



Memorandum

**TO: NEIGHBORHOOD
SERVICES & EDUCATION
COMMITTEE**

FROM: Jon Cicirelli

SUBJECT: See Below

DATE: July 27, 2026

Approved

Date:

8/5/2026

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

SUBJECT: BeautifySJ Neighborhood Blight Reduction Status Report

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report on the BeautifySJ Neighborhood Blight Reduction plan and results for graffiti, litter removal, illegal dumping, and dumpster days.

SUMMARY AND OUTCOME

Through this item, the Committee will be informed of the BeautifySJ Neighborhood Blight Reduction programs delivered by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services in Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

Over the past five years, BeautifySJ has focused primarily on blight eradication to improve neighborhood conditions throughout San José. As the program continues to evolve through operational optimization and stronger partnerships, BeautifySJ is renewing its emphasis on a more balanced strategy built around four core pillars: **Enforcement, Education, Eradication, and Engagement**. This expanded framework empowers residents, neighborhood associations, community organizations, businesses, and other partners to play an active role in restoring, maintaining, and beautifying their neighborhoods.

This evolution reflects the commitment to creating sustainable, community-driven solutions that improve neighborhood conditions over the long term. In February 2027, the City will celebrate a significant milestone—it is the **10th anniversary** of BeautifySJ

serving the San José community—marking a decade of innovation, collaboration, and neighborhood transformation.

Administered by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS), BeautifySJ integrates graffiti abatement, illegal dumping response, neighborhood engagement, litter removal, and encampment management into a coordinated citywide strategy to enhance public spaces and improve quality of life. Understanding neighborhood blight trends requires consideration of the full scope of BeautifySJ's work, including encampment management. Previous annual reports presented neighborhood blight reduction and encampment management separately. This year's report includes a dedicated attachment on encampment management (Attachment A) to provide additional context for citywide trends related to neighborhood blight, public space maintenance, and overall service delivery.

BeautifySJ FY 2025–2026 Program Highlights include the following:

Highlight #1: Overall trash and debris tonnage declined across BeautifySJ blight reduction programs, including illegal dumping response and encampment management.

- BeautifySJ removed 14 million pounds of trash and litter through illegal dumping response and neighborhood litter removal efforts, a 1.8% decrease from FY 2024–2025, when 14.3 million pounds were removed.
- BeautifySJ removed 9.6 million pounds of trash and debris from encampments, a 5% decrease from FY 2024–2025, when 10.1 million pounds were removed.

Highlight #2: Enhanced enforcement efforts, combined with proactive pilot projects such as fixed Dumpster Days, contributed to measurable reductions in illegal dumping.

- BeautifySJ referred 568 illegal dumping cases to Code Enforcement, the San José Police Department (SJPd), and the Office of the City Attorney, resulting in 104 citations and 148 warning letters, a 580% increase in enforcement referrals over the previous year.
- BeautifySJ implemented a fixed Dumpster Day pilot program in four neighborhoods experiencing high levels of illegal dumping. Coupled with a door-to-door education campaign on illegal dumping fines and City-sponsored disposal opportunities, the pilot contributed to an average 38.9% reduction in illegal dumping work orders within the pilot areas.

Highlight #3: Graffiti eradication increased citywide while gang-related, hate, and offensive graffiti continued to decline.

- BeautifySJ eradicated 2.8 million square feet of graffiti, an 11.4% increase over the previous fiscal year.
- Gang-related, hate, and offensive graffiti declined to 429,283 square feet, compared to 442,125 square feet in FY 2024–2025, representing a 2.9% decrease.

Highlight #4: BeautifySJ expanded partnerships and secured external funding, offsetting City costs through reimbursements, grants, sponsorships, and collaborative agreements totaling \$923,850.

- Executed the Caltrans Delegated Maintenance Agreement, expanding the partnership with Caltrans to maintain 13 freeway interchange locations.
- Secured \$544,850 through the State of California Clean California Project for the Lyndale/Capitol/I-680 Resiliency Project in partnership with the Valley Transportation Authority and Caltrans.

Highlight #5: Community engagement continued to grow through increased volunteer participation, stronger neighborhood associations, and sustained investment in neighborhood-led beautification projects.

- Community volunteers contributed 40,252 service hours, compared to 29,522 hours in FY 2024–2025, representing a 36% increase.
- Neighborhood engagement expanded through increased participation in forums and leadership trainings, with representatives from more than 72 existing and emerging neighborhood associations participating, contributing to a network of more than 160 registered and active neighborhood associations throughout San José.
- BeautifySJ awarded grants to 93 of 101 applicants (92%) during Grant Cycle 7 (April 2025–March 2026), distributing \$388,357 in neighborhood improvement funding. During Grant Cycle 8 (April 2026–March 2027), \$256,000 was awarded to 62 of 98 applicants (63%), reflecting increased demand for neighborhood-based beautification and engagement initiatives.

These accomplishments reflect the continued evolution from a program primarily focused on blight eradication to a comprehensive neighborhood stewardship strategy that integrates enforcement, education, eradication, and engagement. Together, these efforts emphasize long-term sustainability, preserve the City's progress, and foster community-driven solutions that create cleaner, safer, and more vibrant neighborhoods throughout San José.

BACKGROUND

Resident feedback continues to highlight the importance of blight reduction and neighborhood beautification. The Annual Community Opinion Survey was launched in 2018 to offer resident input for specific changes to make San José a better place to live. Among resident priorities mentioned in the 2024-25 survey, the top issues were: addressing homeless issues (25 percent), providing more affordable housing (14 percent), and beautifying the city, landscaping (11 percent). The survey also showed the largest increase in resident satisfaction with the City's efforts to maintain public spaces, including a 13% increase in satisfaction with blight cleanup and a 10% increase in satisfaction with graffiti removal. These results reflect the positive impact of BeautifySJ's coordinated approach and reinforce the importance of continuing investments in education, engagement, eradication, and enforcement to create cleaner, safer, and more vibrant neighborhoods.

The City of San José addresses neighborhood blight through a coordinated, citywide approach, with key services consolidated under the BeautifySJ Program. Housed within the Community Services Division of the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) Department, BeautifySJ leads the City's efforts in blight reduction, encampment management, community beautification, and neighborhood engagement (see Attachment B for the current Organizational Chart). The Blight Reduction Program integrates five core service areas that work together to reduce blight, improve neighborhood conditions, and enhance the cleanliness, safety, and vibrancy of public spaces:

1. Graffiti Removal Program;
2. Neighborhood Litter Removal Program;
3. Neighborhood Beautification/Dumpster Day Program;
4. Neighborhood Association Engagement Program; and
5. Removing and Preventing Illegal Dumping (RAPID) Program.

