



Legislation Text

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Discussion of City's 2020 Anti-Litter campaign. (*Leslie Arroyo, Communications Director*)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council receive an update on the City of South San Francisco's 2020 Anti-Litter campaign and provide further direction on proposed initiatives.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

The City of South San Francisco is a wonderful community to live, work, learn, and play, or just visit. We have so much to be proud of, but like many communities across America, litter is found along our city streets and local waterways. Litter became a huge issue a decade ago after two million gallons of trash were found bobbing in Bay Area waterways, about half of it plastic grocery bags, candy wrappers, lids, straws and chip bags. A crackdown was necessary, conservationists said, because the waste leaches toxins into the water and winds up in the ocean, where the plastic breaks down into tiny pieces that are ingested by marine mammals, fish and birds. In a February 14, 2019 *San Francisco Chronicle* article titled "Caltrans ordered to clean up the roadways or face up to \$25,000-a-day fines," it states that Caltrans has committed \$400 million toward trash control and maintenance between now and 2026. That includes \$33 million on cost-sharing deals with five cities to build collections systems and clean up homeless encampments near highways. However, Caltrans has stated it doesn't know how it will pay for everything it was ordered to clean up. According to Keep America Beautiful, one of the bad aspects of litter is that it encourages more people to litter. Researchers observed that if people see garbage scattered around public or commercial areas, they tend to drop their litter on the ground nearby. This is why it is imperative that the City of South San Francisco mount an aggressive anti-litter campaign and provide more ways for people to dispose of their trash.

What the City of South San Francisco Currently Does

The City of South San Francisco has always worked to keep the City clean primarily through the efforts of the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments.

The Parks and Recreation Department currently employs a skilled and highly trained maintenance staff to care for nearly 300 acres of park land, city right-of-way, landscaped streetscape, and open space areas, more than 15,000 city owned trees, and 500,000 square feet of public facilities. The Parks Division is currently budgeted 29.62 full-time equivalent staff positions, while the Facilities Maintenance Division is budgeted 17.46 full-time equivalent positions, spread between day, evening, and weekend shifts. There currently are some vacant positions pending recruitment. The Department relies on contractor support for some of these activities, including minor capital projects, specialized preventative maintenance services and repairs, and semi-skilled landscaped maintenance services to supplement City staff in certain right-of-way areas and in the Common Greens neighborhoods.

The Public Works Department is comprised of 93 fulltime employees, 37 in the Operations and Maintenance division. These individuals maintain the city's roads, sidewalks, traffic signals, streetlights, vehicles, sewers, storm drains, and parking meters. In addition, they clean up illegal dumping, clear transient encampments, abate graffiti, sweep every city street every week, and enforce the City's municipal codes, and community

preservation standards.

Of the more than 6,000 requests for service received by the Public Works Operation and Maintenance division in 2019, nearly half were requests to clean up illegal activities (graffiti, dumping, shopping carts).

City staff recognizes there is always more to do to combat this ever-growing issue. The City must take a zero-tolerance approach when it comes to littering, illegal dumping, smoking downtown, and abandoned vehicles. In the past, the City has provided warnings to residents and visitors who are caught violating our ordinances, however, moving forward, we will not tolerate people who disrespect our City and violate our ordinances.

2020 Anti-Litter Campaign Elements

The City has established a “Clean Team” and adopted the slogan “**This is *Your* City. Keep it Clean South San Francisco.**” Below summarizes additional efforts City staff recommend in 2020 to combat the litter, illegal dumping, and graffiti.

- **Cleanup Blitz 2020 Kick-off**

On Saturday, March 21, 2020, Staff proposes a “kick-off” event in the downtown core area surrounding Grand Avenue between Airport Boulevard and Spruce Avenue from 9:00 a.m. to Noon. This Cleanup Blitz will consist of multiple City Departments, and community volunteer groups. Activities will focus on cleanup activities and improving downtown amenities. Public Works will focus on sign replacement, curb painting, and graffiti removal. The Parks division will focus on tree well maintenance, plant strip improvements, and breezeway painting. The Mayor will kick-off the event from the steps of City Hall among IPP volunteers (although not a formal IPP event), service groups, Gatepath, high school students, etc.

