



Memorandum

TO: TRANSPORTATION AND
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: John Ristow

SUBJECT: Parking Enforcement
Status Report

DATE: November 10, 2025

Approved

Date:

11/13/2025

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report on parking enforcement related to vehicle concerns and service improvements that enhance prioritized outcomes and resident satisfaction.

BACKGROUND

Operating 24/7 across San José, the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Parking Compliance Unit (PCU) works to ensure safe, equitable, and efficient use of public right-of-way by enforcing state and local parking laws. The PCU works to strike a balance between enforcing parking regulations and achieving compliance through education and warnings. This includes informing residents and visitors of applicable parking regulations and providing an opportunity to comply, such as by paying a meter or relocating their vehicle before a citation is issued.

Parking and Traffic Control Officers (PTCOs) conduct regular proactive citywide patrols to address parking challenges and roadway safety through the enforcement of parking regulations such as red curbs, blocked crosswalks, access ramps and bike lanes, overnight restrictions, residential permit zones, and posted street sweeping zones and metered parking. PTCOs also support the City's pavement maintenance program by coordinating and enforcing temporary tow zones to clear streets ahead of paving operations. The team investigates abandoned vehicles, responds to San José 311 service requests, conducts school safety patrols, and provides traffic control for special events across the city. PCU operations expanded with the recent stand-up of the Oversized and Lived-In Vehicle Enforcement program in the third quarter (Q) of Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 and the Expired Registration Enforcement program in Q1 of FY 2025-2026.

In FY 2024-2025, the Parking Compliance Unit was budgeted to deploy 48.5 FTE PTCOs. With the full deployment of the Expired Registration and the anticipated Oversized Lived-in Vehicle Enforcement Supplemental program budgeted for January 2026, the PCU will see an increase in FTE to 55.5.

As shown in Figure 1, at the current staffing level, San José's PCU is the most understaffed comprehensive parking enforcement team among Bay Area cities when adjusted for municipal land area. This staffing level restricts the PCU's ability to deliver on-demand, frequent, extensive enforcement and citywide services.

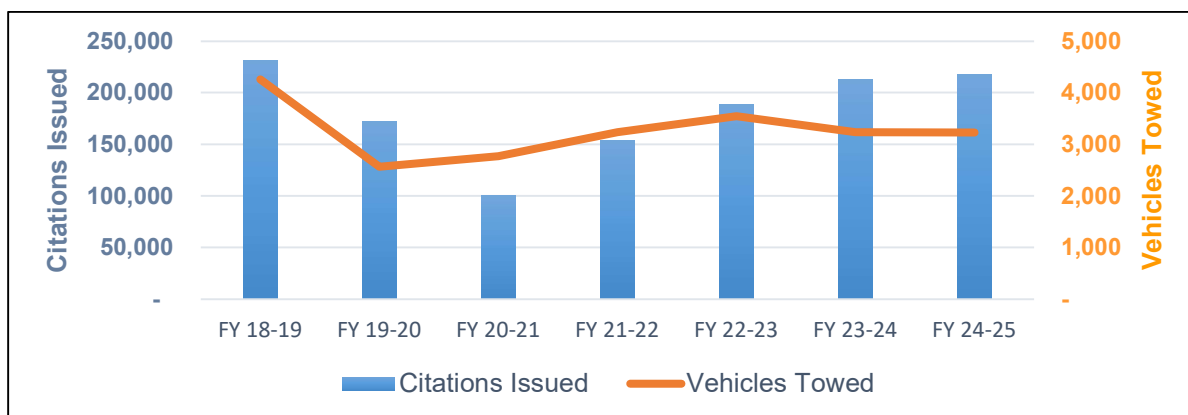
Figure 1: Parking Enforcement Staffing Benchmarking

City	City Size (Sq. Miles)	Parking Officers (Budgeted FTE)	Officers per Square Mile
San José	178	48.5*	0.27*
San Francisco	47	344	7.32
Berkeley	11	22	2.00
Oakland	56	70	1.25

*PTCO FTEs will increase to 55.5 in January 2026, resulting in the Officers per Square Mile to increase to 0.31

The PCU staffing deployment is structured around two primary operational objectives: (1) safety and illegal parking enforcement and (2) vehicle abatement and tow enforcement. Additional details on the breakdown of the teams delivering these objectives are outlined in Attachment A - Parking Enforcement Service Delivery Detail Overview. Figure 2 below highlights the total number of citations issued and vehicles towed by PCU teams between FY 2018-2019 and FY 2024-2025.

