

CELEBRATE NEW BEGINNINGS

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Willow Glen Times

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San Jose District 10 councilman gets early jump on the job

By Vicente Vera
San José Spotlight

San Jose Councilmember-elect George Casey is starting his job a couple of weeks early.

He stepped into his new position before his other colleagues Michael Mulcahy and Pamela Campos, who won their elections in District 6 and 2 respectively, because the District 10 seat had been filled by appointment in January 2023.

Casey attended his first San Jose City Council meeting as a newly-elected city official on Dec. 10 to prevent a gap in district representation after incumbent Councilmember Arjun Batra bid farewell the previous week.

City Clerk Toni Taber said the explanation lies within the city's appointment process. Batra, who lost to Casey in November, was appointed and served for two years after Matt Mahan left mid-term to serve as mayor.

Councilmember Domingo Candelas, who was also appointed last year to fill the District 8 vacancy when voters elected Sylvia Arenas to the county Board of Supervisors mid-term, kept his seat after being formally elected to office in November.

Their appointed terms began Jan. 30, 2023 and were set to end after a candidate was elected in the next regularly scheduled election, and the results were certified. County election officials certified the November election results on Dec. 5.

"Therefore, both Councilmember Candelas and Councilmember Batra's terms end upon certification of the election. This leaves a gap from Dec. 10 to Dec. 31, 2024 where no councilmember is in office," Taber said.

San Jose cyclists unhappy with traffic safety barriers

By Vicente Vera
San José Spotlight

Traffic safety improvements meant to protect San Jose and Los Gatos may have actually made cycling on a busy road more dangerous, bicycle riders said.

San Jose transportation department workers recently added plastic barriers known as "bollards" along Los Gatos Almaden Road to protect cyclists in the bike lane from reckless drivers. City leaders made the decision to add them after approving the City Better Bike Plan 2025, which activated the road as a protected bike lane. But after cyclist Alayne Yellum said a vehicle struck her husband, Don Yellum, in July, she questions whether the plastic barriers are partly to blame.

Her husband has made a full recovery, but Alayne said the bollards are too high and create a blind spot for distracted drivers.



The protected bike lane on Los Gatos Almaden Road. Photo by Vicente Vera.

"The idea behind the bollards is to get you to slow down, look over your shoulder and then make your right hand turn. Well, we all know some people just don't slow down," she told San José Spotlight. "They don't look for bikes."

A Dec. 6 email reviewed by San José Spotlight shows transportation officials responded to the concerns by installing a yield sign above Los Gatos Almaden Road's busiest intersection on Union Avenue, along with doubling the amount of bollards.

Transportation department employees

plan to connect with students at Union Middle and Leigh High schools to educate them on how to navigate the intersection. As part of outreach effort, transportation officials shared flyers promoting San Jose's initiative aimed at achieving zero traffic fatalities.

"It's not really a safe intersection for cyclists or pedestrians, especially kids when they're going to and from school," Don Yellum told San José Spotlight. "Shouldn't the sign be 20 or 30 yards away to alert drivers?"

See BOLLARDS, page 4

Memorial commemorates 197 lives lost to homelessness in Santa Clara County this year

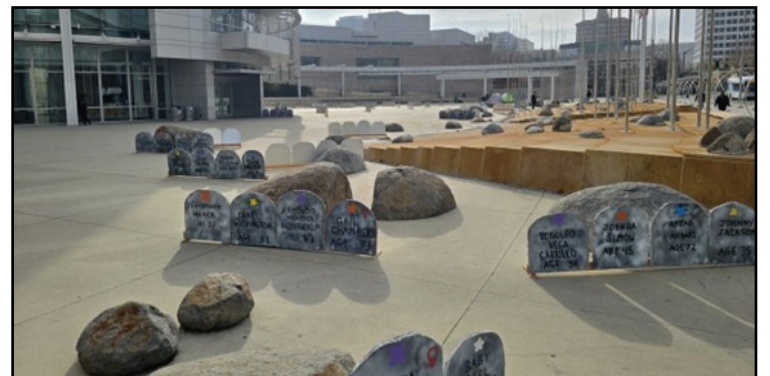
By William Bellou
Publisher

HomeFirst hosted a Homeless Memorial to honor 197 individuals who died while homeless in Santa Clara County in 2024 on December 20th at the Boccardo Reception Center.

