



# #WE ARE PRNS Essential

SAN JOSE  
PARKS, RECREATION &  
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

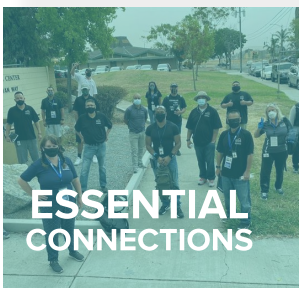
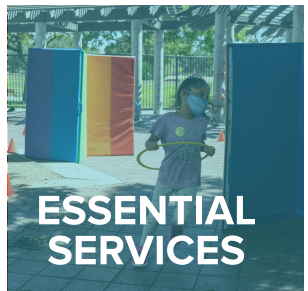


Building Community Through Fun

[Director's Letter](#)

[About Us](#)

The Department of Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services (PRNS) 2020 Community Impact Report focuses on our work and how it aligns with **ActivateSJ**, our people-focused, service-driven 20-year strategic plan. 2020 came with many unprecedented challenges, but our work never stopped and San José's PRNS services became more important than ever. Our parks, trails and open spaces provide residents' with safe outdoor spaces, community centers still serve as important points of connection for all ages, and our neighborhood services continue enhancing quality of life in our diverse neighborhoods.



# ESSENTIAL PLACES



Most days, more than 500 visitors enjoy over 4,000 roses of 250 plus varieties at the San José Municipal Rose Garden. Photo taken before the pandemic.

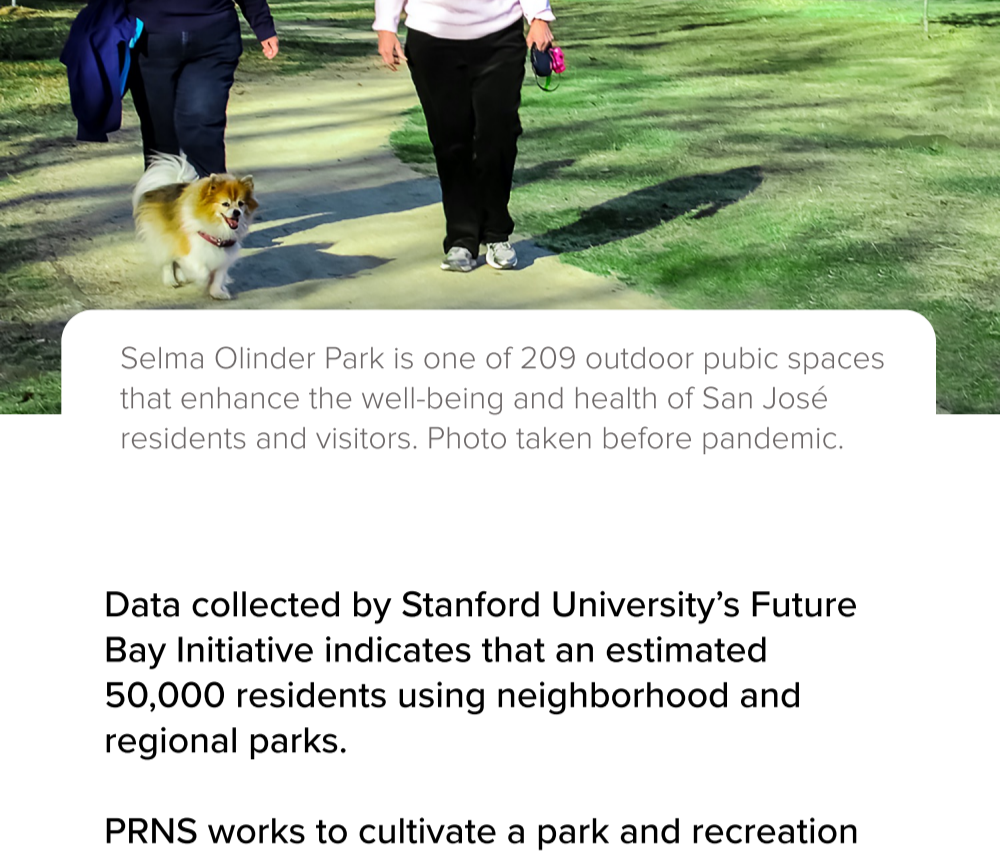
## Access to Parks and Outdoor Spaces is Crucial for Residents Health

Across San José, PRNS parks, trails and open spaces make life better. By caring for these essential places, PRNS provides welcoming and engaging places and outdoor programs for all members of our community.

“During times when indoor options are closed, we provide safe, fun and educational spaces for our community to care for their physical and emotional health and wellness,”

says Avi Yotam, Interim Deputy Director. “The community waited on pins and needles to return to play, and our cautious approach made that a reality. We worked tirelessly alongside the City’s Emergency Operations Center to ensure access to nature citywide”

