment provides a visual representation of the Encampment Management and Housing Data and Integration system being developed.

System Requirements

The Housing Department and BeautifySJ aligned on must-have requirements for the initial release of the system, as well as future desired enhancements to be implemented in subsequent releases. Key Phase 1 requirements are the ability to create and track encampment service work orders based on intaking complaints from City staff or the public, mapping capability enabling field staff to easily drop a pin to locate an encampment, as well as data aggregation and reporting capabilities on encampment services provided that can aid the Mayor and Council in better understanding the problem and shaping policy more effectively to address it.

Implementation Plan

After completing the process flow design and requirements gathering work, the cross-departmental City executive committee team identified and agreed upon a plan to develop and release Phase 1 of the System. Assuming a start date in June 2023, there would be an initial release in December 2023. Phase 1 of the System will enable City staff to better deliver encampment services for both our housed and unhoused residents, and the data captured and reported on City services provided will enable the Council and community to better understand the problem and craft policy and solutions to better address it.

The table below includes the key milestones and tentative Phase I schedule.

Milestone	Date
1. System Planning & Requirements Gathering	May 2023 (*Completed*)
2. Initiate Development of System	June 2023
3. Complete Development of System	October 2023
4. User Acceptance Testing/Training	November 2023
5. Phase 1 Go-Live/Release	December 2023

CONCLUSION

All major cities are struggling to address the unprecedented increase in homelessness and blight in their communities in recent years. San José is not different. The Encampment Management & Homeless Data Integration System initiative is a cross-departmental solution to capture City encampment needs and address them effectively, efficiently, and equitably. The City's Human-centered design approach identified process redundancies, and increased awareness of process and services provided by each department, which will result in a coordinated process flow and System.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The City project team will return to the Neighborhood Services & Education Committee in Q3 2023-2024 after the initial release of the System to provide a status update, as well as the plan to implement enhancements in subsequent releases. The 2023-2024 budget allocates $150,000 for the projects initial design. The 2023-2024 proposed budget includes an additional $250,000 in funds to be used to support program implementation as services and systems are developed. Future priorities will be addressed through the City budget process as directed by the City Manager and City Council.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Manager's Office, the Housing Department, and the City Attorney's Office.

/s/   /s/

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