The event was a remembrance of those lost, highlighting the urgency of addressing homelessness, inspiring action to tackle the ongoing crisis.

HomeFirst's CEO, Andrea Urton, spoke, as did Mayor Matt Mahan, and following this, Reverend Andy Ligot led a short service. The name of every person who passed away was read during the memorial, giving all who attended a moment to reflect upon each life lost.

Numerous local elected officials and HomeFirst staff read the names of those who died aloud one-by-one. For many of the 197 individuals



Tombstones in front of San Jose City Hall commemorate the 197 homeless persons' lives that were lost. Photo courtesy of Todd Langton.

being remembered, the memorial was the only commendation they received.

This year's deaths show a three percent decrease compared to 2023, reflecting the progress made locally in reducing homelessness. However, the numbers also reveal the ongoing challenges, as 197 lives were lost, spanning from newborns to centenarians.

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Times **Community News**



San Jose State University student **Hannah Perez** (left) and Student Homeless Alliance President **Jaylin Flores** on campus. Perez will serve as the group's president next semester and said it's likely more students face homelessness than are accounted for. Photo by Lorraine Gabbert.

San Jose State University students are still battling homelessness

By **Lorraine Gabbert**
San José Spotlight

Homeless San Jose State University students are struggling to find housing — and worry where they're going to sleep at night as they stress over schoolwork and passing grades.

The Student Homeless Alliance, which advocates for unhoused SJSU students, is pushing to expand the number of emergency beds available and for seven safe parking spaces in garages for those living in their vehicles. But the effort has been slow as the alliance has met with its partners only once this school year, Student Homeless Alliance President Jaylin Flores said.

The group is working with Associated Students on a resolution to hold university leaders more accountable for providing food and housing assistance for unhoused students. If progress isn't made, she said the group may join with other organizations to rally next semester.

"I, myself, also struggle with making ends meet," Flores told San José Spotlight.

"I receive (financial aid), but it's still not enough. A lot of students don't have financial support from their families. It puts up a big barrier for students when they're trying to get their education. If they are unhoused... a lot of these students might feel ashamed. They might feel embarrassed to reach out and ask for help. We're here to push for more resources for these students... so there are sufficient resources to help them."

Flores said school leaders need to take this situation seriously.

"We're going to keep fighting," she said.

Kednel Jean, case management director for SJSU Cares, said students who ask for help will have a safe place to sleep. SJSU Cares assists students facing economic crisis by providing support and referrals for food, housing and emergency assistance.

"Currently, we do not advertise the number of available beds, as it may create a false impression to students that we will run out of bed spaces," he told San José Spotlight. "We've developed solutions that enable us to rapidly add on- and off-campus beds if a student's needs exceed the current reserve of 12 on-campus beds."

The Student Homeless Alliance successfully fought for those beds and previously asked for safe parking spaces.

"If a student prefers to sleep in their car over staying in university housing or a hotel,

they will be referred to established San Jose city supportive parking programs that meet their needs," Jean said.

A March SJSU Cares survey showed about 2% of nearly 700 respondents lacked a "fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence" within the past year for at least one night, Jean said. According to SJSU Care's 2023-24 annual report, SJSU Cares received 385 requests or referrals for students requiring emergency housing in 2021-22. The number decreased to 345 in 2022-23, and to 315 in 2023-24.

Student Hannah Perez, who will serve as Student Homeless Alliance president next semester, said it's likely more students face homelessness than are being reported.

"When everyone leaves campus there are students that don't have a place to go," she told San José Spotlight. "Not everyone is going to answer a survey and get the resources they need."

Jean said 30 students received a place to sleep through the on-campus emergency bed program in the 2023-24 academic year, with an average stay of 20 nights, and 42 students received emergency housing grants. SJSU Cares placed 30 students in the rapid rehousing program in 2023-24, more than double the 14 students placed in 2022-23.