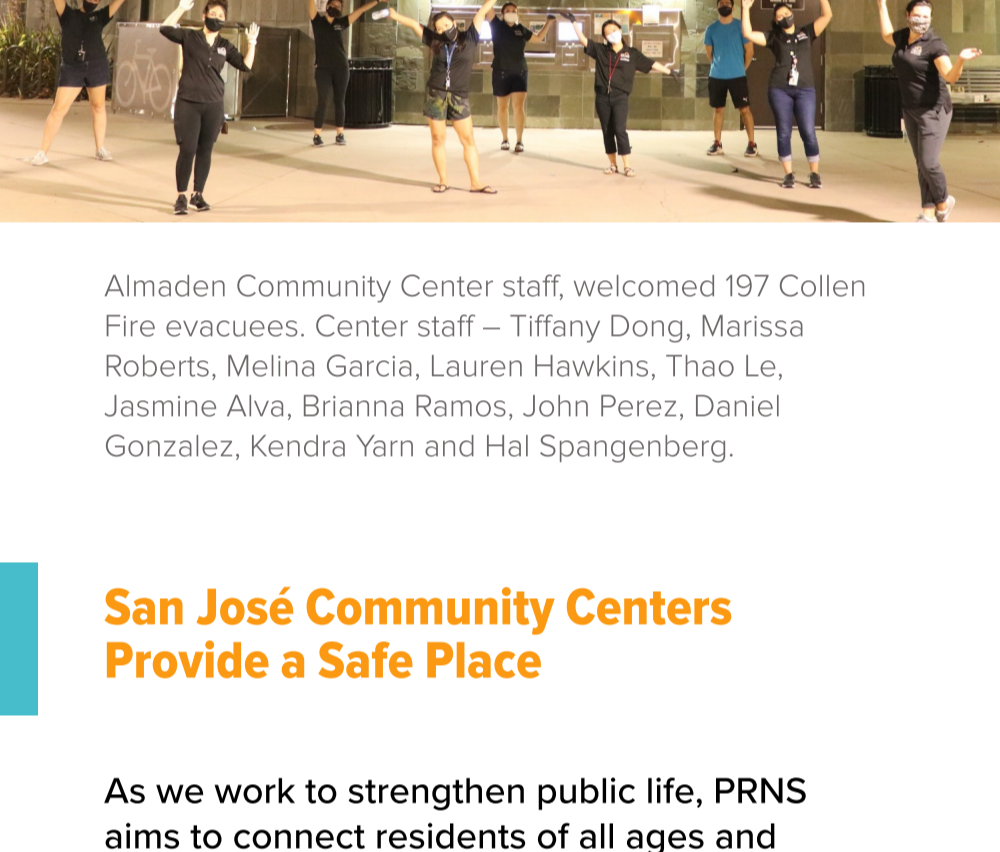
Park staff work hard to assure that San José residents have access to safe, flourishing outdoor spaces. Parks are especially important to those who do not have open space at home, especially during Stay-at-Home orders.



Selma Olinder Park is one of 209 outdoor public spaces that enhance the well-being and health of San José residents and visitors. Photo taken before pandemic.

Data collected by Stanford University’s Future Bay Initiative indicates that an estimated 50,000 residents using neighborhood and regional parks.

PRNS works to cultivate a park and recreation system that preserves nature, supports wildlife and enhances community well-being. We will always protect, preserve, and promote natural areas for all people to enjoy the great outdoors.



Almaden Community Center staff, welcomed 197 Colleen Fire evacuees. Center staff – Tiffany Dong, Marissa Roberts, Melina Garcia, Lauren Hawkins, Thao Le, Jasmine Alva, Brianna Brianna, John Perez, Daniel Gonzalez, Kendra Yarn and Hal Spangenberg.

## San José Community Centers Provide a Safe Place

As we work to strengthen public life, PRNS aims to connect residents of all ages and backgrounds to vital resources. Community centers citywide provide a welcoming place for people to receive free or low cost services and participate in activities year-round. These essential services help during times of need and our facilities are always prepared to open their doors.

For example, during the Colleen Fire on Thursday, June 4, 2020, Almaden Community Center provided a safe place for 70 families and their house pets to evacuate; 2,574 residents received a free COVID-19 test at the Vietnamese-American Cultural Center and Police Athletic League Stadium; over 100 people, including families in need, acquired temporary housing at community centers during COVID-19; multiple community centers served as cooling centers for more than 430 individuals during 11 heat advisory days; and 5,895 older adults received 223,220 meals through the Senior Nutrition Program.

From day-to-day life activities to emergency response, PRNS is committed to serving our community when it matters most.

# CITY OF SAN JOSÉ DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION & NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES OVERSEES

**10** REGIONAL PARKS

**199** NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

**290** PARK PLAYGROUNDS

**48** COMMUNITY CENTERS

**61** MILES OF TRAILS

**Over 50,000** park visitors daily



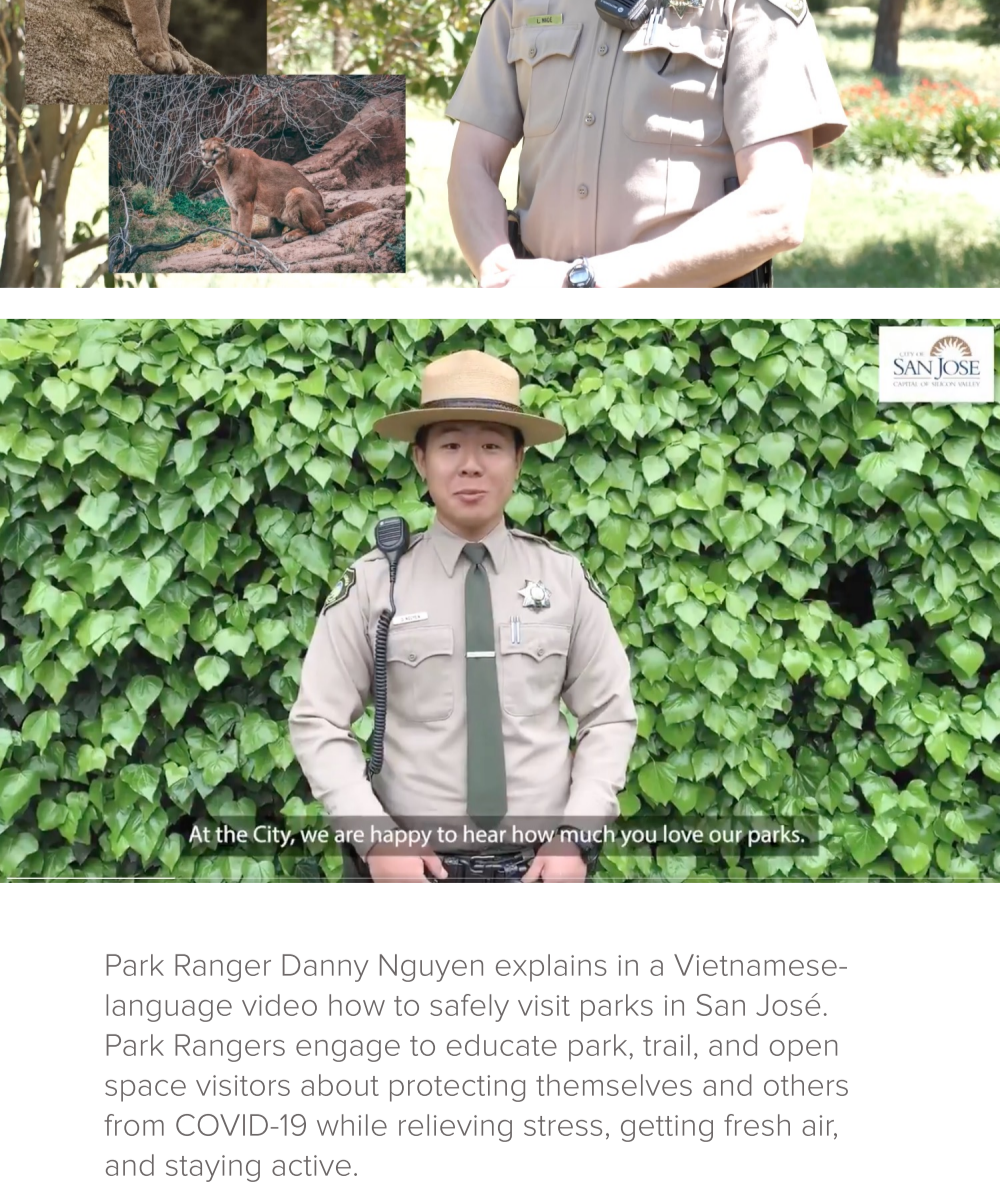
**Over 100** people acquired temporary housing at community centers during COVID-19