These five core service areas are integrated into the overall BeautifySJ Division including Encampment Management. These programs work together to integrate service delivery, engagement, and policies that promote good neighbors across all communities in San José regardless of whether they are housed or unhoused. They work in tandem to improve the physical environment while fostering a shared sense of responsibility across neighborhoods. BeautifySJ plays an additional critical role in bridging the gap between City Hall and the community; connecting City departments, businesses, schools, and neighborhood groups; and collaborating with interjurisdictional partners in a shared effort to reduce blight and beautify public spaces.

BeautifySJ began planning to expand engagement efforts to include Business Associations in FY 2025-2026, largely around graffiti on private property and illegal dumping concerns in response to data that suggests shifting trends away from graffiti on public property and increased tagging on private properties. The introduction of this

sixth core service area, business engagement, aligns with funding included in the FY 2026-2027 adopted budget to establish a [graffiti fee-for-service program](#)¹ to address graffiti located on private property.

The BeautifySJ Program has made meaningful strides in addressing and mitigating the impacts of illegal dumping, litter/trash, and graffiti in neighborhoods and public spaces through the BeautifySJ Blight Reduction Strategy. Despite these efforts, there continue to be challenges with sustaining eradication efforts, high service demands, fleet availability/reliability, and enforcement obstacles.

ANALYSIS

BeautifySJ has utilized the Three 'E's model—Enforcement, Education, and Eradication—as a comprehensive framework for addressing the complex issue of illegal dumping for the past 10 years. While this approach has been effective, BeautifySJ recognizes that long-term success depends on active community participation. As a result, the program has formally added *Engagement* as the fourth pillar of its strategy. This reflects our effort to amplify the effectiveness of the original three 'E's by engaging residents, neighborhood associations and community partners.



Enforcement and Deterrents

The City Council continues to make Cleaning Up Our Neighborhoods a top priority to ensure our residents, businesses and visitors feel that they are in a safe and clean community. BeautifySJ plays a key role by directly combating illegal dumping and graffiti. The City provides a public facing [Cleaning Our Neighborhoods Dashboard](#)² that creates opportunities to educate residents on efforts and metrics related to graffiti removal, illegal dumping, and blight reduction. In FY 2025-2026, Council provided additional resources to continue the Blight Enforcement Working Group efforts to increase collaboration and coordinated enforcement efforts in BeautifySJ, Code Enforcement and the Police Department.

¹ MBA #9 - Graffiti Eradication on Private Property:

<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/131504/639155925310800000>

² Cleaning Our Neighborhoods Dashboard: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/office-of-the-city-manager/city-council-focus-areas/cleaning-up-our-neighborhoods>

The Blight Enforcement Working Group brings together PRNS, Planning, Building and Code Enforcement, the Police Department, the City Attorney's Office, the California Highway Patrol, and the District Attorney's Office to improve coordination and implement more strategic enforcement of persistent blight issues throughout the city.

During FY 2025–2026, the BeautifySJ Removing and Preventing Illegal Dumping (RAPID) Program continued operating 12 surveillance cameras at high-volume illegal dumping hotspots throughout the city. The camera program remained an effective deterrent, contributing to an average 34% reduction in illegal dumping at monitored locations. Staff noted that illegal dumping locations had the most impact when cameras are left in place for six months or more and when combined with targeted outreach and education efforts in the neighborhood that included tri-lingual informational flyers delivered door to door and posting tri-lingual notices on A-frames in hot spot locations.

Table 1: Blight Reduction (Illegal Dumping and Graffiti) Camera Installations

Camera Location / Street Name		
Aiello	Eden	Rogers
Alley	Educational	Roundtable
Boynton	Elodie	S 16th Street
Cadillac	Julian	Singleton
Carlsbad	Kammerer	Sunset
Chiechi	Laddie	Underwood
Davis	Magliocco	
Dupont	North Bayshore	

BeautifySJ strengthened its partnership with Code Enforcement, the Police Department, and City Attorney's Office by utilizing a dedicated full-time staff member to review surveillance footage to identify illegal dumping violations and refer cases for enforcement while tracking outcomes. In FY 2025-2026, of the 568 cases referred to Code Enforcement, 104 citations and 148 warning letters were issued. Citations were issued when video evidence clearly identified both the illegal dumping activity and the responsible party, such as through a visible license plate. When evidence was less definitive, such as identifiable business information or addresses found within discarded materials, Warning Notices were issued to encourage compliance and deter future violations. The City Attorney's Office also processed 93 criminal citations issued by the San José Police Department for illegal dumping.

A dedicated staff member was added to the BeautifySJ Team in January 2025 to monitor camera footage and coordinate with Code Enforcement. This significantly expanded the City's ability to identify and investigate illegal dumping violations. During the first six months of 2025, BeautifySJ referred 83 cases to Code Enforcement,

resulting in 8 citations and 25 Warning Notices. Increased collaboration, staff training and streamlining responses led to dramatic improvement in enforcement efforts. By the end of FY 2025-26 referrals to Code Enforcement increased to 568 cases, an increase of nearly 580%, demonstrating the effectiveness of dedicating staff to proactively review surveillance footage, identify violations, and support coordinated enforcement efforts across departments. Table 2 below outlines the number of enforcement actions.

Table 2: Illegal Dumping Enforcement Actions – FY 2025-2026

Action Taken	Initiated by Reports from Cameras	Initiated by Emails to ReportDumpers	Total Cases Reported through BeautifySJ
Cases sent to Code	381	187	568
Citations Issued	71	33	104
Warning Letters Sent	70	78	148
Insufficient Evidence / No Action Taken	125	39	164
Pending Cases	100	20	120
Other * (Referred Out, etc.)	6	0	6

During the fiscal year, BeautifySJ also partnered closely with the San José Police Department's Real Time Intelligence Center (RTIC) to expand the City's camera infrastructure and strengthen enforcement capabilities. BeautifySJ identified and submitted proposed locations for 12 License Plate Reader (LPR) cameras at illegal dumping hotspots and four LPR cameras at prolific graffiti locations. In collaboration with RTIC and [Flock Safety](https://www.flocksafety.com/)³, proposed camera locations, pole placements, and camera orientations were developed to maximize enforcement effectiveness. Additional cameras will be installed in the second half of 2026, significantly enhancing the City's ability to identify repeat offenders, support investigations, and improve accountability for illegal dumping and graffiti offenses.

The City's coordinated graffiti enforcement efforts continued to expand through strong interagency collaboration. In September 2025, the San José Police Department re-established temporary duty assignments within the Gang Investigations Unit, dedicating two detectives full-time to graffiti-related investigations. Between September 2025 and March 2026, the unit investigated approximately 153 documented graffiti vandalism cases, prepared 191 judicially approved search warrants (including residential, Ramey, social media, cell phone, and ping warrants), identified 70 suspects, and made approximately 15 arrests, compared to 3 arrests made in FY 2024-2025.