Although SJSU Cares displays signs on campus and social media, Flores said it should advertise emergency beds with banners in high traffic areas saying, "Are you housing insecure? We have beds available," rather than "a little poster on a pinboard at the back of the building."

With state support from a higher education student housing grant, Jean said the university offered 124 below-market-rate student beds in its new Spartan Village this fall and plans to expand capacity to 535 by spring 2026.

Jean said although these types of housing assistance can make a major difference, housing insecurity remains a serious issue for San Jose State University students. One of the primary challenges is the limited availability of affordable off-campus housing in a high-cost area like San Jose, she said.

"It's important to recognize that addressing housing insecurity requires collaboration, not just from SJSU Cares but also from the broader community," Jean said. "Through these combined efforts, we're making progress, but we know there is still more work to be done to ensure that every student at SJSU has access to stable and affordable housing."

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Times News



Bollards along Los Gatos Almaden Road are raising safety concerns for local cyclists. Photo by Vicente Vera.

Bollards

Continued from page 1

A field investigation determined the existing sign is adequate, transportation officials said.

“We received reports of vehicles driving between the delineators to make the right turn from eastbound Los Gatos Almaden to southbound Union to attempt to bypass cars lined up at the signal,” city transportation spokesperson

Colin Heyne told San José Spotlight. “Based on this information, extra bollards were added approaching the intersection.”

The bollards along Los Gatos Almaden Road aim to slow down drivers and provide a barrier protecting the bike lane, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition Deputy Director Deanna Chevas said.

Nevertheless, the city’s bicycle safety efforts haven’t been enough to mitigate the high levels of distracted driving and speed-

ing in recent years, she added. San Jose saw its highest rate of traffic fatalities in recent history in 2022 with 65 reported deaths. That number dropped to 49 last year, according to the Vision Zero task force.

“San Jose’s (Department of Transportation) has also run a communication campaign to inform drivers of how easily they can influence street safety by slowing down and being watchful. Perhaps more driver education and

enforcement are needed to change driver behavior,” Chevas told San José Spotlight.

Alayne Yellum said she’s thankful city transportation officials followed up with safety improvements. But she fears other cyclists might get injured the way her husband did if the 3-foot-tall bollards remain.

“I just don’t go that way anymore. I completely avoid the corner.”

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Almaden Senior Association
at the Almaden Community Center
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San Jose plans tiny homes on Cherry Avenue

By Joyce Chu
San José Spotlight

A long overdue agreement between San Jose and Santa Clara County's largest water agency to build housing for homeless residents has been greenlit and is slated to break ground next month.

The San Jose City Council unanimously voted on last month enter into an agreement with Valley Water to build a new tiny home facility at Cherry Avenue. The city will be able to lease the land until Dec. 31, 2035, with the option to extend it for another five years. The site will house up to 136 people when finished next September, expanding from its original 96 beds. The temporary emergency housing site will be built across from the Hampton Inn on land owned by the water district, where dozens of people are camped along the Guadalupe River.

"It's finally here, I can't believe it," District 9 Councilmember Pam Foley, whose district includes the site, said at the meeting. "I'm just so pleased that we're going to be able to move the unhoused out of the creek and into these units and I can't wait for that to occur."

The overall time from when the process started to completion will be about three years, a timeline Valley Water Director Jim Beall said has been too slow.

"The more you wait, the higher it's going to cost," Beall told San José Spotlight. "Now that we got this template of how we agree on things, why don't we just do some other ones, and do it quicker?"

In 2022, the Valley Water board directed the agency's employees to look for ways to address homeless people living on agency land. The water agency decided to partner with San Jose to come up with a plan for its Cherry Avenue property, and in June 2023 the city council approved the site for temporary housing with the intention to move those living at the Cherry Avenue encampment into the future tiny homes.

Valley Water spokesperson Matt Keller previously told San José Spotlight the initial delay came from wanting to develop an agreement that would prevent homeless people from re-encamping next to the tiny homes once built. That's been worked out, as Valley Water and the city developed a no-encampment zone from Blossom Hill to Branham roads. A further work plan will be developed to ensure the area remains free of trash.

