



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: John Ristow

SUBJECT: City Street Sweeping
Performance Status Report

DATE: November 10, 2025

Approved

Date:

11/13/2025

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report on the City's street sweeping performance and the results of related pilots.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Transportation (DOT) oversees the sweeping of 67,000 miles of curb lane each year using a hybrid model: a program delivered by DOT using city-owned sweepers, and the Residential Street Sweeping program delivered by Green Waste Recovery Inc. (GreenWaste) and overseen by DOT inspectors.

Street sweeping involves staff from throughout DOT. In addition to DOT sweeper operators and Residential Street Sweeping inspectors, the Infrastructure Maintenance Division's Traffic Maintenance Section includes staff who install and maintain parking prohibition signs. DOT's Transportation Safety, Operations & Parking Division's On-Street Parking Management Section has parking enforcement staff who monitor compliance with posted signs along signed routes on approximately 546 curb miles. This equates to 13.2% of the 4,133 curb miles of streets.

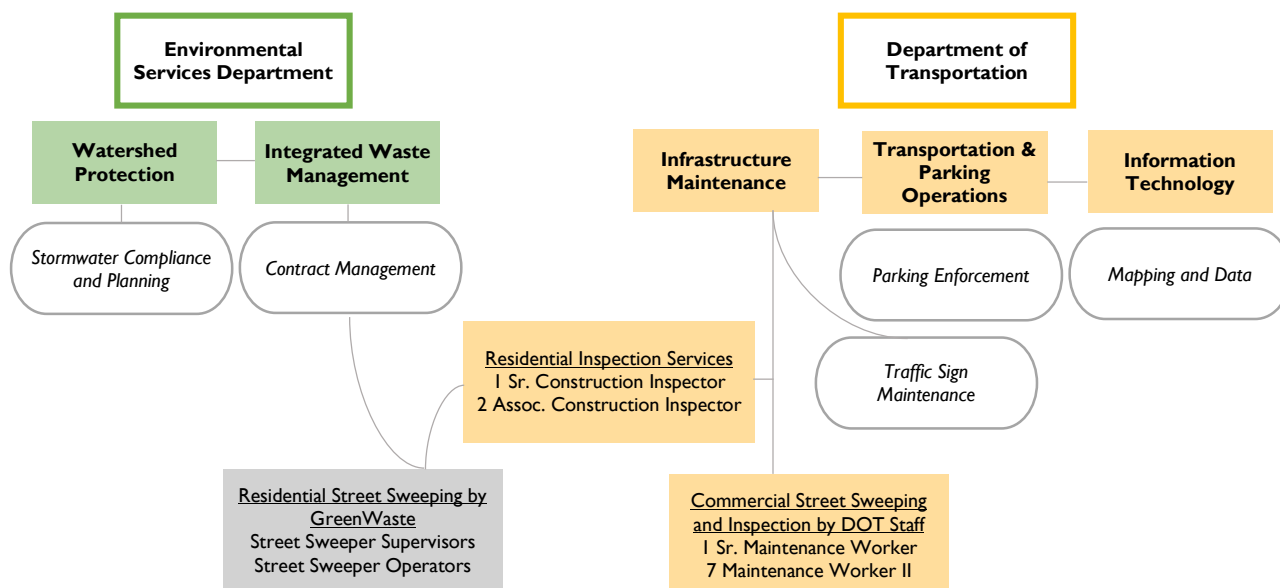
Because the primary purpose of this program is to prevent pollutants such as sediment, nutrients (e.g., fertilizers and animal waste), toxic metals, and organic materials from entering storm drains and polluting waterways, it is regulated by San José's Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit, issued by the San Francisco Bay Area Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Environmental Services Department Watershed Protection Division oversees compliance with this permit and other federal, state, and local regulations, and coordinates with DOT to ensure street sweeping helps meet trash load, polychlorinated biphenyls, mercury, and copper reduction targets mandated by the stormwater discharge permit. The contract with GreenWaste is part of the larger solid

waste agreement that is managed by the Environmental Services Department Integrated Waste Management Division.