³ Flock Safety company; <https://www.flocksafety.com/>

Due to staffing and fiscal constraints, the temporary detectives were reassigned to patrol duties in early May 2026. Despite this change, the Blight Enforcement Working Group remains committed to building on these successes by strengthening interagency coordination, expanding targeted enforcement efforts, and strategically deploying resources to areas experiencing the greatest impacts from graffiti and other forms of blight.

The City also continued to invest in long-term physical deterrents through the Clean Gateways Program in FY 2025-2026. The Clean Gateways Program uses a beautification strategy to reduce illegal dumping and graffiti in targeted areas. Landscaping improvements, including the installation of more than 220 drought-tolerant plants, the addition of more than 5,300 cubic yards of mulch and wood chips, 18 community art projects as graffiti deterrents, and decorative boulders, have enhanced key gateway locations at 11 major entrances and corridors to downtown and the neighborhoods east of downtown. BeautifySJ has also strategically installed fencing, signage, and boulders at chronic illegal dumping and graffiti hotspots to create physical barriers that discourage repeat offenses. Together, these improvements represent a proactive, place-based strategy that enhances neighborhood aesthetics while helping prevent blight before it occurs.

Education and Outreach

Education remains a cornerstone of BeautifySJ's blight reduction strategy, equipping residents, youth, property owners, and neighborhood leaders with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to prevent blight before it occurs. Throughout the fiscal year, BeautifySJ delivered education through schools, neighborhood outreach, community engagement, and direct technical assistance to build long-term stewardship, strengthen neighborhood capacity, and foster civic pride.

BeautifySJ focused outreach efforts in neighborhoods experiencing high levels of illegal dumping by identifying areas through hot spot mapping and examining illegal dumping work orders. BeautifySJ increased education through targeted canvassing, door hangers, educational materials, promotion of the City's Junk Pickup Program, and direct resident engagement. Prior to deploying surveillance cameras, staff conducted neighborhood canvassing and "knock-and-talk" outreach to educate residents on legal disposal options, available City services, and how to report illegal dumping and graffiti. Staff also connected residents to City, County, and community resources, providing guidance on services such as mattress collection, bulky item disposal, household hazardous waste disposal, and other programs that help residents maintain clean neighborhoods.

Education also extends to graffiti prevention. BeautifySJ educated residents and property owners on the distinction between graffiti on public and private property, available reporting and abatement resources, and the City's role in responding to each. Property owners received information on best practices for preventing graffiti, available

assistance programs, and the steps they can take to discourage repeat vandalism and maintain their properties.

Through the Neighborhood Engagement Program, staff educated neighborhood leaders and residents on how to build sustainable and effective neighborhood associations. This included coaching on organizational structure, leadership development, volunteer recruitment, meeting facilitation, community organizing, accessing City resources, and building partnerships. By strengthening neighborhood organizations, BeautifySJ helps communities develop the capacity to identify local priorities, advocate for neighborhood improvements, and sustain long-term community-led initiatives.

BeautifySJ also expanded its Environmental Stewardship Program to six elementary schools across five Council Districts, engaging 2,222 students in litter prevention, environmental stewardship, and neighborhood beautification. The program is designed to plant the seeds of community pride, action, and environmental stewardship at an early age by encouraging students to become ambassadors for cleaner neighborhoods both at school and at home. Participating schools included Samuel E. Stipe Elementary (D2), Northwood Elementary (D4), Robert Sanders Elementary (D5), George Shirakawa Elementary (D7), Voices Academy (D7), and Ida Jew Academy (D8). Youth and school leaders committed to being Environmental Stewards by:

- Hosting an on-campus litter cleanup paired with an educational assembly;
- Organizing a community stewardship event, such as an E-Waste Drive, Collection Event, or Dumpster Day;
- Coordinating at least one neighborhood litter cleanup outside of regular school hours to encourage family and community participation.

BeautifySJ prioritized low-cost and no-cost marketing and outreach efforts to maximize available funding for operations while continuing to raise awareness and encourage community engagement. Free outreach included promotion through the City Manager's e-blasts, the City's public events calendar, division webpage updates, social media campaigns, and existing community networks such as City Council district and neighborhood association mailing lists. Updates to the BeautifySJ webpages helped drive 10,281 visits from 8,497 unique visitors. Low-cost outreach included printed outdoor banners, four retractable banners, 100 yard signs, flyers, and A-frame signage to increase visibility and promote community participation.

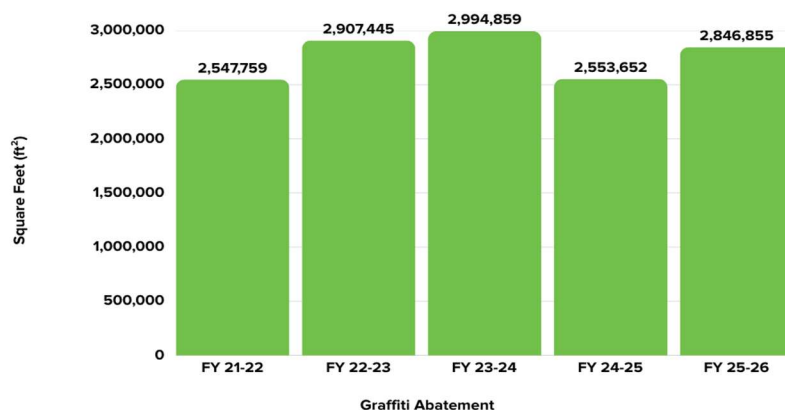
Together, these education initiatives empower residents of all ages to become informed stewards of their neighborhoods, strengthen connections to City services, and build the knowledge and partnerships needed to keep San José's neighborhoods clean, safe, and vibrant.

Eradication

Graffiti Removal Program

The BeautifySJ Neighborhood Blight Reduction program eradicated 2,846,855 square feet of graffiti, an 11% increase from the 2,553,652 square feet eradicated in the previous year (Chart 1).

**Chart 1: Fiscal Year Comparison
of Graffiti Removal Program Performance**



The Neighborhood Graffiti program is designed to respond to graffiti reports submitted via SJ311, by email/phone call and to proactively address graffiti in known hotspot areas. BSJ staff work with the vendor, Graffiti Protective Coatings (GPC) to eradicate graffiti within three business days, with a priority on removing gang-related, offensive, and hate speech graffiti within one business day. Program highlights include:

- 36,016 work orders were completed in FY 2025-2026;
- Approximately 11% more removed than prior year totaling 2,846,855 total square feet of graffiti;
- 93.2% of graffiti removal inquiries were responded to within the target response time of three business days;
- Roughly 429,283 square feet of the graffiti removed involved gang-related, hate, or offensive content versus 442,125 square feet last fiscal year, a 2.9% decrease;
- 32.4% of all graffiti removal requests involved private property and interjurisdictional property, a 3.1% increase compared to the 29.4% of graffiti incidents on private property the previous year, with most incidents impacting small businesses.