The construction of the site comes at a time when home-



Above left: San Jose plans to add 136 tiny homes for unhoused residents on Cherry Avenue. File photo. Above right: A map of where the Cherry Avenue tiny home site will be located. Image courtesy of San Jose.

less people are being banned from camping on Valley Water-owned land and could face up to \$500 fines for doing so. Valley Water will enact the policy starting Jan. 2.

The people camped at the proposed tiny home site will be temporarily relocated during construction and will be given priority placement once the site is ready to open, San Jose Housing Director Erik Solivan said at the council meeting.

When asked where people will be relocated, housing department spokesperson Jeff Scott deferred to Valley Water. Keller told San José Spotlight that while the water agency will be conducting sweeps in early January, the city is responsible to provide homeless people with relocation options.

Additionally, the city is responsible for shelter intake and keeping track of the homeless people who have priority placement into the tiny home site after construction is complete, Keller said. Scott did not provide details on how the city intends to keep track of the homeless people during the temporary relocation period, or whether any city workers will be present when Valley Water begins the sweeps.

The project costs \$18.3 million and will be funded with about \$9 million from the state and \$7 million from Measure E, a property transfer tax approved by city voters in 2020. The city also received about \$2.4 million in philanthropic donations. DignityMoves is the developer and will receive up to \$15 million to design and construct the site.

The site will have central laundry, private bathrooms and an outdoor picnic area. It will also have case management, security and other services to help people transition into permanent housing. The city has not chosen who will be the service provider. Once the site is up and running, it will cost about \$5 million annually to operate, or \$37,500 per bed.

Mayor Matt Mahan wants to add 784 beds over the next year to tackle the homelessness crisis. The beds will be

spread across five tiny home locations: Via Del Oro, Cerone Yard, Cherry Avenue, Branham and Monterey Road and an expanded Rue Ferrari. The city currently has approximately 500 beds across its six tiny home sites.

"I think it's a great example of the two agencies working together to help solve the homeless crisis," Todd Langton, executive director of Agape Silicon Valley, told San José Spotlight. "It's still way too little and hopefully not too late. We need hundreds, if not thousands more (shelter beds). We need to cut the red tape between the agencies and make this happen sooner and quicker and bigger."

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Times **Local News**

New laws going on the California books in '25

There are a few California laws that will go into effect in 2025, with broad influence on the Golden State's economy, schools, streets, environment and workplaces.

Here are a few of the most significant new laws:

Cannabis and alcohol

Assembly Bill 1775 allows dispensaries to serve non-cannabis food and drinks to customers who can relax and smoke on the premises. These new businesses will officially be known as "cannabis consumption lounges." The idea is to get people out in the communities across the

state and allow businesses to bounce back from the pandemic.

Artificial intelligence

Assembly Bill 2602 makes it illegal to use an AI-generated likeness of an actor's image or voice without their permission. Assembly Bill 1836 allows a deceased artist's estate to collect damages when their artificial likeness is used without permission.

Education

Assembly Bill 1780 cracks down on children of wealthy donors or alumni getting special treatment in admissions decisions by colleges and universities in California. Sponsors of the bill said the practice disproportionately benefited white and wealthy students.

Public school employees won't be able to disclose a student's gender identity or sexual orientation to their parents — or anyone else — under Assembly Bill 1955. The law also protects staff who support LGBTQ students

and requires the California Department of Education to provide those students with resources. The law passed on a party-line vote, with Democrats in support and Republicans in opposition and several lawmakers abstaining.

History teachers will be required to teach the negative consequences of Spanish colonization and the Gold Rush, and the perspectives of contemporary Native Americans, under Assembly Bill 1821.

Housing

Senate Bill 1395 seeks to ramp up construction of so-called tiny homes by exempting them from the California Environmental Quality Act. The goal is to use tiny homes temporarily to house homeless residents which is embraced by San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan.

California's Attorney General will have more power to crack down on local governments that flout state housing mandates

with Senate Bill 1037. The law allows AG Rob Bonta's office to fine cities and counties \$50,000 per month for violating state housing law.