**Cooling Centers served Over 430** people during **11** heat advisory



**4,945** park signs were posted during COVID-19



At the City, we are happy to hear how much you love our parks.

Park Ranger Danny Nguyen explains in a Vietnamese-language video how to safely visit parks in San José. Park Rangers engage to educate park, trail, and open space visitors about protecting themselves and others from COVID-19 while relieving stress, getting fresh air, and staying active.

HOME

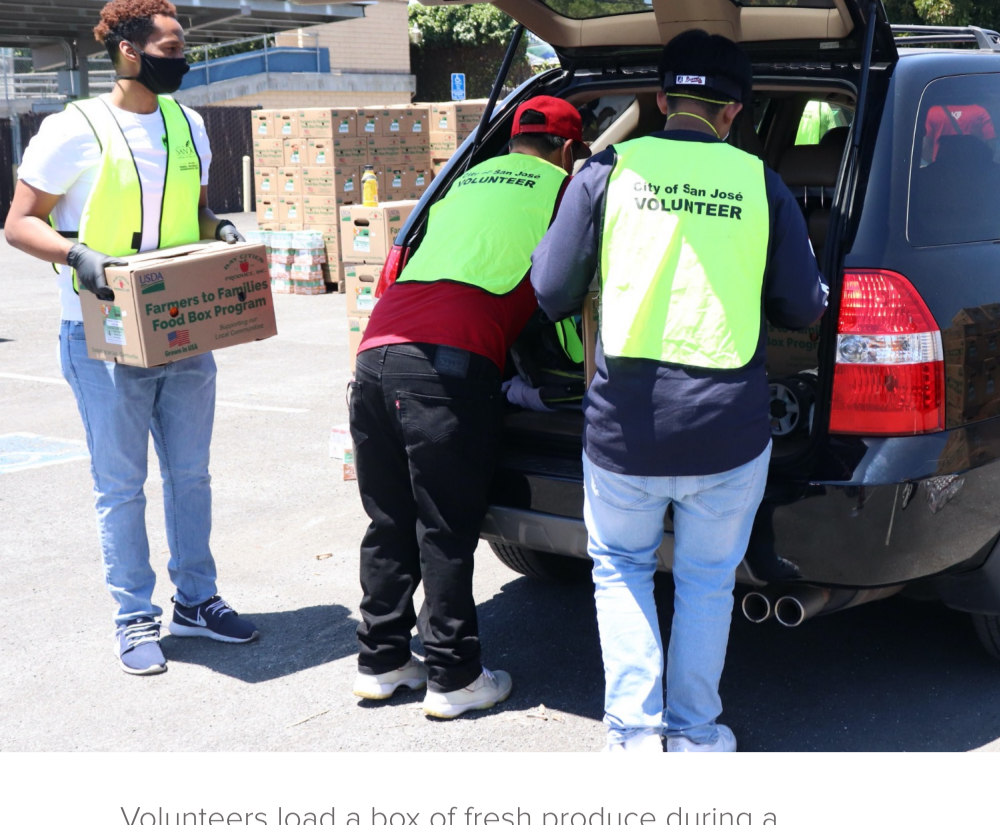
ESSENTIAL PLACES

ESSENTIAL PEOPLE

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

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# ESSENTIAL PEOPLE



Volunteers load a box of fresh produce during a drive-thru food giveaway event hosted by San Francisco 49er Kendrick Bourne at Emma Prusch Farm Park on June 20, 2020.

## PRNS Staff are Essential

PRNS employees serve as disaster service workers during all emergencies. Whether it's a pandemic, wildfire, flood or other natural disaster, we deliver immediate aid when San José needs it the most.

PRNS is an "all-hands-on-deck" team, and we work with and assist people of all ages, abilities and walks of life. This year we saw an increased need for childcare, food, virtual programming and more.

When in-person programming halted, recreation specialists quickly shifted to virtual programming to ensure continued access to educational enhancement, therapeutic recreation, and holistic leisure. Through 50 live virtual events, we reached over 570 participants from March to June.

