

Memorandum


TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Jon Cicirelli

**SUBJECT: RECREATIONAL VEHICLE
BIOWASTE POLLUTION
PREVENTION PROGRAM**

DATE: November 28, 2022

Approved



Date

11/28/22

INFORMATION

The purpose of this Informational Memorandum is to provide an update on Council direction from a memorandum authored by Vice Mayor Chappie Jones and Councilmember Matt Mahan¹ specifically related to removing discharge and human waste from recreational and other lived-in vehicles. Recreational vehicle (RV) location analysis is scheduled on the November 29, 2022, Council agenda.

BACKGROUND

At the May 3, 2022, Council Meeting, City staff provided an update on the City Roadmap item: Encampment Management and Safe Relocation Policy² which noted the gap in services to address the removal of human waste from recreational and lived-in vehicles.

Currently, the City does not have a proactive program to remove and dispose of human waste discharges from lived-in or recreational vehicles. During COVID-19 emergency operations, the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department's BeautifySJ team contracted with a provider to remove and dispose of bio-waste in buckets/containers or other soiled trash for the encampment trash service and has continued for the encampment management program. This contract ends on June 30, 2023.

¹ May 3, 2022, City Roadmap – Encampment Management Strategy, Supplemental Memorandum from Vice Mayor Chappie Jones and Councilmember Matt Mahan:

<https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=10860913&GUID=97774B4F-7C8D-401C-A56D-AC84C551B41F>

² May 3, 2022, City Roadmap – Encampment Management Strategy and Safe Relocation Policy;

<https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=10860685&GUID=3BEB1411-FBEC-4F19-9163-CC120C6ED303>

ANALYSIS

Through the City Roadmap – Encampment Management and Safe Relocation, an annual key result is to secure funding aimed at providing human waste disposal services to 1,000 recreational and lived-in vehicles. This was based on the 2019 Point in Time Homeless Census which revealed that there were approximately 900 recreational and lived-in vehicles on the streets of San José at that time.

Staff was directed to:

- Explore programs for the removal of discharge and human waste from RVs and other lived-in-vehicles;
 - Identify appropriate implementation opportunities within San José;
 - In addition to the existing Safe Parking locations being considered; research the best practices of other cities for designated RV and lived-in vehicle locations; and
 - Return to Committee or Council with a proposal and budget appropriation by the end of November 2022.
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- The City of Seattle conducted a pilot program that provided pump out services to recreational vehicles to reduce sewage spills on streets. Early results from their program included a 70% decline in sewage (discharges) spills on streets based on providing services to 480 recreational vehicles in the first year of the program.
 - The City of San Francisco utilizes in-house staff in the Department of Public Works and a vendor that provides proactive power-washing and cleanup services in areas most impacted by human waste. This approach focuses on areas within the public right of way but doesn't focus on the specific needs of those residing in vehicles to appropriately dispose of human waste.
 - The City of Mountain View considered providing vouchers to those who resided in recreational vehicles to travel to pump out stations. These efforts were stalled due to most recreational vehicles being non-operable.
 - For Safe Parking sites within San José, the Housing Department provides portable restroom facilities to ensure that those residing at the location have access to restroom facilities. If needed, the City's RV Biowaste Pollution Prevention Program, as described below, would, in part, provide pump out services to recreational vehicles located at a Safe Parking location.

Project Implementation

As the City continues to iterate its encampment management services in alignment with the 2022-2023 City Initiatives Roadmap, the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department is preparing to launch a Pilot RV Biowaste Pollution Prevention Program to remove

and dispose of human waste from recreational and lived-in vehicles, through contracted vendors that can: (1) collect human waste from recreational and lived-in vehicles including waste located in buckets and other containers; and (2) provide mobile recreational vehicle waste pump out services (services to remove waste from recreational vehicles). This model will be implemented based on discussions with the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services Department that identified several constraints to internal infrastructure and capacity as well as serious concerns related to stormwater compliance.

During the pilot phase of the program, staff will focus on assessing lived-in vehicles for age, and capabilities to dispose of biowaste; understanding frequency and developing service routes for maximum efficiency; and establishing a data collection and reporting system. The pilot phase of the program will last approximately 12 months to allow for analysis of collected data and program services. This analysis will inform Phase II of the establishment of the RV Pollution Prevention Program.

Pilot RV Biowaste Pollution Prevention Program January 2023 – December 2023

Month	Activities
January – February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hire full-time temporary staffing resources - Develop Standard Operating Procedures - Assess and map locations of RVs/lived-in vehicles - Secure biowaste vendor
March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine service types and levels - Train staff on data collection methods
April 2023 – June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop routes and train staff and vendors - Launch pilot services
July 2023 – December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Iterate and refine routes based on findings from the pilot pending procurement decisions / contracting - Develop plan to scale services

As the City improves its understanding of the scope, locations, and needs of RV residents, the plan for developing routes and service models will iterate.

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

The Pilot will be exploratory as staff develops and refines the appropriate protocols, the estimated cost for the initial launch of the program from January 2023 – December 2023 ranges from \$300,000 - \$650,000. These one-time costs will be absorbed within the existing budget for

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

November 28, 2022

Subject: Recreational Vehicle Biowaste Pollution Prevention Program

Page 4

BeautifySJ in the American Rescue Plan Fund and the Homelessness Management Services appropriation in the General Fund, with the expectation that a portion of these funds will be rebudgeted into 2023-2024 to complete the Pilot. Continuation of the Pilot beyond December 2023, as well as a preliminary analysis of how the program could be scaled-up on an ongoing basis, will be evaluated with the rest of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department's encampment management and abatement activities in the 2023-2024 Proposed Budget development process.

It is important to note that, while City Council's approval of the 2022-2023 Adopted Operating Budget ensured that the Beautify San José Consolidated Model has its currently authorized staffing funded ongoing, nearly all the contractual services related to encampment trash collection and enhanced abatement and clean-up activities is funded on a one-time basis in the American Rescue Plan Fund in 2022-2023. Preliminary estimates of the ongoing need in 2023-2024 and beyond is \$7-\$10 million – even before considering the additional costs of a biowaste pollution prevention program – though this figure will be thoroughly evaluated by Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department and the City Manager's Budget Office during the budget development process.

COORDINATION

This memorandum was coordinated with the City Manager's Budget Office.

/s/

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