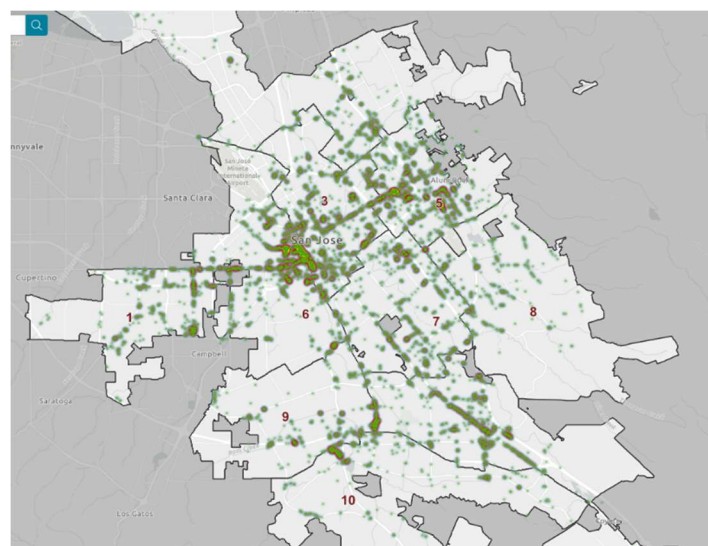
The 11% increase in square feet of graffiti eradicated can be attributed to special projects around Destination 2026 / SJ26 events. BeautifySJ formed a special multi-program team, the Event Readiness Team, to provide targeted support, blight reduction,

encampment management, and beautification efforts ahead of major events including the SuperBowl LX, Nvidia GTC, the NCAA games played at SAP center, the FIFA world cup, and much more. 43,920 square feet of graffiti was eradicated on three trestles over Highway 101, with more than 39,000 additional square feet eradicated on walls and vacant buildings as part SuperBowl LX event preparedness. Increases in graffiti reported and eradicated can also be attributed to pilot efforts to increase proactive graffiti eradication and restoration within parks in Council District 5, increased proactive gang graffiti eradication in targeted neighborhoods, and increased interagency collaboration by working with Union Pacific Railroad to abate 29,845 square feet of graffiti along railway soundwalls in San José.

Despite ongoing education and outreach efforts focused on graffiti prevention, reporting procedures, and best practices for private property owners and businesses, BeautifySJ experienced a 3.1% increase in graffiti reported on private property during the fiscal year. This trend highlighted the need for additional tools to support property owners in addressing graffiti quickly and preventing repeat vandalism.

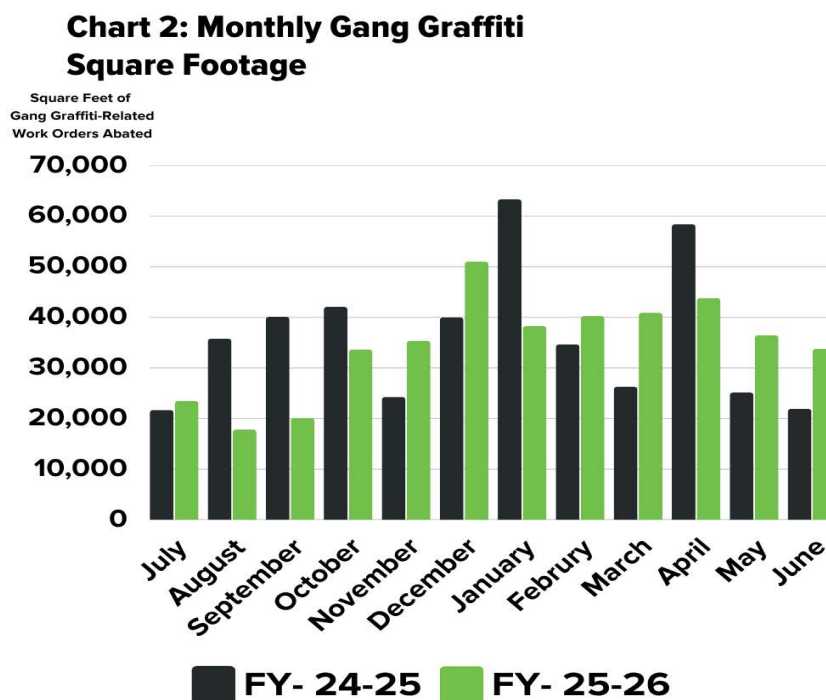
BSJ staff expanded outreach and engagement efforts to better support the 11,036 incidents of graffiti reported on private property in response to the emerging trend of increased graffiti on private and interjurisdictional properties. Staff actively worked with businesses to either encourage timely self-removal or coordinate resources to support abatement when possible, including providing free paint and supplies. Outreach and educational materials were developed to assist private property owners, particularly small businesses, in understanding their responsibilities and equipping them with best practices for graffiti removal, prevention, and reporting. Many small businesses continue to face challenges with recurring graffiti after removal.

Map 1: Heat Map of Graffiti on Private Property – FY 2025-2026



To improve response times and provide an additional service to property owners, Council provided resources and direction to optimize staff resources and provide direction through [MBA#9: Graffiti Eradication on Private Property](#)⁴. BeautifySJ will launch a fee-for-service graffiti removal pilot during the next fiscal year. The pilot will allow eligible private property owners to voluntarily purchase City graffiti removal services, enabling faster abatement while minimizing impacts to the General Fund. The pilot will also evaluate the operational and financial feasibility of expanding graffiti removal options for private property owners and help inform future program recommendations. Map 1 illustrates where graffiti is located on private property via a heatmap.

BeautifySJ also began mining data and evaluating trends around graffiti, with a particular focus on gang graffiti. Current analysis of gang graffiti trends suggest that incidents may fluctuate based on factors such as school breaks, holidays, and weather conditions (Chart 2). Gang graffiti trends downward during prolonged wet weather, for example, but quickly rebounds and spikes once weather conditions allow. Recognizing these trends will allow BeautifySJ to use these patterns to proactively prepare and mobilize staffing, enforcement, and removal efforts during higher-risk periods to improve response times and reduce the visibility of gang graffiti.