When the pandemic left 4,694,852 people in our county without stable access to nutritious meals, PRNS responded by taking the lead on countywide food distribution services to provide 2.5 million meals for residents impacted by COVID-19. During this time, PRNS staff coordinated food supply chains for a county of 1.7 million people and staffed food banks, community centers and distribution sites while partnering with 35 nonprofits and vendors to organize and distribute meals.

Summer and Fall brought record-breaking heatwaves and wildfires resulting in power shutoffs, poor air quality, and evacuations. Thankfully, PRNS' 48 community centers and over 600 staff are always ready to mobilize to ensure safe spaces and services for our most vulnerable residents and their loved ones. Whether it's access to water, electricity, internet, or a climate controlled space – we open our doors to provide for those in need.

During normal times, or the unprecedented, PRNS staff are champions for our residents.

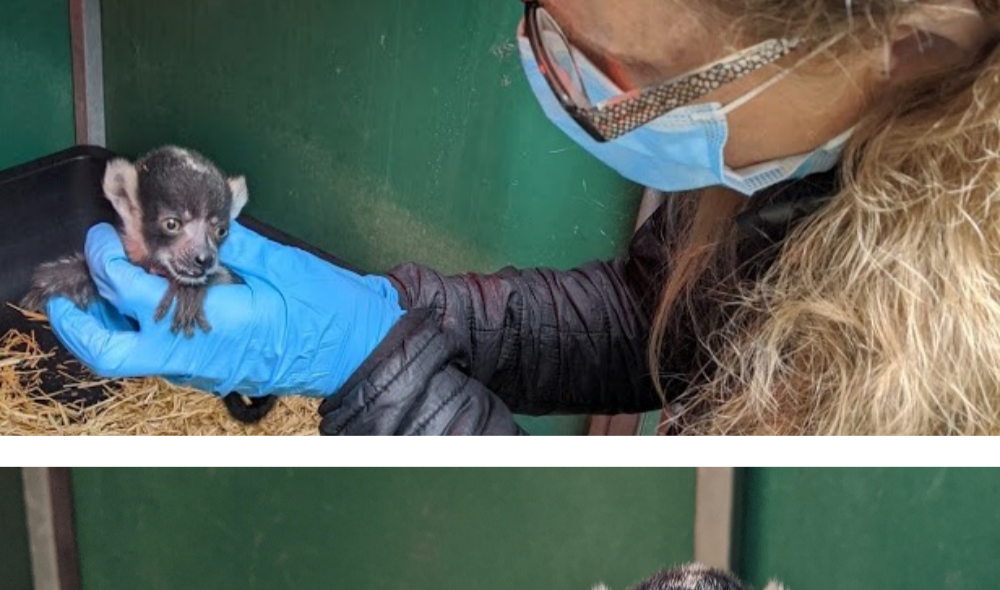
**3.1 Million Meals served.**  
**5,895 older adults received 223,220 meals through the Senior Nutrition Program.**



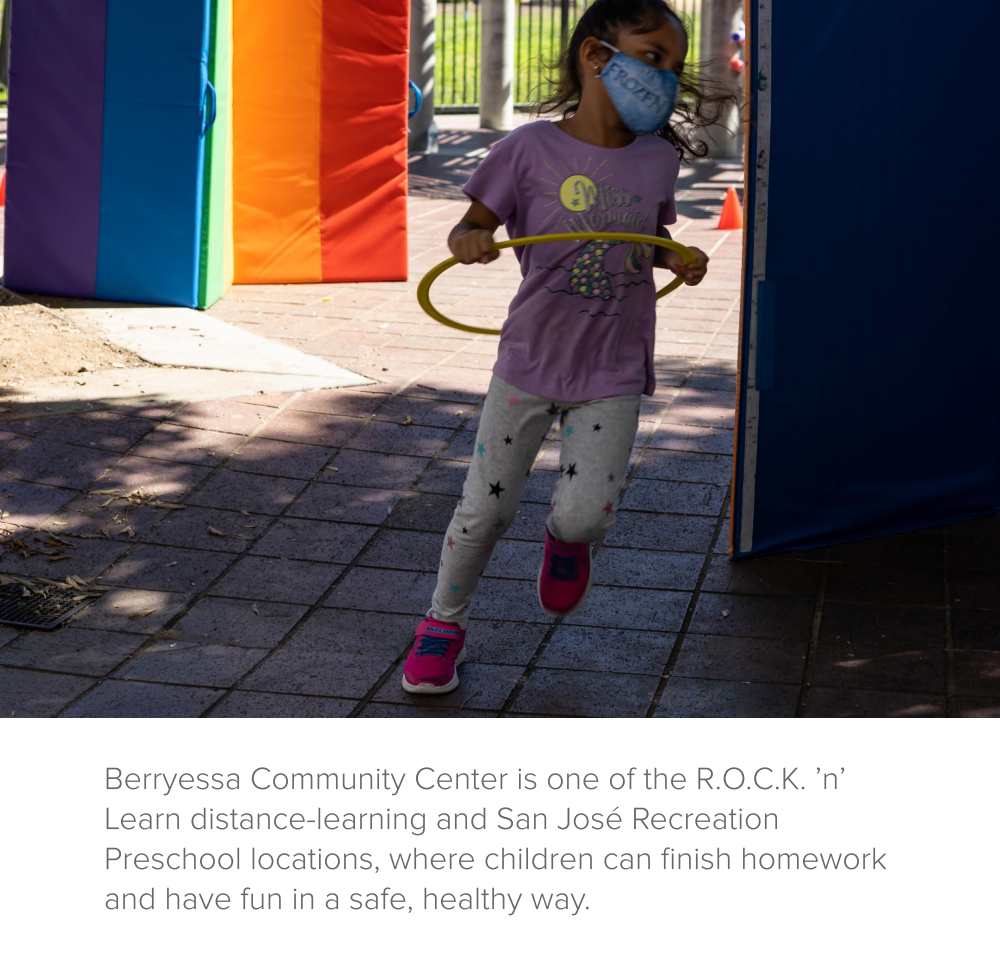
**22,908 Recreation & Neighborhood Services Program Participants**



**3,553 Scholarship participants**



Animal caretakers at Happy Hollow Park & Zoo and Emma Prusch Farm Park continue providing professional, dedicated care for the animals 365 days a year.