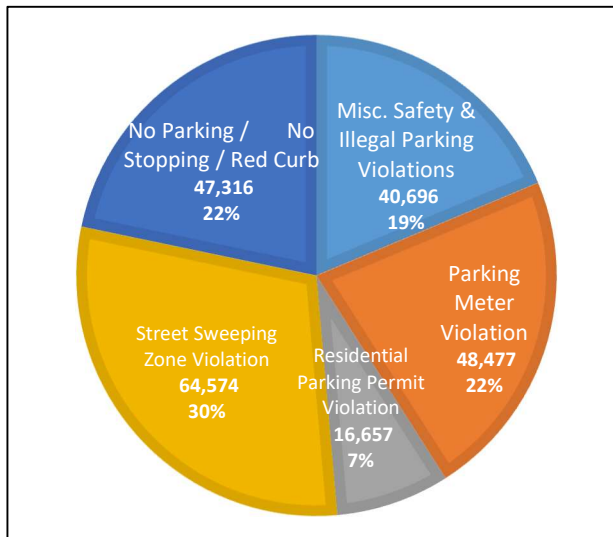
Figure 2: FY 2018-2019 to FY 2024-2025 Citations Issued & Vehicles Towed



A total of 217,720 citations were issued and 3,227 vehicles towed in FY 2024-2025. Both enforcement outcomes have seen incremental increases since the lows seen in

FY 2019-2020 and FY 2020-2021 due to the COVID-related shutdowns and reassignment of PCU staff to non-enforcement duties. Figure 3 highlights the 217,720 citations issued in FY 2024-2025 across five major parking violation categories, including general safety and illegal parking (19%), parking meter (22%), residential permit (7%), street sweeping (30%), and various no parking/stopping violations (22%).

Figure 3: FY 24-25 Parking Citation Issuance



Additionally, in FY 2024-2025, the PCU received over 32,000 public vehicle concerns service requests through San José 311, including requests related to potential abandoned vehicles, vehicles parked for extended periods of time, and general illegal parking concerns. PCU proactive vehicle abatement patrols identified an additional 7,400 potential abandoned vehicles for investigation. While the Abandoned Vehicle program resulted in the towing of 2,265 vehicles, including both proactive and reactive efforts, for a tow rate of 19%, the Extended Parking Stay (EPS) Enforcement program resulted in the towing of only 46 vehicles, for a tow rate of 0.23%. Due to the EPS program's minimal enforcement outcomes, the program was identified during the FY 2025-2026 budget process to be phased out, allowing for resources to be reallocated to a more impactful service delivery, the new Expired Registration Enforcement program.

FY 2024-2025 also saw the launch of the new Oversized and Lived-In Vehicle Enforcement (OLIVE) program, focused on addressing the areas of the city most impacted by the congregation of lived-in vehicles. The first OLIVE field enforcement effort took place in January 2025.

ANALYSIS

The strategic direction of DOT parking services is to provide layered services that, through consistent and equitable distribution throughout the City, address issues much more efficiently and effectively than solely relying on a reactive reporting system such as SJ 311. A proactive model allowed for rapid reassignment of staffing responsible for lower performing programs, such as the enforcement of time-limited parking (2.0 FTE) and the Extended Parking Stay (EPS) program (1.0 FTE), to the dedicated enforcement of expired registration, as further outlined below. Figure 4 below highlights the deployment of the FY 2025-2026 budgeted 55.5 FTE PTCO positions.