⁴ MBA#9: Graffiti Eradication on Private Property :

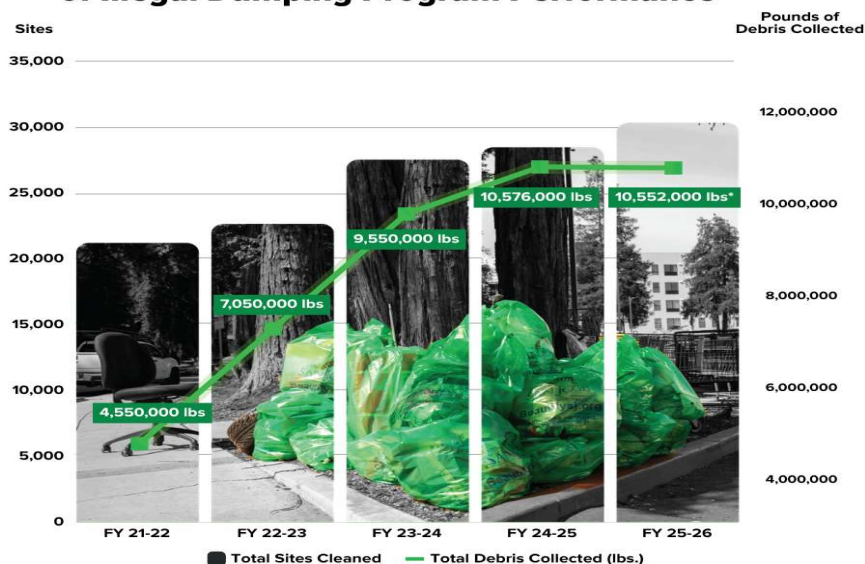
<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/131504/639155925310800000>

Removing And Preventing Illegal Dumping Program (RAPID)

The Removing And Preventing Illegal Dumping RAPID team responds to reports of large, bulky items illegally dumped in public spaces that do not obstruct the public right of way (Priority 2 requests)⁵. BSJ staff responded to 30,217 work orders and removed 10,552,000 pounds of illegal dumping in FY 2025-2026 (Chart 3). The RAPID team was able to maintain an average response time of 2.8 days and successfully met its service goal, responding to 84.4% of work orders within the targeted five-day timeframe.

RAPID responds to illegal dumping reports submitted through the San José 311 platform, as well as incidents identified through proactive “self-discoveries.” The BSJ RAPID team completed 27% of overall illegal dumping incidents through proactive monitoring, which is on par with the efforts from the previous year. While illegal dumping occurs citywide, several hot spot streets and areas consistently experience higher volumes of activity. To address these areas more effectively, the RAPID team collaborates closely with the Neighborhood Association Engagement Program, which engages with active neighborhood associations and community groups. Staff conducted targeted outreach in neighborhoods experiencing high levels of illegal dumping by placing door hangers on nearby residences, raising awareness, promoting the Environmental Services Departments Junk Pickup Program, and encouraging responsible disposal practices.

**Chart 3: Comparison
of Illegal Dumping Program Performance**



⁵ The Department of Transportation addresses Priority 1 requests, which are related to debris in the roadway, that impedes safe travel.

The City Council-approved [Mayor's March Budget Message for Fiscal Year 2026-2027](#)⁶ directed the City Manager to:

- a) Evaluate how Free Junk Pickup and BeautifySJ's illegal dumping response can be better integrated, with a goal of maximizing blight reduction per dollar spent;
- b) Quantify performance gaps by tracking the frequency and root causes of incomplete Free Junk Pickup requests and, if feasible, assess whether these incidents generate calls for service that require BeautifySJ follow up; and
- c) Assess outreach effectiveness in hotspot neighborhoods and propose strategies for aligning the Environmental Services Department (ESD) and BeautifySJ public education and marketing efforts.

[MBA #12: Free Junk Pick-Up and Illegal Dumping](#)⁷, allowed BeautifySJ and the Environmental Services Department to continue to evaluate services related to Free Junk Pickup and the RAPID program. In FY 2025–2026, BeautifySJ and ESD conducted a pilot in select Multi Family Dwelling (MFD) areas to strengthen coordination in locations with persistent illegal dumping.

BeautifySJ also launched a fixed-location Dumpster Day pilot program in FY 2025–2026. The program provides recurring monthly dumpster access at four locations. Program results and metrics are discussed further under the Dumpster Day program section or this report (page 19).

Since 2016, the City has participated in the California Illegally Dumped Mattress Collection Initiative. Through this program, the Mattress Recycling Council allocates \$1 million annually to support the collection and recycling of illegally dumped mattresses, providing participating agencies with reimbursement of up to \$15 per eligible mattress. During the last fiscal year, BeautifySJ collected 9,519 mattresses from city streets and neighborhoods.

Effective January 2026, the Mattress Recycling Council implemented a new reporting platform, Rubbish, an operating system for modern waste management. Under the new requirements, participating agencies must upload a photograph of each collected mattress through the Rubbish portal before reimbursement can be issued. This documentation requirement was introduced after BeautifySJ's existing collection process had been established; not all mattresses collected during the transition period met the new eligibility requirements for reimbursement. BeautifySJ has since updated its collection procedures to align with the new reporting requirements in order to maximize future reimbursement opportunities. Chart 4 shows the mattress funds collected.

⁶ March Budget Message for Fiscal Year 2026-2027
<https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=15304311&GUID=48306C96-6326-4EB3-8AC4-88F31D54A8AE>

⁷ MBA #12: Free Junk Pick-Up and Illegal Dumping :
<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/131572/639143751519770000>

**Chart 4: Fiscal Year Comparison
 of Mattresses/Funds Collected**



Neighborhood Litter Program

In FY 2025-2026, 20,477 residents volunteered 40,252 hours of their time to collect 17,043 bags of trash/debris, removing 596,505 pounds of litter and debris from the community (Chart 5). Volunteer contributions to the City are valued at \$1,454,707.28. These service hours are an extremely valuable contribution, as a volunteer hour is currently valued at \$36.14 per hour⁸.

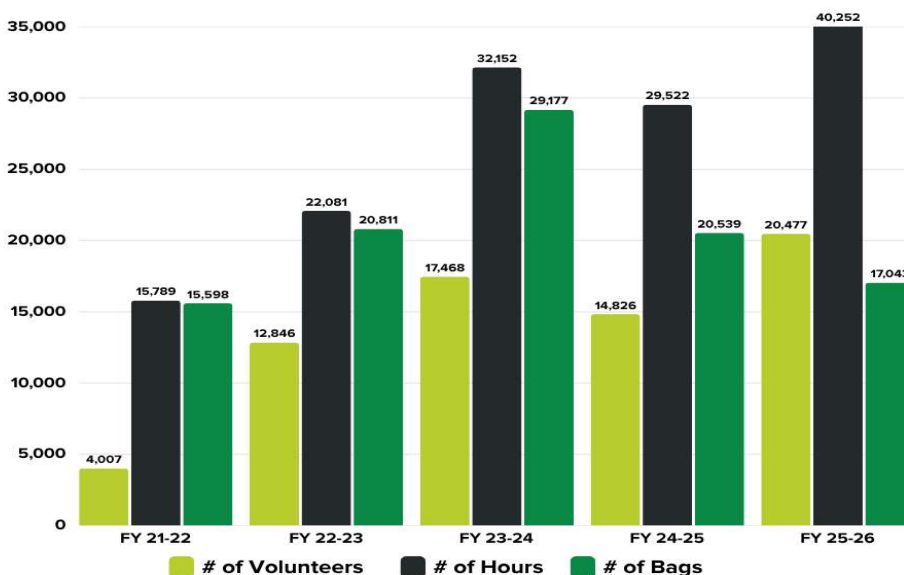
The Neighborhood Litter Program hosts two signature volunteer events each year: the Autumn Litter Harvest in October and the Great American Litter Pick-Up in April in celebration of Earth Day. These events continue to demonstrate exceptional community engagement. In FY 2025–2026, the Autumn Litter Harvest engaged approximately 1,703 volunteers across 35 sites, while the Great American Litter Pick-Up and Earth Day activities engaged 3,116 volunteers at 104 locations throughout San José. Combined, these events attracted the highest volunteer participation and the greatest number of project sites in more than five years.