- **Community Ambassadors Program - “Trashbusters”**

Keeping a City clean involves the cooperation and commitment of the community-at-large, where Homeowner Associations, neighborhood groups, service clubs, non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, and school groups take pride in their community - their City. This is the concept of the Community Ambassadors program, where volunteers representing the community gather monthly and become “Trashbusters,” by Adopting a Neighborhood or Block.

Under the Community Ambassadors program, each month and/or quarter the volunteer Trashbusters will focus on up to 10 key neighborhoods/areas in the City designated as prospective Adopt-a-Block opportunities by the City’s internal Clean Team.

- **Business Ambassadors**

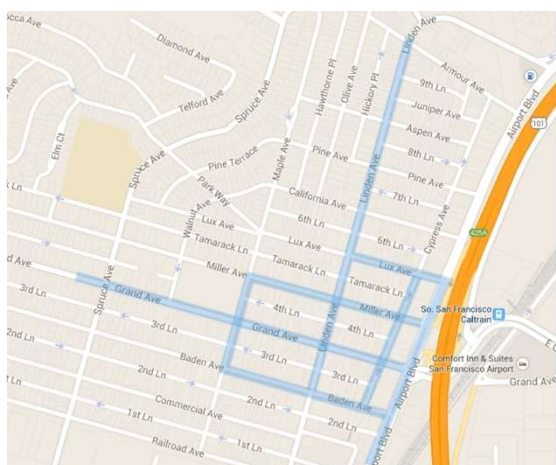
Several cities nationwide have implemented Adopt a Block programs that allow businesses and residents to volunteer and “adopt” an area that they commit to keeping litter free for a period of two years. Implementing a Business Ambassador program keeps the City of South San Francisco litter free and volunteers improve the appearance, property values, and attractiveness of the City. The program also reduces environmental pollution and prevents crime associated with blighted communities. Volunteering businesses help keep their adopted blocks clean by removing litter, and reporting graffiti, weed control, and blight issues. Under the Adopt-A-Block Business Ambassador program, businesses will commit to keeping their adopted block litter free for a period of a minimum of two years with the ability to renew. Businesses commit to cleaning up their block at least four times per year, and more

often if needed. Businesses may choose to clean up their adopted block themselves or contract the work out with a maintenance services company. If a business decides to clean up their block on their own, the City's maintenance service team will provide basic supplies such as gloves, vests, bags, and grabbers. The City's maintenance service team will also come out to an agreed upon location to pick up the litter collected.

After two successful clean-ups, the City of South San Francisco will put an adopt-a-block sign on the adopted area to advertise the efforts of the sponsoring business, providing recognition of the businesses commitment to keeping South San Francisco clean.

- **Downtown Façade Grant Program**

The City is developing a new Downtown Façade Grant Program. If approved by Council, the program would launch in July 2020.



Under the program, Downtown merchants located in the program area (indicated in blue on the inset map) would be eligible to apply for a matching grant to reimburse them for facade improvements. Qualifying improvements include: windows, awnings, signage, ADA improvements, fascia repair, and other similar work. Cleaning and maintenance would not qualify. To receive a grant, merchants must first fill out an application form, which requires property owner approval, a scope of work, and other information. City staff would review the application and work with the merchant prior to the façade work being done - and design assistance will be available, if needed. Once the grant is approved, the merchant would be free to complete the approved scope of work, and the grant would be paid in the form of a partial reimbursement for the work, upon proof of payment to the contractors. In previous years, the City has awarded grants for several successful Downtown façade projects, including: Ben Tre, Luminous Day Spa, Café 382, Bitters & Bottles, and the shops at 415 Grand.

- **Scavengers Vouchers**

This program would be available to all residents, but it would target residents who do not own their property. Currently, Scavengers provides two free pickups to residents of single-family dwellings, but will not do pickups at apartment buildings. Under the City of South San Francisco voucher program, residents (must show proof of residency) can go to the Public Works department and obtain a voucher, not to exceed three/year, for a Scavengers drop off. The vouchers are good for one truck load. Vouchers

are not transferable.

- **Big Belly Trash/Recycle Units**

Public Works has ordered and will install 10 Trash/Recycling units along Grand Avenue. These units are compacting, solar-powered, sensor-equipped waste and recycling stations that communicate real-time status to collection crews; eliminating unnecessary manual inspections, increasing efficiency, and allowing staff to address additional maintenance issues. Based upon information gathered from the first 10 installations, Public Works will install an additional 10 units throughout the City.