Senate Bill 1211 allows a homeowner to build more detached ADUs on their property than what was previously allowed.

Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose to host El Día de los Tres Reyes Magos cultural event

Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose will host its 27th annual El Día de los Tres Reyes Magos cultural event on January 11, 2025 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The special programming starts at 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

The celebration will feature art



activities, tortilla making, Rosca de Reyes tasting, photo opportunities with the Three Kings, ballroom dancing with Studio M, and lively folklórico dance performances and instruction from local dance groups Los Lupeños Juvenil, Brenda Lopez Folklorico Group, and El Grito de La Cultura.

Attendees are encouraged to perform their talents at our open mic event. Miss World America 2024, Athenna Crosby, who is a San Jose native and proud Latina-American, will host an engaging bilingual storytime about the Tres Reyes for attendees.

The Día de los Tres Reyes Magos event was originally conceived and designed in partnership with an advisory board composed of local leaders from the Latino community. Twenty-seven years later, it has become a much anticipated and popular program, and the Museum is thrilled to continue this joyful tradition.

"We believe it is important to create programs where people from all backgrounds can explore the rich customs and traditions that represent the diverse cultures in Silicon Valley," said Jessica Torres, Director of Education and Programs at the Museum. "It's critical that children and families see themselves and their culture represented in the community and in community organizations such as ours."

About El Día de los Tres Reyes Magos

The Three Kings (or Epiphany – the Feast of the Three Kings) is widely celebrated by many cultures around the world and is observed in many Spanish-speaking countries. The holiday celebrates the three kings' arrival in Bethlehem with gifts for the baby Jesus. Our program brings to life these rich traditions of family gatherings, gift giving, music, dance, and art activities.

Admission: \$18 for children and adults; \$16 for seniors; infants under one & members are free. Tickets: <https://www.cdm.org/event/el-dia-de-los-tres-reyes-magos>

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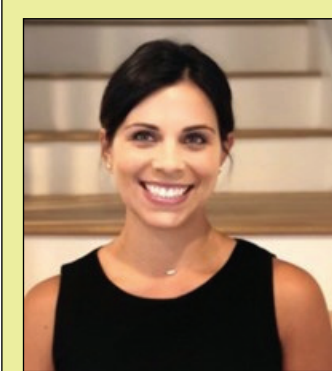
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Election results show voter frustration, revolt against political establishment

By Matt Mahan

This week, election results were finally certified here in California. I know this election cycle felt endless for many of us and, like me, you're hopeful that the propositions and leaders we supported will create the change we need.

In case it wasn't already clear, this election sent a message that voters are frustrated and want to see results. Here in California, for example, Prop 36's more than 2-1 margin of victory was a voter revolt against the political establishment's complacency on public safety and addiction. I heard this same frustration when I ran for mayor three years ago and committed to focusing City Hall on the basics and increasing accountability for better outcomes.

The people of California are continuing to send the message, and we need our elected officials up and



From the Mayor
Matt Mahan
Mayor, San Jose

down the state, from the local level to Sacramento, to listen. Voters are telling us they want their government to focus on reducing crime, ending homelessness, cleaning up the state, and reducing our high cost of living, especially by addressing rising housing and energy prices. They are not interested in partisanship and political posturing.

So far, I'm not sure the message has gotten through. Last week, I sat down with Elex Michaelson, host of "The Issue Is," to talk about Sacramento's distraction and how I'd like to see California move forward, led by

pragmatic cities like San Jose.

I hope you'll take a moment to watch the interview and tell me what you think: <https://youtu.be/pQ8hzHJkPDw>

I also hope you and your loved ones have a chance to relax this holiday season, enjoy each other's company, and celebrate your blessings. I know I'll be taking a few days with Silvia, Nina and Luke to catch up on some of the board games and family hikes I've missed this year.

Read on below to hear more about what's happening in San Jose this month. In early January, our newsletter will recap some of our collective accomplishments in San Jose this past year and share an early preview of what we have planned for 2025.

Happy holidays and a very Happy New Year to you and your family!