While volunteer participation continues to increase, the amount of litter collected, as measured by tonnage and bag counts, has continued to decline. BeautifySJ views this as a positive indicator of improving neighborhood conditions. As large-

⁸ Independent Sector – Value of Volunteer Time: <https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>

scale litter and illegal dumping are reduced through sustained blight reduction efforts, volunteer events are increasingly focused on removing smaller debris and maintaining cleaner parks, neighborhoods, and waterways rather than addressing large accumulations of waste. This trend reflects the program's continued progress from large-scale cleanup efforts toward long-term community stewardship and preservation of cleaner public spaces.

**Chart 5: Fiscal Year Comparison
 of Neighborhood Litter Volunteer Efforts**



Neighborhood Beautification Program/Dumpster Day Program

The Dumpster Day Program partners with neighborhood associations and Council Offices to host neighborhood cleanup events that allow residents to properly dispose of unwanted bulky items. There were 165 Dumpster Days events held in FY 2025-2026, an 8% increase from the previous year. Weekday events were added to improve accessibility, especially in areas with higher rates of illegal dumping. This offered residents more opportunities to dispose of unwanted items. Additionally, the program introduced proactive sweeps in participating neighborhoods to collect any remaining debris after each event within the host neighborhood. These efforts resulted in the removal of 2,848,000 pounds (1,424 tons) of additional waste. Chart 6 below illustrates the weight and number of events specifically for the Dumpster Day Program over the past four years.

Chart 6: Fiscal Year Comparison of Neighborhood Dumpster Days



In addition to BeautifySJ's regular Dumpster Day programming, and as directed in the Mayor's March Budget Message for Fiscal Year 2025–2026, approved by the City Council, BeautifySJ established four fixed Dumpster Day pilot sites in key locations throughout the city to help reduce illegal dumping. The pilot sites were located at Seven Trees (District 7), Mayfair Park (District 5), Backesto Park (District 3), and Starbird Park (District 1), providing residents with regularly scheduled disposal opportunities in neighborhoods experiencing higher levels of illegal dumping.

These locations were strategically chosen based on multiple factors, including neighborhoods with lower Healthy Places Index (HPI) scores, high concentrations of illegal dumping service requests, and their accessibility as central locations within the four quadrants of San José. Residents were provided with monthly recurring and convenient disposal opportunities coupled with targeted area outreach that included door-to-door canvassing with information about illegal dumping fines along with the information about where and how people can properly dispose of or recycle unwanted

items and/or debris. The pilot sought to reduce illegal dumping while expanding equitable access to City services.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot, BeautifySJ compared illegal dumping work orders during the five months preceding implementation (September 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026) with the first five months of the pilot (February 1, 2026 – June 30, 2026). The pilot sites experienced an average 38.9% reduction in illegal dumping work orders (Table 3), demonstrating the effectiveness of providing consistent, neighborhood-based disposal opportunities. The program is operated at full capacity based on resources with the pilot ending in June. Program continuation and / or expansion would require additional part-time staffing and operational resources.

Table 3: Fixed Dumpster Day Pilot Results – FY 2025-2026

Neighborhood Area⁹	# of Work Orders (9/1/2025 – 1/31/2026)	# of Work Orders (2/1/2026 – 6/30/2026)	% Change in Illegal Dumping
Seven Trees	104	75	-27.9%
Mayfair	85	23	-72.9%
Backesto	90	64	-28.9%
Starbird	143	106	-25.9%

These early results demonstrate the value of strategically locating fixed Dumpster Day sites in fixed locations as an effective tool for reducing illegal dumping.

Partnerships

Partnerships remain a cornerstone of the strategy to reduce neighborhood blight, improve public spaces, and maximize City resources. Through collaboration with regional agencies, nonprofit organizations, neighborhood groups, and other public partners, BeautifySJ has expanded service delivery, leveraged outside funding, and improved coordination to address illegal dumping, graffiti, encampments, and neighborhood beautification throughout San José.

Key partnership accomplishments during FY 2025–2026 include:

- Caltrans –Executed a Delegated Maintenance Agreement (DMA) covering 13 freeway interchange locations to proactively address illegal dumping, graffiti, litter, and encampment impacts on Caltrans property while receiving reimbursement of up to \$400,000 through June 2027.
- County of Santa Clara – Reimbursed the City more than \$174,000 for trash removal, encampment abatements, and debris cleanup within the County jurisdiction, including expressways and other County-owned properties.

⁹ Illegal dumping work order data was analyzed for the approximate neighborhood area served by each fixed Dumpster Day site and where event-related canvassing and outreach was conducted.

- Lyndale Resiliency Partnership – Secured \$544,850 in Clean California State funding and \$60,000 in-kind work from other agencies for the Lyndale/Capitol Expressway/I-680 Resiliency Project with Caltrans, VTA, Our City Forest, the San José Conservation Corps, and neighborhood stakeholders.
- Continuous Posting Protocol – In partnership with Caltrans, BeautifySJ launched California's first municipal Continuous Posting Protocol pilot integrated with the City's No Encampment Zone and DMA efforts. The pilot covers 22 high-impact freeway interchange areas along Interstate 280, Interstate 680, and Highway 101, focusing on sustained management of encampments, illegal dumping, and graffiti. Early observations indicate noticeable reductions in blight, with a formal evaluation scheduled for late 2026.
- Creek Cleanup Partners – Removed 298,305 pounds of litter while contributing 9,353 volunteer hours with South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition, Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful, and Trash Punx with increased annual funding to \$145,000 for each organization.
- United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County (UNSCC) – Provided \$5,000 in sponsorship funding to support the 2026 Neighborhoods Conference in October 2026, supporting more than 350 neighborhood leaders through leadership training, community engagement, and educational forums. .
- Union Pacific Railroad – Removed approximately 29,845 square feet of graffiti while addressing illegal dumping and encampment impacts along railroad corridors under the existing Memorandum of Understanding. .
- Valley Transportation Authority – Coordinated 15 outreach efforts and collaborated on 23 different projects, particularly in preparation for Destination 2026/SJ26 events, eradicating 2,826 square feet of graffiti on VTA property, improving communication, project prioritization, and response times BeautifySJ strengthened coordination with VTA to address blight and homelessness on adjacent properties.