- **Updated Illegal Dumping Ordinance**

In 2019, City Council approved an amendment to the Illegal Dumping ordinance. Changes include increased fines, and place the responsibility for cleaning up of dumping on the property owner. The updated ordinance also makes the owners of Multi-Unit dwellings responsible for illegal dumping stemming from their property, regardless of where the dumping occurs. Public Works staff is updating the current illegal dumping signs with the \$1,000 minimum fine amount.

- **Shopping Cart Ordinance - Update Pending**

Public Works Code Enforcement is currently working with the City Attorney's office to update the City's Shopping Cart ordinance. The updated ordinance, which will be brought to City Council for approval, will require storeowners to provide a shopping cart business plan with additional steps to prevent shopping cart removal from their property. Measures required may include wheel locks, physical barriers such as bollards, or a security guard. Businesses failing to comply with the new ordinance will face increased penalties.

In addition, the City will contract with a cart retrieval service and will invoice business for carts retrieved. Continued collection of carts from a specific business may lead to revocation of their plan and require submission and approval of a new plan.

- **Graffiti Ordinance - Update Pending**

Public Works is also working with the City Attorney's office to amend the current Graffiti Abatement ordinance. The current ordinance requires a property owner to abate graffiti on their property within 48-hours. However, if the property owner does not, then the City will abate the graffiti at no cost.

The updated ordinance will require the property owner to keep their property free of graffiti and will impose administrative fees and penalties should the City be required to remove or paint over the graffiti.

City staff will continue to immediately remove offensive or gang-related graffiti. Under the proposed ordinance, property owners will be required to repaint any areas covered by City forces with the primary color of the structure.

- **Caltrans**

Staff recently updated the existing Delegated Maintenance Agreement (DMA) for City performed services on Caltrans Properties. The update increases the compensation for current work performed by City forces on Caltrans properties. The work consists of street sweeping, cleanup, and signal maintenance primarily along El Camino Real and Airport Boulevard.

City staff is currently in discussions with Caltrans to expand current maintenance agreements to allow city staff or city contractors the ability to clean up additional areas outside of those areas reserved for “Exclusive Freeway Use.” “Exclusive Freeway Use” describes active areas including on-ramps, off-ramps, and freeway shoulders. These areas require an encroachment permit and traffic control plan for entry, and are not eligible under a maintenance agreement. Obtaining an encroachment usually takes 3-6 weeks for approval once an application is submitted. A separate encroachment permit application and traffic control plan is required for each entry into areas reserved for “Exclusive Freeway Use.”

- **Staff Augmentation**

Public Works is preparing to release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in order to solicit proposals for on-call maintenance services. These services can be in any number of disciplines, including graffiti abatement, illegal dumping cleanup, traffic signal, and streetlight pole painting, curb painting, street striping, weed abatement, transient encampment cleanup, and concrete and asphalt repair. Staff will bring the agreements authorizing contract authority to City Council for approval at a later meeting.

- **El Camino Real landscape improvements**

As part of the larger Clean City initiative, Parks Maintenance staff continues to work with Public Works/Engineering staff to support the landscape improvements along El Camino Real, including the Grand Boulevard Initiative, and rehabilitation of the medians from Spruce Avenue heading north toward Chestnut Avenue. In the short term, staff will work with Caltrans to secure an encroachment permit and maintenance agreement to replace the existing median fence fabric on El Camino Real, between Country Club Drive and Orange Avenue, with a more aesthetically pleasing black vinyl clad option. This fence has historically been maintained by Caltrans, yet due to many years of neglect, it has fallen into disrepair. Long term provisions to replace the fence entirely are included in the larger median renovation project.

- **Enhanced maintenance services in high visibility areas**

In addition to ongoing maintenance activities described above, Parks Maintenance staff has proposed to increase the existing landscape maintenance services contract budget authority to enhance maintenance of streetscaping, right-of-way, particularly in high visibility arterial streets, such as Sister Cities Boulevard, Airport Boulevard, El Camino Boulevard, Junipero Serra Boulevard, Hickey Boulevard, Chestnut Avenue, Poletti Way adjacent to the new Caltrain Station, and Gull Drive in addition to an expanded scope of work on Centennial Way Trail. All of these areas are identified as “hot spots” for litter abatement and improved landscape maintenance work. Increasing maintenance in these areas will have an immediate positive impact in the aesthetics of these highly utilized thoroughfares.

