

May 3, 2022

San José City Council  
City of San José  
200 E. Santa Clara Street  
San José CA 95113

Comments for Item 7.1 File 22-612 – City Roadmap – Encampment Management and Safe Relocation Policy

Dear Mayor Liccardo, Vice Mayor Jones and Councilmembers:

SPUR submits this letter in response to city staff's report and update on the status of the City's Encampment Management and Safe Relocation Strategy ahead of an FAA deadline to comply with regulations. The City's encampment management strategy includes four strategy objectives: (1) Clean the City's Public Spaces; (2) Create Setbacks for Priority Locations; (3) Identify Sites that Promote Safety and Belonging; and (4) Connect People to Social Services and Meet their Basic Needs.

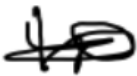
We believe that encampment abatements should be considered as a last resort instead of a solution, and that the City must continue working alongside the County to house vulnerable populations in permanent supportive housing and provide aligned social and behavioral health services. Given the FAA's deadline to comply with regulations in Guadalupe River Park, we appreciate that city departments are working collaboratively, and between other local county and state agencies, to address the housing, behavioral and mental health, and other basic needs of unhoused residents in the park. We are hopeful this will lead to a strategy that is rooted in an equitable approach that addresses the current need, and believe the call for a month-by-month work plan is appropriate given the complexity of the situation.

The underlying forces that cause homelessness are deeply rooted in housing, economic, and racial inequity. Homelessness is just the tip of the iceberg – a symptom of broader economic and social

forces and experiences that include rising housing costs, systemic racism, unstable employment, mass incarceration, physical and mental health challenges, income inequality, discrimination, and domestic abuse. While homelessness is a current condition that park managers and stewards must work with, the city, county, and state must continue addressing the housing shortage, income inequality, and other structural causes of homelessness.

Further, we recognize that cleaning, oversight, upkeep, and public space activation are just as important as initial capital investments in our parks. Operations and maintenance include repairs, landscaping, cleaning, and waste management that are critical to the success of a public space. SPUR will continue to engage with the city and county to address these needs for the long-term success of all parks and for the well-being of all residents in San José.

Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'FB' or similar initials.

Fred Buzo  
San José Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Erika Pinto' in a cursive script.

Erika Pinto  
San José Planning Policy Manager