These partnerships significantly expanded BeautifySJ's capacity and were instrumental in supporting the City's Destination 2026/SJ26 Event Readiness efforts, enabling coordinated blight reduction, gateway beautification, and public space improvements that helped prepare San José to welcome residents and visitors during a historic year of world-class events.

Engagement

Nearly ten years of work around blight reduction has led to the recognition that engagement is a critical tool for combating neighborhood blight. Local participation at the neighborhood, business and local partner level ensures that the original three 'E' areas of emphasis – Enforcement, Education, and Eradication – can be amplified and better sustained through Engagement. The fourth 'E' promotes effective, resident and business driven revitalization that reflects real-world needs and builds further trust in local government.

Following the sunset of the Neighborhoods Commission in 2024, BeautifySJ launched the initial phase of the Neighborhood Association Engagement Model, a new framework designed to strengthen community connections, increase civic participation, and build neighborhood capacity. The Neighborhood Association Engagement Model consists of three pillars: the Foundational Model (Neighborhood Association Forums), the Expanded Model (Neighborhood Engagement Team), and a proposed future phase that includes a Neighborhood Services Advisory Group.

In FY 2025–2026, the Neighborhood Engagement Program advanced the Foundational Model by strengthening neighborhood leadership, increasing resident capacity, and fostering stronger partnerships between neighborhoods and City departments. Quarterly Neighborhood Association Forums remain a cornerstone of this effort, providing neighborhood leaders with opportunities to learn about City initiatives, exchange best practices, discuss quality-of-life issues, and strengthen two-way communication with City staff.

To further expand leadership development, the program launched a new monthly Neighborhood Leadership Workshop Series focused on increasing the capacity of neighborhood associations while improving awareness of City services and resources. The workshops also fostered collaboration among neighborhood leaders by providing opportunities to learn directly from City staff and subject matter experts. Topics included Neighborhood Association 101, the City Budget and Civic Engagement, BeautifySJ Grant Reporting, coordinating Litter Pickups and Dumpster Days, National Night Out Planning, and Planning, Building and Code Enforcement. The series averaged more than 51 participants per session, demonstrating strong interest in ongoing leadership development and civic engagement.

The Neighborhood Engagement Team also continued to provide individualized support to neighborhood organizations. During FY 2025–2026, the team completed the association development of nine Project Hope neighborhoods and graduating them into fully developed associations. The team has partnered with 72 neighborhood associations and community groups, providing coaching, mentoring, organizational development, and capacity-building assistance to strengthen neighborhood leadership and improve organizational effectiveness. In addition, the team supported the formation of two new neighborhood associations, expanding opportunities for resident participation and community collaboration. The Neighborhood Engagement Team expanded the capacity of neighborhoods, connected people to resources and each other and activated residents in neighborhoods.

These efforts culminated in the third annual citywide Neighborhoods Conference, held in October 2025 at City Hall. The conference attracted a record 350 neighborhood leaders, residents, City staff, community partners, and stakeholders, making it the largest conference to date. The event celebrated neighborhood accomplishments, showcased City resources, and offered valuable networking and educational opportunities. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, reaffirming the

conference's role as a key opportunity to strengthen partnerships, build neighborhood capacity and civic pride, and empower residents to improve their communities.

BeautifySJ Grants to support Neighborhood Engagement

The BeautifySJ Grant Program provides grants of up to \$5,000 to neighborhood associations, emerging neighborhood groups, property owner/tenant associations, district leadership groups, and community partner groups. The original grant program was launched in 2017 to bring volunteers together, activate neighborhoods, and reclaim public spaces. Through this program, residents and community partners are able to lead projects that strengthen neighborhood pride, support beautification, and build community connection.

The BeautifySJ Neighborhood Grant Cycle 7 ran from April 1, 2025, through March 31, 2026. The program budget totaled \$423,309, including \$250,000 from the operating budget and an additional \$173,309 shifted into the program during the year from savings and program funding. Of this total, \$388,357 was awarded in grants to 93 groups. While 96 groups were initially awarded funding, 93 accepted awards, representing 92% of the 101 groups that applied. The remaining \$34,952 supported UNSCC's fiscal intermediary and technical assistance services. Cycle 7 grantees completed a wide range of community-led activities, including neighborhood clean-ups, dumpster days, National Night Out events, and other community celebrations.

Cycle 8 awards were announced in February 2026 for the grant cycle beginning April 1, 2026. With \$256,000 in grant funds available, 62 of the 98 applicants received funding, representing 63% of applicants. This was the first cycle since the program's relaunch in 2017 that demand for BeautifySJ Grant funds significantly exceeded available funding.

Looking ahead to Cycle 9, \$300,000 has been allocated in the FY 2026-2027 operating budget. Given that more than 160 neighborhood organizations are currently registered with the City, with new groups continuing to form, demand for grant funds is expected to again exceed available funding.

Emerging Challenges

Several emerging challenges will require continued attention. Fleet procurement remains one of the most significant operational constraints to full optimization. Specialized collection vehicles, including compactors and high-capacity Hino trucks often require two to three years from procurement to delivery, limiting the program's ability to quickly adapt fleet resources to changing operational demands. BeautifySJ continues working closely with Fleet and Public Works to accelerate procurement where possible and utilize interim rental vehicles; however, supply chain and manufacturing timelines remain a long-term challenge.

Another emerging challenge is the increasing concentration of illegal dumping, graffiti, and encampments on private property. The success of the City's No Encampment Zones, Santa Clara Valley Water District's Water Resource Protection Zones, and Caltrans' Continuous Posting Protocol has significantly improved conditions within targeted public spaces. However, staff have observed a corresponding increase in blight and encampment activity shifting onto adjacent private properties. The City generally lacks authority to remove blight from private property, leading to the need for greater coordination with property owners, Code Enforcement, the San José Police Department, and other partners. BeautifySJ began tracking these requests in Spring 2026 to better understand the trend, evaluate resource impacts, and identify policy and operational strategies that will support private property owners while preserving the City's progress in reducing neighborhood blight.

