

Davide B. Vieira

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September 24, 2018

Mayor Sam Liccardo and City Council Members
City of San José
200 East Santa Clara Street
San José, California 95113

Dear Mayor Liccardo and City Council Members:

The Vehicle Abatement Audit is too kind to the department. Allow me to add some of what I've seen on the streets in my Roosevelt Park Neighborhood.

Tow companies won't tow vehicles that aren't worth their time and yard space. I call this "vehicle profiling". If a vehicle is fifteen-years-old and has expired tags, more times than not it stays on the street. It's worthless to a tow company because it won't be claimed by its owner; hence, no fees collected. When a tow truck pulls up to one of these junkers, the operator simply says that they don't have space and moves on to better pickings. Space in the tow yard is precious. Planting a junker on the lot that's worthless at auction only to have to wait a month before fetching \$50 at the crusher is a non-starter for a tow company.

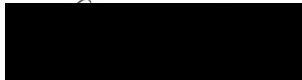
Only 8% of orange-tagged vehicles are towed, yet we have a backlog of 2,300 vehicles clogging our streets. We're now at the point where vehicles with expired tags won't even be considered for towing unless their tags are a year in arrears. The law stipulates that a vehicle with expired tags may be towed after six months and a day. How did we get to this point? Are officers "vehicle profiling" for the tow companies so as not to waste either one's time, leaving the worst of the worst to fester on our streets?

Changing the text on the orange stickers isn't going to fix the problem. Enforcing the laws on the books is a start. Making the process more efficient would be another improvement.. When using My San José to open a service request, why can't I as the creator of the request close the request if the situation is remedied before an officer arrives on the scene days or even weeks later? It's a waste of an officer's time that could be avoided with a change to the application. There must be other such efficiencies in the process that could yield both time and cost savings.

What about tow contracts? There must be a better way to draft these contracts so as to incentivize self-interested tow companies to take vehicles regardless of their dollar value to them. Is there wiggle room in the law that would allow the worst of the worst vehicles to go right to the crusher without stopping at a tow yard? What about a city-owned yard with a city-owned crusher?

How about crowd-sourcing these problems? San José is the Capital of Silicon Valley, after all. Let's pool our collective intelligence, roll up our sleeves and get to work!

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Davide B. Vieira.

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