Figure 4: FY 2025-2026 Parking Compliance Unit Service Deliveries

PARKING COMPLIANCE UNIT - SERVICE DELIVERY TEAMS

11 Service Delivery Teams		55.5 FTE	Core Functions: Citations, Towing, Safety, and Vehicle Abatement	
Parking Enforcement Program		Staffing (FTE) Staffed / Budget	Primary Enforcement Mechanism	Program Operations & Outcomes
Safety & Illegal Parking Enforcement	Proactive Citywide Parking Patrol	13	Citation	Patrol every city street every 14 days • Safety, street sweeping, school patrols, bike lanes
	Evening & Overnight Parking Patrol	6	Citation	Evening & Overnight Citywide Patrol • Overnight Restrictions and General Enforcement
	Downtown & Meter District Parking Enforcement	6.0 / 8.5	Citation	Patrol of Greater Downtown and Meter Districts • Meter, Freight/Passenger Loading, and Safety Enforcement
	Residential Parking Permit (RPP) Enforcement	2	Citation	Patrol of Residential Permit Zones • RPP Enforcement across 22 zones using ALPR
	Expired Registration Enforcement * + 3 FTE effective January 2026	3 / 6	Citation/Towing	Patrol Every City Street • Citation for expiration between 6-months and 1-year • Towing for expiration > 1-year
	Request for Service / Event / Construction – Tow Support	2	Cite / Towing	Responsive to Customer Requests • Blocked Driveways • Tow Permits (Events/Construction)
Vehicle Abatement & Tow Enforcement	Proactive Vehicle Abatement	7	Towing	Patrol every city street every 14 days • Identify and investigate abandoned vehicles
	Reactive Vehicle Abatement (SJ311)	1	Towing	Investigate SJ311 Vehicle Concerns • Vehicle Abatement * Supplemented by 2.0 FTE Contract Staff
	DOT Pavement Maintenance Support	4	Towing	Provide tow support within temporary tow-away zones facilitating pavement maintenance
	Oversized & Lived-In Vehicle Enforcement (OLIVE)	2	Towing	Conduct citywide inventories, establish and enforce temporary tow-away zones, coordinate zone clean-up
	OLIVE Supplemental Enforcement * Program launches January 2026	0 / 4	Towing	Citywide 72-hour parking investigation of lived-in vehicles identified during OLIVE program inventories

55.5 FTE includes 7.0 new FTE and 3.0 FTE reassigned from Timed Parking and EPS enforcement (FY25-26 MBA#4)

Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Parking Enforcement Enhancement Programs

In response to the Mayor’s March Budget Message and as part of the FY 2025-2026 budget process, DOT proposed a suite of parking enforcement enhancement programs aimed at strengthening the City’s ability to address the impacts of lived-in vehicles

parked on San José streets. The core of the proposals outlined in the City Manager's Budget Addendum #4-Parking Enforcement Enhancements¹ are:

- Expired Registration Enforcement Program
- OLIVE Supportive Enforcement Program (OSEP).
- Street Sweeping Tow Pilot
- Vehicle Buyback Program

In addition to the three FTE shift mentioned above, new funding for additional PTCOs was made available for DOT to develop these new programs. With the sunset of the EPS program effective July 2025, staff updated the San José 311 Vehicle Concerns intake process, triage engine, and customer-facing messaging. DOT worked with the Information Technology Department to update both the backend system and public messaging, informing customers that the City has shifted resources to more impactful parking enforcement efforts. While EPS service requests can still be submitted, customers are advised that vehicles reported for being parked in the same location for an extended period are no longer investigated, and that submitted information may be used to help identify areas with parking turnover concerns. EPS service requests are now closed automatically, with follow-up notifications explaining the change.

Additionally, at the time of the transition approximately 3,400 open EPS service requests were manually closed out in coordinated batches to monitor and maintain system stability and manage potential increases in call volumes to the Customer Contact Center. This process was completed in September of 2025.

Expired Registration Enforcement Program

Under the California Vehicle Code, enforcement agencies are authorized to issue parking citations or initiate an immediate tow for vehicles with registration expired longer than six months. An analysis of 2022-2023 California Department of Motor Vehicles data revealed at least 4,200 vehicles registered to San José zip codes that had registrations lapsed by more than six months. They were verified as being actively parked on city streets, including oversized and lived-in vehicles. The OLIVE program vehicle inventory in August-October 2024 identified over 2,000 oversized or presumed lived-in vehicles, with approximately 36% displaying expired registration or unverifiable registration. To address the identified challenge of expired vehicle registration, DOT proposed the establishment of a new dedicated team of six PTCOs to focus on patrolling every city street, identifying, verifying, and enforcing expired registration.

