



Memorandum

TO: BUILDING BETTER
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

FROM: James R. Helmer
Sara Hensley

SUBJECT: FREEWAY CLEAN-UP PROGRAM **DATE:** 02-17-04

Approved

Date

RECOMMENDATION

Receive status report on the City of San José/Caltrans Regional Freeway Clean-Up Program.

BACKGROUND

In December 2003, Councilmember Williams, along with staff from the offices of the Mayor, Councilmember Campos, the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS), met with representatives from the California State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to develop strategies to address litter removal from local Freeway segments and interchanges. The discussion focused upon the current state budget shortfall and as a result of the impacts of this shortfall, the dramatic staff reductions facing Caltrans. These reductions have led to a decline in the frequency of freeway sweeping and other maintenance activities, which has led to a noticeable increase in the visibility of roadside debris. It was determined by the attendees at the December meeting, that a reasonable near term goal would be to pool the collective resources of the participating jurisdictions in an attempt to address the litter removal problem.

The goal of the Freeway Clean-Up Program will be to supplement Caltrans' efforts to maintain the appearance of local freeways and improve the overall aesthetics of state-maintained roadways within San José. The clean-up effort intends to utilize existing City resources while seeking grant funds and other personnel to expand the program over time.

ANALYSIS

The current economic climate has created significant challenges for the State Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Budget cuts, staff reductions, and a slow recovery have combined to force a depletion of Caltrans resources, particularly those devoted to freeway maintenance and clean-up in Caltrans District 4. The Mayor and City Council have expressed an interest in dedicating city resources to support Caltrans' maintenance efforts.

Staff from DOT and PRNS has met with Caltrans to develop a comprehensive clean-up strategy that incorporates the following elements:

- Identification of specific areas that include high traffic volumes and significant levels of litter and debris.
- Determination of priority areas designated for regular joint maintenance efforts.
- Establishment of a regular schedule for maintaining targeted areas.
- Meaningful performance measures and a method to report progress.

Gateway/Corridor Selection

Staff determined that a reasonable goal, given existing financial resources, would be to identify specific “gateways” and hotspots throughout the freeway system in San José upon which to focus clean-up efforts. These locations would generally be entrance points into the city, or areas where litter is most noticeable, e.g., the Route 87 corridor near Mineta San José International Airport or freeway interchanges, and access points to major employment and commercial centers. Once a broad spectrum of potential locations has been identified, a list of targeted clean-up candidate sites would be determined. Attachment A highlights potential candidate sites for the Clean-Up Program.

Regularly Scheduled Clean-Up

Once the City’s priority sites have been selected, City and Caltrans staff will develop a schedule of regular maintenance activities for the targeted locations. Specific maintenance activities and timeframes will vary from monthly to quarterly as determined necessary. It is noted that a near term impact of this strategy will be that non-targeted locations in the region will likely go unattended for longer periods of time as a result of the current limited staff and limited state and local resources.

Performance Measures

City staff will apply performance measures that are currently utilized in the evaluation of landscape property and citywide litter conditions as a starting point for evaluating the cleanliness of these priority locations. These measures will be regularly collected and evaluated to assess progress. Staff will report on the status and effectiveness of the clean-up program on a quarterly basis. At regular intervals, staff will evaluate the targeted locations and identify any modifications that may be necessary.

As part of these coordinated activities staff will utilize available resources where appropriate. Specifically, utilization of volunteers, Caltrans’ Adopt-a-Highway Program volunteers and participants utilized by DOT through the Santa Clara County Alternate Work Program (AWP) will offer additional support for these local clean-up efforts. At the same time, staff will continue to seek grant resources that would help fund expanded clean-up efforts. An immediate

goal for this endeavor will be a joint clean-up effort at both the I-680/McKee Avenue interchange in Council District 5 and I-680/Berryessa Road Interchange in District 4 in East San José. Combining resources will allow a more comprehensive, and longer lasting effort to clean-up of sites like these.

Enforcement and Education

Two elements of a comprehensive program that are vital to the success of any clean-up effort include enforcement and education. Local Police Departments, County Sheriffs and the California Highway Patrol cited 161 commercial and individual debris haulers from July to October of 2003. Staff will monitor these statistics on a regular basis and work with law enforcement to expand their oversight of haul routes where appropriate. In the Spring of 2004 the City of San José in cooperation with the Santa Clara County District Attorney's office, will be initiating an "Avoid the 13" type campaign to address the problem of escaping debris from unsecured commercial and individual truck beds.

In addition to enforcement, public education and responsibility awareness needs to be encouraged. Staff will work in an ongoing way to identify funds and programs, like the national Keep America Beautiful campaign, and the State's proposed "Don't Trash California" campaign, that will help promote litter education at the local level.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This item will seek to coordinate efforts with volunteers in the communities surrounding targeted clean-up locations

COORDINATION

This item has been coordinated with the State Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

COST IMPLICATIONS

The activities of this effort are expected to be completed with existing resources.

JAMES R. HELMER
Director of Transportation

SARA HENSLEY, Director
Parks, Recreation and
Neighborhood Services

Attachment

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