ANALYSIS

Figure 1 below summarizes the street sweeping roles and responsibilities as assigned:

Figure 1: Street Sweeping Organization Chart



DOT Street Sweepers

DOT's in-house street sweeping program is delivered by city staff who operate overnight during the graveyard shift (12:00 to 8:30 a.m.) on the following routes:

- **Downtown:** Daily, Monday-Thursday during graveyard shift, including downtown bikeways
- **Neighborhood Business Districts:** Twice per week, during the graveyard shift
- **Arterials, Connectors, and Bikeways:** Twice per month, during the graveyard shift

In addition to sweeping routes, staff deploy sweep waste bins into which operators dump sweep waste, alleviating the need to return to a corporation yard in the middle of a route. Bins are placed at the beginning of the shift at predetermined sites which vary based on routes served and operators deposit waste and remove them at shift end.

Residential Street Sweeping

Residential streets are swept once per month by GreenWaste and overseen by a three-person inspection team. The team logs route completion data and identifies field conditions that are used to generate reports that lead to corrective action. The virtual inspection form with visual aid is provided as Attachment A. Inspectors coordinate with the contractor to address missed sweeps and revisit areas that can be swept to correct minor issues, such as a small amount of debris in the roadway. Inspection staff also track “trouble spots” using a database that details the type of issue as well as parking impacts. This process enables inspection staff to follow up by alerting property owners of issues and allowing them the opportunity to address them. DOT inspection staff also distribute flyers in impacted neighborhoods to encourage residents to remove obstructions, including cars, cones, and debris piles that cannot be swept by sweepers.

Common Impediments to Sweeping

Parked cars are the most frequently occurring and impactful obstacles to a successful sweep. For every parked car, the sweeper is unable to sweep approximately three car lengths of curb line due to the maneuverability constraints of the sweeper. In San José, signs that prohibit parking during scheduled street sweeping cover 546 (13.2%) of the total curb miles. There are several reasons for this, including additional unfunded contracts and enforcement costs, and a lack of public support due to parking impacts in neighborhoods with limited nearby parking options. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025, the DOT Parking Compliance Unit issued over 66,000 citations to nearly 45,000 vehicles for violating posted street sweep parking restrictions. Approximately 90% of vehicles cited during the year received one or two citations, indicating that these vehicle owners may have simply forgotten to move their car on street sweep days. The low volume (1.3%) of habitual offenders (six or more annual citations) suggests that, in most cases, citations are an effective enforcement tool.

Other barriers to street sweeping include yard waste piles and waste containers. While residential street sweeping is scheduled for the day following solid waste collection, early set-out of yard waste in the street can be especially challenging for street sweepers because piles of landscape debris can hide items that may damage the sweeper or act as a projectile and harm people or property nearby. If a sweeper encounters a pile of landscape debris, it will often drive away from the curb to avoid it. DOT sometimes receives complaints regarding landscape waste and debris; however, it is important to note that per the municipal code, property owners are responsible for ensuring their curb lines are clear, and landscape waste set-outs are allowed only within 24 hours of scheduled landscape waste pickup.

Sweepers must also avoid low-hanging trees with branches within 14 feet of the road. At this height, sweepers will hit branches, resulting in damaged equipment and compromised trees. Property owners are responsible for ensuring tree clearance. When pruning needs are identified, DOT inspectors alert property owners by leaving door hangers with instructions for how to obtain a no-cost pruning permit. DOT sweeper operator staff and inspectors use an online inspection tool to document and address these impediments. DOT is currently participating in a pilot program evaluating the use of artificial intelligence to detect and code roadway obstructions that impact sweeping, which could streamline identification and obstruction reporting.

Bike Lane Sweeping and Proactive Maintenance

Recognizing the concerns and complaints regarding bike lanes citywide, DOT's landscape team implemented a bike lane maintenance plan on July 1, 2024. Bike lanes are thoroughly cleared each quarter beginning with the most impacted areas. The DOT Active Transportation team compiled data on concerns and complaints between April 2022 and 2024. Bike lanes are generally maintained in good condition, and DOT has the ability to respond to service requests. The most frequent issue reported by cyclists is an obstruction such as a parked vehicle or other item in the bike lane. Obstructions should be reported by calling 311 or the DOT Dispatch line at 408-794-1900. The parking compliance unit visits all bike lanes twice a month, and in FY 2024-2025 they issued 2,086 citations for bike lane parking violations. The maintenance team will use this information to help inform their maintenance activities and prioritize the locations with the most debris complaints.

Supplemental Sweeping Support

When sweeping issues need to be addressed before the next scheduled sweep, DOT has remediation tools that can provide relief to the neighborhood. If parking is severely impacting a residential sweeping route, DOT can distribute trilingual flyers (English, Spanish, and Vietnamese) in two neighborhoods per month on windshields of parked cars to encourage compliance from residents. Additionally, Residential Street Sweeping program inspectors will leave door hangers to notify properties that have been identified as a source of an obstruction.