¹ [2025-2026 City Manager's Budget Addenda #4 :](https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/121484/638824039396130000)
<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/121484/638824039396130000>

During the initial launch of the program, to effectively manage the anticipated high volume of work and provide grace to vehicle owners, DOT has focused first on:

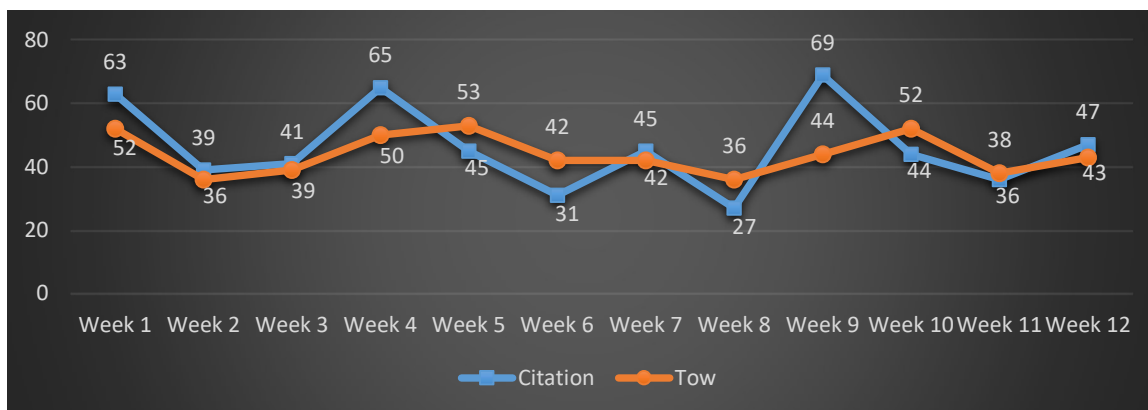
- Towing vehicles with registration expired for more than one year; and
- Citing vehicles with registration expired for six months up to one year

Throughout July and into mid-August, DOT made initial patrols across the city, issuing warnings to notify drivers of impending enforcement and details on how to avoid potential citation or towing. During this initial warning phase, PTCOs issued approximately 3,000 warning notices. DOT also led a communications campaign throughout July and early August which included a news release, distribution of multilingual flyers (Attachment B), and articles and interviews from local news outlets including San José Spotlight, ABC7 news, Telemundo, and Univision.

Effective August 18, 2025, the Expired Registration Enforcement team began citation and tow enforcement operations. The team employs a proactive, citywide patrol model in which PTCOs identify vehicles with potentially expired registration and verify registration status with DMV records. When lived-in vehicles with confirmed expired registration are encountered and tow enforcement is deemed appropriate, the team coordinates with SJPd to ensure the vehicle is vacated prior to removal, which can extend the enforcement timeline. While this process can be time-intensive, the proactive patrol approach supports equitable and consistent enforcement across the city.

Initial enforcement efforts have been focused in areas near previous OLIVE, emergency interim housing, and supportive parking sites as well as no-encampment zones. Figure 5 below shows the enforcement outcomes through the initial 12 weeks (ending November 8, 2025) of enforcement activity. During this time, the team has patrolled roughly 30% of the city, issued 552 citations and towed 527 vehicles.

Figure 5: Expired Registration Enforcement Outcomes (August 18, 2025 – November 1, 2025)



The Expired Registration Enforcement team is budgeted to be fully funded effective January 2026. This will allow DOT to hire three additional PTCOs to join the team, for a total of 6.0 FTE. The additional staffing is expected to allow for an increased patrol frequency and enforcement outcomes. It is anticipated that the full team could issue over 1,500 citations and tow 1,500 vehicles by the end of FY 2025-2026.

Oversized & Lived-In Vehicle Enforcement (OLIVE) Program

The OLIVE program is designed to identify areas impacted by oversized and lived-in vehicles, facilitate the clean-up of the most impacted areas and encourage vehicle circulation to help mitigate the potential environmental and safety impacts posed by oversized and lived-in vehicles parked for extended periods of time on city streets.