Conclusion

BeautifySJ's FY 2025–2026 accomplishments demonstrate that a comprehensive and coordinated approach to neighborhood blight reduction can produce meaningful and measurable results. BeautifySJ:

- Removed 23.6 million pounds of trash, 14 million of which were removed through blight reduction efforts
- Eradicated 2.8 million square feet of graffiti
- Referred 568 illegal dumping cases to Code Enforcement, a 580% increase from prior year
- Decreased illegal dumping in some areas by as much as 34% through use of cameras, fixed dumpster locations, enforcement and outreach
- Worked with SJPd to conduct 15 graffiti vandalism arrests
- Expanded partnerships totaling \$923,850
- Engaged volunteers to contribute 40,252 services hours
- Maintained 9 gateways and 2 corridors
- Restored gateways with 220+ plants; mulch and more than 5,300 cubic yards of mulch and wood chips

Through the combined efforts of enforcement, education, eradication, and engagement, the program continued to improve the cleanliness, safety, and appearance of neighborhoods throughout San José. Reductions in overall trash and debris tonnage, decreases in encampment-related trash and debris, increased graffiti eradication, and improved resident satisfaction all indicate that the City's investments in blight reduction are generating positive outcomes for the community. Although challenges remain, particularly regarding resource demands, private property graffiti, and monitoring expanded No Encampment Zones, the data suggests that early intervention, clear expectations, and consistent enforcement are helping to reduce the overall scale and impact of encampments across the city. As BeautifySJ approaches its tenth anniversary, the program is well-positioned to build upon a decade of progress and innovation. Continued optimization of resources, investment in technology, expansion of

community partnerships, and emphasis on engagement will strengthen San José's ability to prevent blight before it occurs and preserve the gains already achieved. By fostering collaboration between residents, businesses, community organizations, and government agencies, BeautifySJ can continue advancing its vision of cleaner, safer, and more vibrant neighborhoods that enhance quality of life for all who live, work, and visit San José.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

BeautifySJ will provide key program updates through the Focus Area reporting at the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee and City Council.

COORDINATION

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

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Agenda website for the August 13, 2026 Neighborhood Services and Education Committee meeting.

BOARD, COMMISSION, COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT

No board, commission, or committee recommendation or input is associated with this action.

CEQA

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

PUBLIC SUBSIDY REPORTING

This item does not include a public subsidy as defined in section 53083 or 53083.1 of the California Government Code or the City's Open Government Resolution.

July 27, 2026

Subject: BeautifySJ Neighborhood Blight Reduction Status Report

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/s/

Jon Cicirelli

Director of Parks, Recreation and
Neighborhood Services

For questions, please contact Olympia Williams, Deputy Director, Community Services Division of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services, at Olympia.williams@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 794-6867.

The principal author of this memorandum is Paul Pereira, BeautifySJ Division Manager, in the Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department. For questions, please contact Paul.pereira@sanjoseca.gov

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: BeautifySJ Encampment Management

Attachment B: BeautifySJ Organizational Chart

ATTACHMENT A

BeautifySJ Encampment Management

This year's Annual Neighborhood Blight Reduction Report includes BeautifySJ's Encampment Management Program information to provide a more comprehensive picture of the City's Cleaning Up Our Neighborhoods Focus Area and responds to City Council's direction during last year's annual report discussion.

Originally established during the COVID-19 pandemic to improve sanitation and reduce the spread of disease, the Encampment Management Program has evolved into a comprehensive operational model for managing encampments while protecting neighborhoods and the environment. During FY 2025–2026, BeautifySJ removed 9.6 million pounds of trash and debris from encampments, a 5.51% decrease from the 10.1 million pounds removed the previous fiscal year. At the same time, encampment abatements increased 133.24%, with 2,470 abatements compared to 1,059 the previous year. (Table 4) Although more abatements were completed, staff observed that the average size of encampments and the amount of debris removed continued to decline, indicating that encampments are generally being addressed earlier and remaining smaller through consistent monitoring, education, and enforcement of the Good Neighbor Guidelines.

Table 4 – BeautifySJ Encampment Management Services FY25-26

	2024-2025	2025-2026	Change
Total Debris/trash collected (pounds)	10,127,000	9,568,800	-5.51%
Total Abatements Overall	1,059	2,470	+133.24%
Total Abatements in No Encampment Zones	119	607	+410.08%
Total Trash collections at encampments	7,248	7,466	+3.01%
Total Biowaste Services Provided (RVP3)	2,606	2,676	+2.69%
Total Biowaste Removed (pounds)	521,210	663,089	+27.22%
Total Engagements (Therapeutic Services Engagement)	645	857	+32.87%

BeautifySJ's Encampment Management Program plays a critical role in balancing the City's commitment to maintaining safe, clean public spaces while treating people experiencing homelessness with dignity and respect. The program administers and

enforces the City Council-adopted Good Neighbor Guidelines/Code of Conduct, which establish expectations that help reduce impacts on neighborhoods while connecting unsheltered residents with available services. Staff routinely educates residents living in encampments about the guidelines, enrolls eligible encampments in weekly trash collection services, and coordinates closely with Housing Outreach teams before any large abatements occur to ensure individuals receive information about available shelter, housing, and supportive services.

The Good Neighbor Guidelines/Code of Conduct establish expectations that encampments:

- Remain within a 12-foot by 12-foot by 10-foot footprint, or within a lived-in vehicle.
- Do not block sidewalks, trails, or other public rights-of-way.
- Participate in weekly trash collection.
- Properly contain and store biohazardous waste.
- Accept offers of shelter or housing when available.

BeautifySJ posts the Good Neighbor Guidelines in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese at known encampments and lived-in vehicles at least every six months as part of its regular monitoring process, with additional postings provided when new encampments are identified. Staff document all outreach and notifications through a centralized tracking system that supports coordination with the San José Police Department's Neighborhood Quality of Life Team and other partner departments.

To preserve these gains, BeautifySJ continues to implement the City's No Encampment Zone program (NEZ). Established in 2024, NEZs designate sensitive public areas, including waterways protected under stormwater permit requirements and locations adjacent to Emergency Interim Housing sites where encampments are prohibited. Once permanently signed, these areas allow the City to remove encampments immediately without a 72-hour notice. BeautifySJ monitors NEZs in partnership with the San José Police Department's Neighborhood Quality of Life Team to protect public health, improve environmental conditions, and preserve safe access to parks, trails, and other public spaces. The tables below provide information on No Encampment Zones and BeautifySJ Encampment Management Services.

Table 5 - No Encampment Zones - Creek and River Segments (miles) FY25-26

	Current NEZ	Upcoming NEZ	Total NEZ
Guadalupe River NEZ	9.82	0	9.82
Coyote Creek NEZ	14.77	2.44	17.21
Penitencia Creek NEZ	1.96	0	1.96
Silver Creek NEZ	0.88	0	0.88
Los Gatos Creek NEZ	0.26	0	0.26
Yerba Buena/Thompson Creek	2.3	0	2.3
Total	29.99	2.44	32.43

Table 6 - No Encampment Zones - Emergency Interim Housing locations FY25-26

1.	Felipe Emergency Interim Housing (EIH)	7.	Rue Ferrari EIH
2.	Mabury EIH	8.	Guadalupe EIH
3.	Evans Lane EIH	9.	Santa Teresa Safe Parking
4.	Branham/Monterey EIH	10.	Taylor Street Navigation Center
5.	Bernal EIH	11.	Great Oaks Blvd and Endicott*
6.	Via Del Oro EIH		

**Area added as part of Council Direction*

ATTACHMENT B

BeautifySJ Organizational Chart