Enhanced sweeps also address areas ranging from two to three miles in length that have not been receiving effective street sweeping. Enhanced sweeps must be scheduled in advance by DOT inspection staff and require coordination with the Parking Compliance Unit. The team then establishes a temporary tow zone, posts and manages temporary tow-away signage, and conducts outreach. On the day of the sweep, parking compliance officers will go door-to-door to contact residents to move vehicles. In cases where the vehicle owner is not found, as a last resort, parking compliance officers facilitate the towing and removal of remaining vehicles.

DOT has the contractual capacity to perform as many enhanced sweeps as funding will allow. In FY 2024-2025, DOT completed 19 enhanced sweeps, excluding November and December due to the holidays, which represents a 16% increase from the previous fiscal year and its highest total to date. A list of completed enhanced sweeps over the past five years can be found in Attachment B. No enhanced sweeps were performed from March 2020 to January 2023 due to the pandemic.

In FY 2024-2025, DOT's In-House Street Sweeping team collaborated with the Oversized and Lived-In Vehicle Enforcement (OLIVE) pilot program to conduct enhanced sweep operations at 33 designated sites. This initiative was intended to address environmental and public health and safety concerns associated with oversized vehicles, particularly those parked on city streets. Effective FY 2025-2026, the In-House Street Sweeping program anticipates supporting sweeping operations at over 50 sites annually.

Parking Prohibition Signs

Residents, neighborhood groups, and councilmembers can request street sweeping parking prohibition signage in neighborhoods. DOT inspectors verify the need for signs based on field assessments of parking impacts. Following a 2016 audit, DOT received funding to add limited signage throughout the city, resulting in 46 miles of added routes. As of October 2025, there are a total of 18 requests for new locations in the queue, though there is currently no funding to expand signage. If funding is made available, DOT will consider installing signs in those areas where at least 40% of curb miles are impacted by parked cars. To prioritize these areas, additional considerations are assessed to determine if parking prohibition signs should be installed including neighborhood support, compliance, and contractual and enforcement cost increases which can vary depending on the location of the signs. One-time funding for equipment and labor is also needed for installation.

Once parking prohibition signs are installed, DOT parking compliance officers can enforce street sweeping parking prohibitions. In San José, parking prohibition signs are in effect for up to five hours. Limiting sweeping to strict timeframes presents logistical challenges and raises costs because it limits the flexibility of when a street can be swept from a 24-hour window to a much narrower window requiring more precise routing.

The DOT Infrastructure Maintenance Division and Parking Compliance Unit compiled a cost estimate to add 100 miles of enforceable street-sweeping signs based on known unit prices and best estimates of needed staffing support, contained in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Estimated Costs to Add 100 Miles of Street Sweeping Signs

Parking Prohibition Signage (fabricate & install)	\$885,000
Parking Compliance Vehicles x 3	\$155,000
Parking Compliance Unit Equipment	\$50,000
One Time Total	\$1,090,000
Additional Inspection staff	\$200,000
Sweeping Vendor Cost Increases	\$5,000
PCU Staff (3 Officers & 1 Supervisor).	\$800,000
Ongoing Cost Total*	\$1,005,000

**Revenue offset up to \$350,000 of above noted costs may be possible through the issuance and collection of additional parking citations*

Additionally, these annual ongoing vendor contract costs are anticipated to increase in accordance with the Refuse Rate Index, which is like a Consumer Price Index.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Any resident can review a sweep day at their convenience by checking the Environmental Services Department's utilities services website at www.sjenvironment.org/lookup. DOT has coordinated with ITD to develop an email reminder alert service that residents can register to participate in. Once signed up, individuals will receive email reminders before their designated sweep day, reminding them to move their vehicle to help facilitate sweeping. The service was incorporated into San José 311 in January 2024. DOT can work with interested council offices on engagement.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the hybrid sweeping model is operating as it was intended. DOT is responsive when issues arise and has various tools to help address community concerns. Moving forward, DOT will continue to look for options to improve outreach to residents, but to further enhance the sweeping program, additional funding and staffing would be needed.

COORDINATION

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

/s/

John Ristow

Director, Department of Transportation

For questions, please contact Jennifer Seguin, Deputy Director, Department of Transportation, at Jennifer.seguin@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 794-6453.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – DOT Street Sweeping Effectiveness Chart

Attachment B – Enhanced Sweep Locations