Staffed with 3.0 FTE (one Senior PTCO and two PTCOs), the OLIVE program conducts biannual citywide inventories of oversized and presumed lived-in vehicles parked on city streets. Up to 50 sites are identified each year where temporary tow-away zones are established for a period of approximately one month to help facilitate the clean-up and street sweeping of the area and encourage the movement of vehicles out of the restricted zone. Vehicles that are not voluntarily moved out of the tow-away zones are subject to tow.

Throughout the first half of FY 2024-2025, DOT hired staff and stood up the new program. The team conducted a citywide inventory and in January 2025 submitted an information memorandum² to City Council that identified the initial OLIVE sites to be completed by June 2025. The first site, Chynoweth Avenue, was established in January 2025 and by the end of June 2025, the OLIVE team completed work at 34 sites throughout the city.

Across the 34 OLIVE sites completed in FY 2024-2025, a total of 256 recreational vehicles (RVs) or trailers were initially identified within the temporary tow-away zones. During the initiation of each OLIVE site, teams post temporary tow-away signage, inventory all vehicles parked within the zone, distribute multi-language (Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese) OLIVE program flyers (Attachment C), and distribute outreach information provided by the Housing Department.

Of the 256 RVs or trailers identified in 34 OLIVE zones, 18 were towed for violating the temporary tow-away zone restrictions. The remaining 238 RVs and trailers complied by leaving the zones, some relocated just outside the zone or down the street, and others to different areas of the city or potentially outside the city. To provide program information and status updates, DOT launched the OLIVE dashboard³ in July 2025,

² [Oversized and Lived-In Vehicle Enforcement Program Info Memo \(January 6, 2025\) :](https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/117022)
<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/117022>

³ [OLIVE Program Website and Dashboard :](https://csj.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/portfolio/index.html?appid=b44b50f968b94695a3d5530b3b365121)
<https://csj.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/portfolio/index.html?appid=b44b50f968b94695a3d5530b3b365121>

which outlines site locations, program process and timelines, and enforcement outcomes.

DOT, Housing, and BeautifySJ teams have successfully coordinated voluntary relocations of lived-in vehicles to supportive-parking sites, such as Berryessa and Santa Teresa, when space is available. These outcomes highlight the need for additional parking options for these vehicles; without them, ongoing circulation of vehicles is expected to continue, as observed during the early stages of the OLIVE program.

With initial FY 2024–2025 OLIVE operations and post-enforcement site monitoring complete, DOT is now shifting to evaluate areas for potential permanent parking restrictions.

DOT's Neighborhood Traffic Management engineers are evaluating if site conditions support the installation of any of the following parking restrictions:

- **No Oversized Vehicle Parking – Tow Away:** Requires specific identification of the existence of safety hazards for vehicles, bicyclists, and/or pedestrians when oversized vehicles are parked. Applies to vehicles 6 feet high or 7 feet wide.
- **No Overnight Parking – Tow Away:** Applies to all vehicles and presents enforcement challenges during overnight (10 p.m.-6 a.m.) hours.
- **No Parking Anytime:** Applies to all vehicles, with citation as the only enforcement option.

DOT anticipates completing evaluations and recommendations for any necessary ordinances and municipal code amendments in Q3 FY 25-26, and any permanent signage installations in Q4 FY 25-26.

OLIVE Supplemental Enforcement Program (OSEP)

Recognizing that the current OLIVE model is focused on only addressing the most impactful and complex locations, DOT committed to initiating an OLIVE Supportive Enforcement Program (OSEP) to complement the existing OLIVE program and to broaden the City's efforts to address impacts from lived-in vehicles parked on city streets. This new initiative will address additional sites that fall outside the 50 OLIVE program locations identified during the biannual vehicle inventory.

To support this service delivery expansion, four new PTCO positions will be added to the PCU, effective January 2026. DOT is finalizing the program's standard operating procedures, which, for safety, will have officers organized into two-person teams. The two OSEP teams will investigate lived-in vehicles at lower-priority OLIVE inventoried locations and may respond to hotspot areas identified through data analysis of San José 311 community reports. It is estimated that these teams will have the capacity to investigate 1,500 to 2,000 vehicles annually. They will use 72-hour parking restrictions

as the enforcement mechanism, placing warning notices on vehicles, rather than directly engaging with vehicle owners.