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Security Camera Registration with the San Jose Police Department is now available. The registration program enables CAM registrants who are using video in an area in which a crime occurred. Police would ask CAM registrants to check their video surveillance system for a specific date and time for video that may show activity involved with a crime, such as a getaway car or the direction that a person of interest was headed. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/3y8a97fto> to learn more about the program, including how to register!

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Times Local News

Holiday Giving Event:
Hunger at Home and Many Paths One Destination bring holiday cheer to families at Lincoln Glen Church

Hunger at Home and Many Paths One Destination hosted a Holiday Giving Event to support local families facing food insecurity and struggling economically at Lincoln Glen Church on Dec. 21.

More than 300 families participated and received a holiday meal, grocery provisions, gifts for the children, and more to ensure that everyone in our community, regardless of circumstances, enjoys the promise of the holiday season.

Volunteers and staff distributed complete holiday meals, including poultry, mashed potatoes, and other seasonal favorites, alongside Hunger at Home's regular grocery provisions.

With more than 37 percent of people living in Silicon Valley facing food insecurity and families continuing to struggle with inflation, the event was designed to make sure no one is left behind.

The Holiday Giving Event is more than a food distribution—it's a celebration of community, compassion, and the holiday spirit. At a time when many families face challenges, this event offers a lifeline, ensuring everyone can experience the joy



and dignity of the holiday. The event featured a toy distribution that will allow children the opportunity to personally select their gifts.

Santa Claus greeted families and posed for photos to add a touch of holiday magic. Together, these efforts help families obtain the resources they need to celebrate the holiday season with dignity and joy.

About Hunger at Home

Each day in Silicon Valley, tens of thousands of pounds of excess food and surplus goods are dumped into landfills and go to waste. Hunger at Home was created to connect this food to those in need. Hunger at Home partners with local convention centers, hotels, and restaurants to collect excess food and goods to distribute to the homeless and hungry through a robust nonprofit network. To date, Hunger at Home has donated 12.5 million meals locally.

TECH JARGON OF THE WEEK
Zero Trust Models

By Shubhi Asthana



Have you ever stumbled into a conversation where everyone is speaking around this “techie” word – and even after you’ve broken in, it is difficult to understand the unfamiliar jargon and acronyms? Well, there’s no need to sweat it. Let me teach you the meaning of some commonly used tech words:

Zero Trust Models

Zero trust is a cybersecurity approach based on a simple principle: never trust, always verify. Unlike traditional systems that assume users or devices inside a network are trustworthy, zero trust assumes every request could be a potential threat until proven otherwise. Think of it as airport security for your digital systems—everyone, even frequent flyers, must go through checks before they’re allowed in.

How Does Zero Trust Work?

Zero trust applies strict controls at every step. Here’s how:

1. Verify Identity: Every user or device must prove who they are. For example, when you log into an app, it asks for not just your password but also a verification code from your phone.

2. Least Privilege Access: Users and devices only get access to what they need. For instance, an employee in marketing can see campaign data but not financial

records.

3. Continuous Monitoring: Activity is constantly checked. If unusual behavior occurs—like someone trying to download all the company files—it’s flagged immediately.

Let’s take an example: Imagine a bank’s vault. In a traditional system, employees inside the bank might have easy access to the vault because they’re “trusted.” But with zero trust, even employees must prove their identity, justify their need to enter, and only access the specific valuables they’re authorized to handle.

So why does it matter?

In today’s world, cyber threats are more sophisticated, and sensitive data can be at risk even from insiders or compromised accounts. Zero trust adds layers of protection to ensure that no one gets more access than they truly need, reducing the chance of data breaches.

Zero trust isn’t about being paranoid—it’s about being careful. By verifying everyone, limiting access, and staying vigilant, organizations can keep their systems secure in a constantly changing digital landscape. Whether it’s protecting your bank account or your company’s trade secrets, zero trust is the modern way to stay safe.

About the Author

Do you enjoy reading this column? Send in your comments or feedback to the author at shub.saxen@gmail.com. Shubhi Asthana works as a Research Senior Software Engineer at the IBM Almaden Research Center, San Jose.