Berryessa Community Center is one of the R.O.C.K. 'n' Learn distance-learning and San José Recreation Preschool locations, where children can finish homework and have fun in a safe, healthy way.

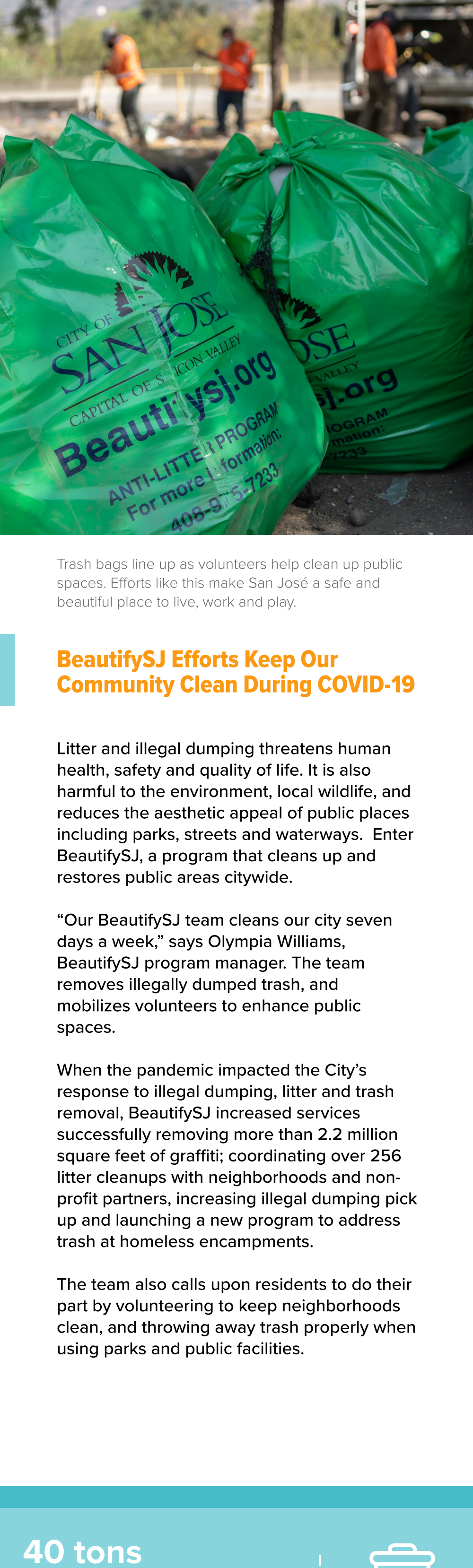
### Emergency Child Care Services

For families that work, PRNS ensures secure, safe and accessible childcare.

Even before the pandemic, affordable childcare challenged millions of families. With over 700 full-time and part-time staff, PRNS assists families facing financial hardships. Our Citywide scholarship program provides free and affordable programs for thousands of San José youth and children each year. In May 2020, Willow Glen Community Center became a safe haven for children of emergency responders, and over the summer, 23 PRNS locations offered camp programs for the public.

Today, professional, trained staff members throughout PRNS parks, community centers and destinations offer 35 groups of modified R.O.C.K. 'n' Learn distance-learning, and welcome over 40 children in person for the San José Recreation Preschool program, and almost 100 children in virtual preschool.

All coordinators, teachers, and staff of our programs are experienced and trained in the areas of child development, recreation, supervision, curriculum, first aid and CPR.



Trash bags line up as volunteers help clean up public spaces. Efforts like this make San José a safe and beautiful place to live, work and play.

### BeautySJ Efforts Keep Our Community Clean During COVID-19

Litter and illegal dumping threatens human health, safety and quality of life. It is also harmful to the environment, local wildlife, and reduces the aesthetic appeal of public places including parks, streets and waterways. Enter BeautySJ, a program that cleans up and restores public areas citywide.

“Our BeautySJ team cleans our city seven days a week,” says Olympia Williams, BeautySJ program manager. The team removes illegally dumped trash, and mobilizes volunteers to enhance public spaces.

When the pandemic impacted the City’s response to illegal dumping, litter and trash removal, BeautySJ increased services successfully removing more than 2.2 million square feet of graffiti; coordinating over 256 litter cleanups with neighborhoods and non-profit partners, increasing illegal dumping pick up and launching a new program to address trash at homeless encampments.

The team also calls upon residents to do their part by volunteering to keep neighborhoods clean, and throwing away trash properly when using parks and public facilities.

**40 tons**  
of trash picked up  
weekly on average



**60 different**  
encampments received  
PRNS services



**44,453**  
estimated incidents  
of graffiti removal



**20,693**  
volunteers worked to  
clean litter and graffiti  
from our public spaces



Community Gardens throughout the City support food security for San Jose residents.

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# ESSENTIAL CONNECTIONS



Project HOPE and the Mayor’s Gang Task Prevention Force (MGTPF) engages in community-based violence prevention by reducing client juvenile justice system involvement and empowering neighborhood associations.

## Community Engagement

PRNS staff provide equitable and accessible opportunities by establishing trust with residents, staying engaged with the needs of our communities, and pioneering new opportunities for feedback and participation so we can strengthen the identities of the communities we serve.