Based on historical enforcement data, DOT anticipates that the tow rate within the OSEP program will be low (under 1%), and most investigations are predicted to result in vehicle circulation over varying distances, rather than towing. In instances where tow-eligible vehicles are physically occupied, DOT will need to coordinate with SJPD to ensure the vehicle is safely vacated prior to removal. OSEP enforcement will not include the coordinated site cleanup or street sweeping efforts that are part of the existing OLIVE program.

Street Sweeping Temporary Tow Zone Pilot

DOT manages approximately 67,000 curb miles of street sweeping annually, of which about 13% (546 miles) are permanently signed with parking restrictions and enforced by the PCU. In FY 2024–2025, PTCOs issued roughly 65,000 citations in these zones.

Currently, signed street sweeping zones are enforced through parking citations only. Establishing tow-away authority would require San José Municipal Code amendments, additional PCU staffing, expanded towing vendor capacity, potential increases to the scope of work of existing sweeping vendor contracts, and increased inspection and landscape staff, all of which would require new funding and could reduce General Fund parking citation revenue.

Temporary tow-away zones require fewer resources and have been shown to increase voluntary compliance. As outlined in City Manager's Budget Addendum #4, DOT is developing a temporary tow-away zone pilot program in two existing signed street sweep areas that experience lower levels of compliance. This approach would allow the City to assess the impact of heavier enforcement actions on parking behavior and sweep effectiveness in two existing restricted areas. The pilot will use existing street sweep enforcement resources, supplemented by staff on overtime. The overtime staffing model is sufficient to obtain proof of concept but is not a sustainable or scalable model long-term. DOT staff will identify two existing sign-restricted street sweeping areas of suitable size and with lower levels of compliance for implementation during Q3 and/or Q4 of FY 2025-2026.

Vehicle Buyback Program

In alignment with the Mayor's March Budget Message for FY 2025-2026, the OLIVE program budget included \$100,000 in FY 2024-2025 and \$200,000 in FY 2025-2026 to allow for lien sale purchasing of RVs after they are towed, attempting to reduce the inventory of dilapidated lived-in vehicles returning to city streets.

In FY 2024-2025, DOT had discussions with the City Attorney's Office to understand options and obstacles to buying lien sale RVs. Additionally, DOT interviewed several tow operators to understand the post-tow process, outcomes, and opportunities to purchase these vehicles. In September 2025, City Council adopted a resolution to authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute the 2nd amendment to the City's tow administrator services contract. The contract amendment established a \$3,200 fee to be paid by the City for the disposal/dismantling of lived-in RVs and trailers when they are not recovered within 15 days of being towed. This will now serve as the City's vehicle buyback program, with citywide total funding in FY 2025-2026 to facilitate the removal of up to 260 dilapidated RVs/trailers from circulation.

Additionally, through the OLIVE program, DOT provided \$50,000 in one-time funding to partially fund a vehicle buyback program (totaling \$160,000) piloted during the Columbus Park abatement and cleanup efforts. The Housing Department provided \$2,000 gift cards to anyone willing to relinquish their RV or trailer and accept placement into one of the available temporary housing options. During this effort, Housing released a total of 69 gift cards totaling \$138,000 to "buy" 69 vehicles. These vehicles were then dismantled, ensuring they did not return to occupy space on San José streets in the future.

Next Steps

As DOT progresses through the remainder of FY 2025–2026, core parking enforcement programs will continue to operate alongside ongoing OLIVE efforts, including completion of the third citywide lived-in vehicle inventory (November 2025), site selection, and enforcement through Q3 and Q4. Meanwhile, the Expired Registration Program will expand with additional staffing resources, and two new initiatives, the OLIVE Supplemental Enforcement Program (OSEP) and the Street Sweeping Pilot, will launch. The collective outcomes of these enforcement efforts will be summarized in next year's Transportation & Environment Committee Parking Enforcement Program Update.

COORDINATION

This report has been coordinated with the City Manager's Budget Office, the City Attorney's Office, the Housing Department, the Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department, and the Police Department.

/s/
John Ristow
Director of Transportation

For questions, please contact Heather Hoshii, Deputy Director for Transportation Safety, Operations, and Parking at heather.hoshii@sanjoseca.gov

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Parking Compliance Unit Service Delivery Overview

Attachment B – Expired Registration Flyer

Attachment C – OLIVE Program Flyer