Enforcement

In addition to a Zero Tolerance approach, the South San Francisco Police Department will focus on areas prone to illegal dumping, as well as expand current programs to engage our youth in clean up efforts.

- **Installation of surveillance cameras:** Based on 2019 reported illegal dumping incidents from EngageSSF, staff is recommending placing ten surveillance cameras in the top five high dumping areas in South San Francisco to combat or deter violators. These areas are Susie Way, Randolph Ave, Gardiner Ave, 3rd Avenue, and 4th Ave. The City will install cameras on City light poles and will use solar panels

and cellular connectivity to send video back to City storage where staff can review. In addition, the police department can use the cameras for other illegal activities in the areas.

- **Special services:** Initiating “special services” throughout the City while police personnel are on duty and conducting their regular duties. Officers and personnel will look for areas that require cleanup and initiate incidents that will be forwarded to the proper city department for cleanup. In addition, police will conduct extra patrol in the middle of the night in areas that are prone to illegal dumping.
- **Project NEAT involvement:** The Police Department will evaluate cases involving juvenile suspects that could be resolved by the juveniles completing the Project NEAT (Neighborhood Enhancement Action Team) program as an alternate to criminal prosecution. The juveniles will sign an agreement with their parent/guardian and agree to participate in eight hours of community service for each violation they commit. The community service will include the cleanup of areas around the City that are identified by the Public Works department.
- **Summer Youth Work Program expansion:** The Summer Youth Work Program is a program that was implemented in the mid 1990’s, and has been managed through the police department since its inception. The current program is comprised of six youth workers and one adult program manager. The current program runs seven weeks and begins one week after school breaks for summer, and ends one week before the students return to school for the following school year. The focus of the program is to clean up areas around the city that are identified by the Department of Public Works, which are in need of weed abatement, litter pickup, painting over graffiti, etc. The workers are sought out through our local high schools and youth groups, and they are each paid the minimum wage for the hours they work.

The police department proposes an expansion to the existing program by increasing the amount of workers to 12, and adding an additional manager to create a second team. Additional funding would be requested for FY21 to support this expansion.

Outreach

City staff will aggressively promote the efforts of City staff cleanup efforts through articles in the citywide newsletter, and on social media (Facebook, Twitter, NextDoor, and YouTube). In addition, citywide postcards will be mailed to residents promoting the Cleanup Events (*Spring Cleanup Day: April 18; Fall Cleanup Day: September 19*).

Additional outreach includes:

- **“Did You Know”** PSA campaign on Anti-Litter in South San Francisco. Once a month, we will advertise various facts/videos on anti-litter tactics in an effort to raise the awareness of Keeping South San Francisco clean.
- **“How Long Does Litter Last”** educational campaign posted on Breezeway banners, poster boards in the Municipal Services Building, Main and Grand Avenue Libraries.
- Profile our “Trashbusters” in the citywide newsletter - every quarter, residents will be introduced to a

group of volunteers and learn more about their efforts in keeping the City clean.

Anticipated Cost:

Item	Cost
Increased enforcement of Community Preservation Standards	\$25,000
Painting & preservation of Downtown historic light poles, traffic signals, controller cabinet, bike racks, and other street furnishings	\$100,000
Delivery, installation, and monthly leasing for 20 Big Belly Trash/Recycle units	\$40,000
On call staff augmentation for additional maintenance services	\$150,000
Enhanced right-of-way and streetscape maintenance	\$30,000
(10) Surveillance cameras for equipment, licenses and installation	\$80,000
TOTAL APPROVED MID-YEAR REQUESTS	\$425,000

FISCAL IMPACT

The total budget for the City led efforts is \$425,000, as detailed above. If Council approves this effort, it can be funded from the FY2019-2020 General Fund surplus as recognized through the mid-year budget process. Staff will be presenting the FY2019-2020 mid-year results to Council next week. Staff will submit separate Council action requests to fund the City's 2020 Anti-Litter effort for FY2020-2021 estimated to be approximately \$730,000, pending direction from City Council.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The City's 2020 Anti-Litter campaign aligns with the City's strategic priority of maintaining a Quality of Life for residents, businesses, and visitors.

CONCLUSION

Staff seeks City Council's direction on the City's 2020 Anti-Litter campaign.