Following the County’s Stay-at-Home order, PRNS programs adapted to reach and engage community members. The Youth Intervention Services teams extended virtually — cultivating partnerships with school districts; connecting youth to resources; and providing virtual classes and workshops for at-risk youth.

Project HOPE, a City program that aims to build strong communities with viable neighborhood associations or community groups, is bridging the digital divide by creating content in multiple languages. To better serve Spanish and Vietnamese-speaking students, bilingual staff created multi-lingual Zoom tutorials to ensure better access to online resources and programs.

Youth Intervention Services and Project HOPE also conducted door-to-door outreach for the 2020 Census. Bilingual teams canvassed in communities with a low census participation and high monolingual population to increase equity and access for our communities. By assisting residents in their native language, PRNS makes sure everyone gets counted.

Claudia Cortez, acting Community Coordinator for the Safe Schools Campus Initiative and Female Intervention Team, recalls being greeted by a resident. “Over the course of 25 days, the resident waved at us from her driveway and said she has been waiting for us. She noticed we were walking around the neighborhood, helping people with the Census. We were able to count her and her household,” said Cortez.

Census canvassers, like Cortez, knocked on approximately 24,000 doors in San José. As a result, the City’s overall response rate increased to 76.8%, placing San José at #1 among 69 large cities in the United States.

**12,914**  
VRC visits from  
April-July 2020



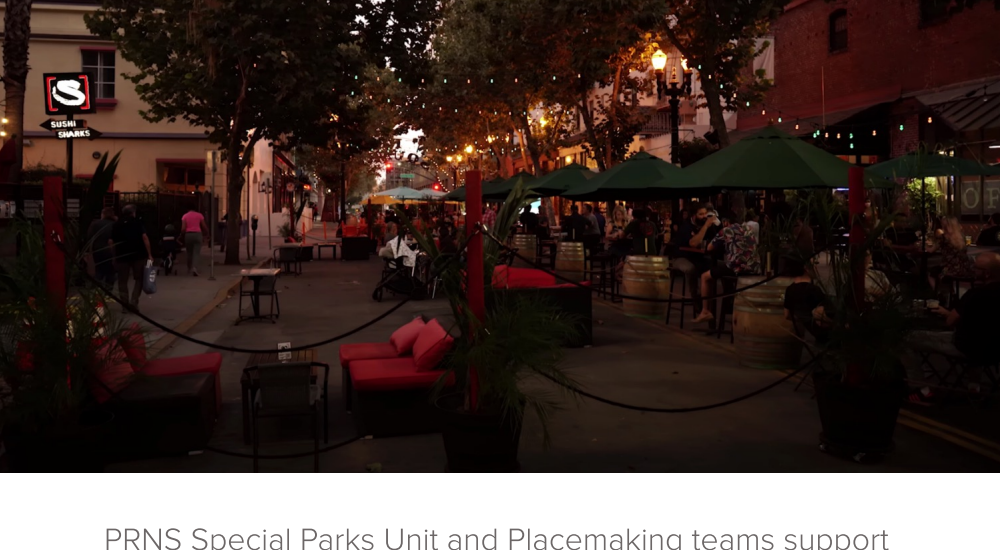
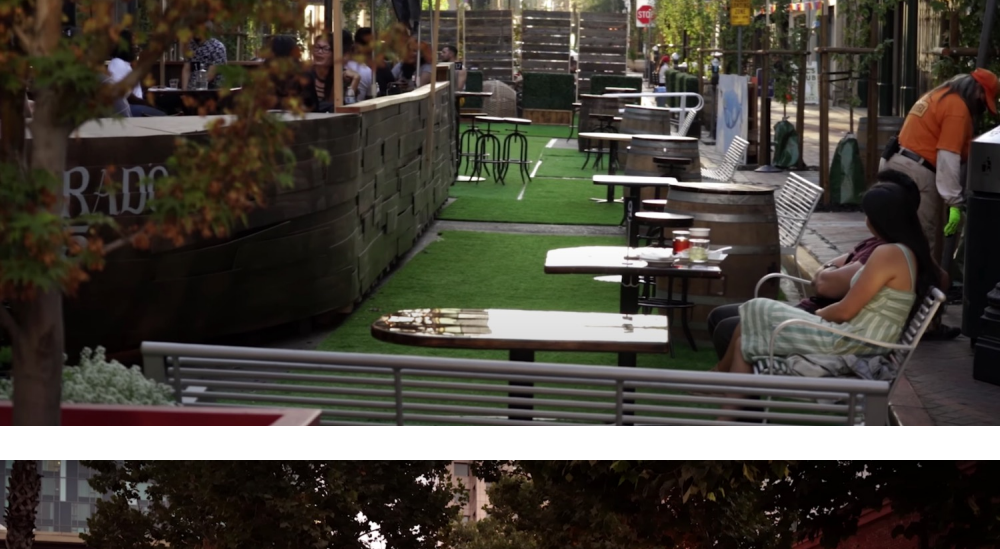
**50 Live**  
Classes Offered



**567**  
Participants  
in VRC live



**\$5,916,466**  
Grants



PRNS Special Parks Unit and Placemaking teams support San Jose Al Fresco efforts to allow local businesses to move their operations outside.

HOME

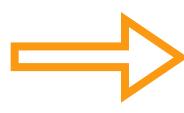
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# MOVING FORWARD



PRNS Parks construction team gets to work building a new playground at Groesbeck Hill Park for residents to enjoy.

**PRNS** protects and maintains our parks and facilities while working to accomplish **ActivateSJ**. As we look ahead, we know there is much to be done within our five guiding principles of stewardship, nature, equity and access, identity and public life, we know there is much to be done.

To improve and expand our services, we will focus on a workforce that is reflective of the communities we serve. This includes assessing our policies, practices, and procedures continuously, strengthening our many partnerships, and engaging with people from all across our wonderfully diverse city.