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PATH social worker Mei Curry and her colleagues walked up and down Guadalupe River Trail in San Jose on Jan. 24, 2023 to tally the number of homeless people along the waterways. File photo.

San Jose counts homeless people along creek ahead of sweep

By Joyce Chu

San Jose officials have homed in on a stretch of waterway to clean up debris and ban homeless encampments.

A 12-mile stretch along Coyote Creek is slated to be cleared of homeless people starting in January and an encampment ban will be reinforced following that. The areas include Tully Road to Capitol Expressway, O'Toole Lane to Corie Court, around Coyote Meadows and Kelly, Watson and Roosevelt parks.

City officials visited part of the creek last week with workers from homeless nonprofit People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) to count the population along this section of the waterway. The headcount will help determine how many people need to be moved. The count is still ongoing, and results will be known in January.

"Knowing how many people live along our waterways provides needed insight that will shape our interim housing and shelter strategies, helping us get our unhoused neighbors indoors faster by starting outreach early," Mayor Matt Mahan told San José Spotlight.

"We've made historic budget investments to address homelessness, and accurate data ensures we're putting every tax dollar to good use."

The city is under scrutiny to comply with the Clean Water Act and reduce pollution in the waterways or face a fine. Mahan said roughly 90% of pollution in local creeks and rivers is caused by homeless encampments, and in February the city approved a plan to sweep multiple homeless camps along the Guadalupe River Trail and bar unhoused people from returning.

Officials are also racing to build shelters and tiny homes, though several sites that were supposed to have opened this year face delays. Mahan wants to add 1,500 temporary beds for homeless residents over the next 18 months.

Several tiny home villages are expected to open next year, including the Cherry Avenue site in September, which can house up to 136 people, an expansion of the Rue Ferrari site in October, which can accommodate an additional 134 people, and Via Del Oro early next year, which will accommodate 150 people. San Jose has the largest homeless population in the county, with approximately 6,340 homeless residents, 4,411 of whom live on the street, along waterways or in tents.

A sanctioned encampment is expected to be up and running by the end of March near Watson Park and will serve as a navigation center,

where participants will be given three daily meals, have access to shower and laundry facilities and get connected with supportive services. The goal is to move people within 30 days of placement to another temporary housing site such as a tiny home or congregate shelter — where people share a common space with limited or no privacy — or into permanent supportive housing.

"The city is continuing to build out the housing and shelter supply in our housing continuum so unhoused residents have safe, dignified destinations," city housing department spokesperson Jeff Scott told San José Spotlight. "In this particular instance, we have been engaging with unhoused residents (along Coyote Creek) for many weeks. Case management is available to assist these individuals, and a navigation site will be coming online in 2025 to provide even more assistance to unhoused residents who are seeking shelter and housing."

Santa Clara County's main water supplier, Valley Water, also passed a policy that bans homeless people from encamping along 333 miles of creeks where it owns land rights. The ban takes effect Jan. 2.

There are more than 700 people encamped along Valley Water property, and there are an estimated 1,000 homeless people living along creeks and rivers in San Jose. The city is not coordinating with Valley Water to clear encampments located on the agency's property, Scott said.

There aren't enough shelter beds for all the people living at the waterways, and shelters in the city are often "jam packed," homeless advocate Scott Largent previously told San José Spotlight.

There were 900 emergency shelter beds in the city in 2019, according to a Department of Housing and Urban Development study — though San Jose has ramped up efforts to house homeless residents. Since then the city has built six emergency temporary housing sites with nearly 500 beds.

Homeless advocate Todd Langton, executive director of Agape Silicon Valley, was at Coyote Creek with his organization a couple weeks ago to distribute food and tents. He said he's shocked by the amount of trash he saw.

"I do feel like the waterways needs to be cleaned up," Langton told San José Spotlight. "But the ratio of (people getting abated) doesn't keep up with the number of transitional housing that is available. So it's the same old question — where are they going to go?"

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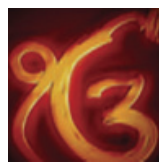
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