PRNS is making improvements now that will have long-lasting impacts. Whether it's keeping our parks, trails and open spaces clean and maintained or adding vibrance and local culture to our parks and community centers with new murals, artwork, events and leisure programs.



With over 200 parks #PRNSBest maintenance teams work tirelessly to keep our facilities and open spaces safe and well kept.

The Capital Improvement Program creates more equitable access to parks and green spaces in low-income neighborhoods through the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of parks, recreational facilities, trails and open spaces. Through targeted investments in park infrastructure, we can provide more opportunities for physical activity, time in nature, social connection, mental wellness, and many other environmental benefits for marginalized communities.

With three new and renovated playgrounds, three new parks, and much more, we anticipate plenty improvements in the months and years to come.

We know there are many challenges ahead, especially as it pertains to economic recovery from the pandemic, but we are also excited for the many opportunities that help keep San José's parks, trails and services fun, safe and available for everyone.

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## SPECIAL EVENTS

Fiscal Year 19-20

- **VIVA PARKS DOWNTOWN**  
Visitors: 25,532
- **VIVA PARKS NEIGHBORHOODS**  
Events held: 52  
Attendees: 9,000+
- **PARK ACTIVATION BY OTHERS**  
Special events: 4
  - Make Music Day lead by OCA.
  - National Night Out lead by various Council Office.
  - E.A.T. (Everyone at the Table) lead by PRNS.
  - "San Pedro Square" Meet in the Street.
 Permits issued: N/A  
Event attendees: 7,000
- **VIVA CALLESJ (One Event)**  
Participants: 60,000  
Miles of open Streets: 6

## Health

- **LEISURE CLASSES**  
Participants: 22,901  
Classes offered: 3,635
- **FITNESS:**  
Memberships: 284
- **ACTIVE ADULTS**  
Memberships: 4,946  
5,895 (unduplicated senior nutrition program participants)  
Meals served: 223,220

## Places

- **PRNS OVERSEES**  
Regional Parks: 10  
Neighborhood Parks: 199  
Park Playgrounds: 290  
Community Centers: 48  
Miles Of Trails: 61
- **COMMUNITY GARDENS**  
Gardeners: 901  
Gardens: 18  
Community Gardening Plots: 978

## Fun

- **PICNIC RESERVATIONS**  
Booked: 1,233
- **AQUATICS PROGRAMS**  
Lesson participants: 0  
Rec. swim participants: 0
- **LAKE CUNNINGHAM ACTION SPORTS PARK**  
Visitors: 18,500 (duplicated)
- **HAPPY HOLLOW PARK & ZOO**  
Admissions: 306,795  
Memberships: 19,729
- **FAMILY CAMP AT YOSEMITE**  
Campers: 4,085
- **SUMMER CAMPS**  
Participants: 848

## Service

- **PARK VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**  
Events: 175  
Volunteers: 2,751  
Hours: 19,464
- **ANTI-LITTER/GRAFFITI VOLUNTEERS**  
Volunteers: 20,693  
Hours: 20,837  
Graffiti cleaned: 2,529,388 sq. ft.  
(130,650 sq. ft. abated by volunteers)
- **COMMUNITY CENTER VOLUNTEERS**  
Events: 89  
Volunteers: 601  
Hours: 105,458
- **GRANTS**  
Grantees: 142

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

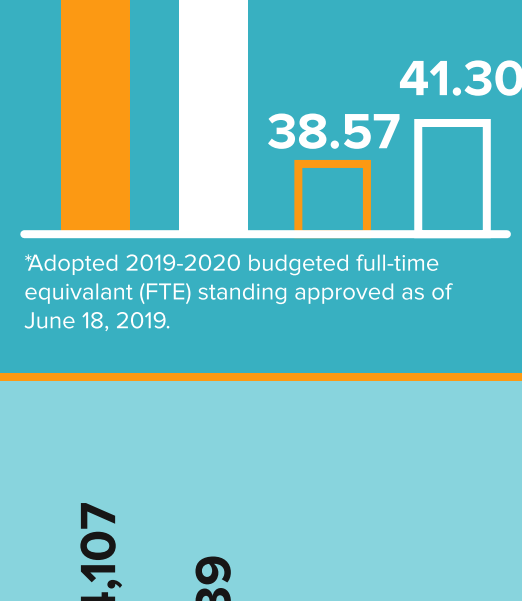


Fiscal Year 19-20

### AUTHORIZED POSITIONS

742.08

- Parks
- Recreation
- Strategic Support
- Capital Projects



\*Adopted 2019-2020 budgeted full-time equivalent (FTE) standing approved as of June 18, 2019.

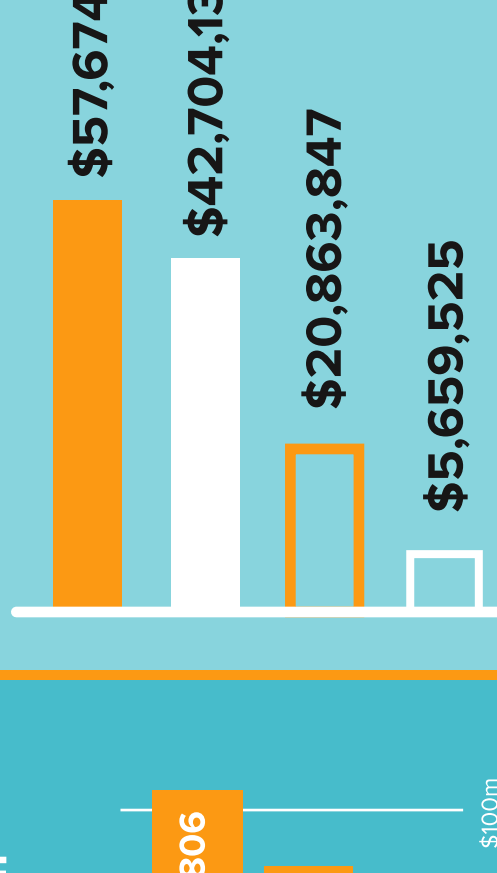


Fiscal Year 19-20

### AUTHORIZED OPERATIONS

\$126,901,618

- Parks
- Recreation
- Strategic Support
- Capital Projects



Fiscal Year 19/20

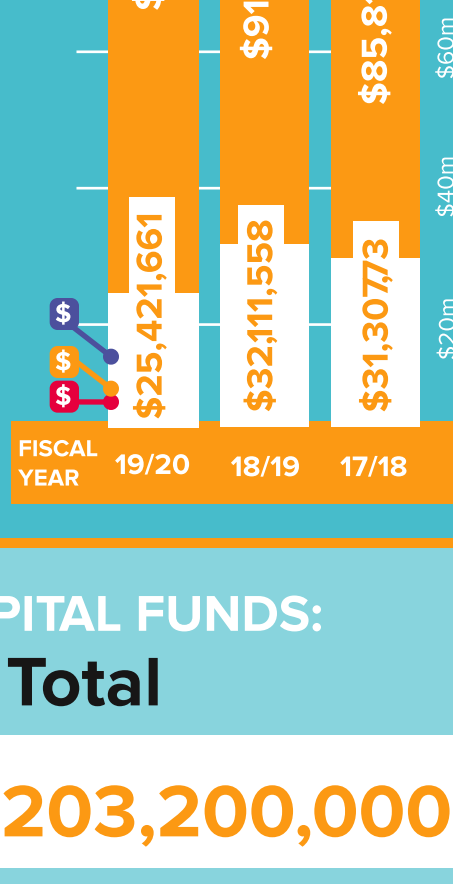
### FISCAL PERFORMANCE

24.43% COST RECOVERY

- EXPENSE
- REVENUE

#### DEPARTMENT REVENUE

- 💰 Program Fees \$14,425,263
- 💰 Grants \$5,916,466
- 💰 Construction & Conveyance Tax \$5,079,932



### OPERATING & CAPITAL FUNDS:

\$330,101,618 Total

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \$203,200,000

PRNS OPERATIONS \$126,901,618

### 2020 SCHOLARSHIPS

TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOLARSHIPS 8,829

TOTAL SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT USED \$1,021,855

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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Jon Cicirelli

Director of PRNS

I think we can all agree that 2020 was like no other. For the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS), our staff and facilities provide an essential community service for people of all ages, cultures and abilities every day. The pandemic, wildfires and racial injustices have amplified our role as frontline staff and a lifeline to many in our community. This year, our Community Impact Report is virtual and highlights the people, places, services and connections essential to the times we live in.

Our dedicated staff have adapted their current roles or have completely changed what they do on a regular basis in order to meet our community's needs. Over 68 million meals have been provided to seniors, youth and families countywide since March 2020. While their parents were keeping our city safe and community healthy, the children of essential City workers remained engaged in school through a modified childcare services pilot that became a model for future education and recreation programming, now known as learning pods. Our R.O.C.K. Afterschool and San José Recreational Preschool continued in-person and virtually, which inspired the creation of the Virtual Recreation Center, a resource page of fun activities to do at home.



Amid the coronavirus pandemic, PRNS employees gear up with Personal Protective Equipment to distribute grab- and-go meal packs at local school districts for families in need.

Our facilities provide a safe place to connect and find resources. Citywide, parks experienced an increase in visitors while maintenance staff shifted their workload to adhere to COVID-19 safety protocols. Community centers became resource centers and clean air centers during wildfires and evacuations; cooling and warming centers during extreme weather; food distribution points for older adults; housed homeless; and hosted learning pods.

Unlike other parks and recreation departments nationwide, neighborhood services is integral to who we are. During COVID-19, Project Hope staff worked with neighborhood associations to shift from in-person to virtual meetings, allowing residents to stay connected and gain access to resources from federal, state and City programs. Our neighborhood services team also ensured that households in marginalized communities were counted in the census. Their efforts helped San José become the largest US city with the highest percentage of people counted at 76.8%.

Guiding our work year-round is ActivateSJ, our 20-year strategic plan adopted by the City Council in 2019. To activate in San José means we remain committed to our mission of connecting people through parks, recreation and neighborhood services for an active San José and to our five guiding principles: stewardship, nature, equity and access, identity and public life.



Leading our efforts on ActivateSJ is Neil Rufino, PRNS's new Assistant Director. He is a familiar face to many, and I am grateful to have his expertise as we implement ActivateSJ and continue our efforts to lift all our communities. We are making our City a stronger and better place for everyone.

We are dedicated and passionate about delivering our vision: Healthy Communities that Inspire Belonging. Our work never stops, nor does our commitment to serve San José. I invite you to read all about it!

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# ABOUT PRNS



## Executive Staff

### Jon Cicirelli

Director

### Neil Rufino

Assistant Director

### Nicolle Burnham

Deputy Director, Capital and Planning

### Andrea Flores Shelton

Interim Deputy Director, Recreation & Neighborhood Services Division

### Avi Yotam

Interim Deputy Director, Parks Division

### Dave DeLong

Interim Division Manager, Administrative Services

## City Council

### Sam Liccardo

Mayor

### Vice Mayor Charles “Chappie” Jones

District 1

### Sergio Jimenez

District 2

### Raul Peralez

District 3

### Lan Diep

District 4

### Magdalena Carrasco

District 5

### Devora “Dev” Davis

District 6

### Maya Esparza

District 7

### Sylvia Arenas

District 8

### Pam Foley

District 9

### Johnny Khamis

District 10

### Dave Sykes

City Manager

## Our Foundations

PRNS foundations and friends provide time and resources to keep our programs invigorated. Their tireless commitment benefits all San José residents.

[Learn more at sanjoseca.gov/prnspartners.](http://sanjoseca.gov/prnspartners)



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