

Public Safety Updates:

Police Staffing

In FY 2013, City Council initiated a hiring incentive bonus to help fill police officer position vacancies. To date, the Santa Cruz Police Department has 94 sworn positions, with 85 positions filled. SCPD has 3 positions on conditional job offers for lateral police officers, which would bring total vacancy to 6 positions. Additionally, there are several police officer candidates in the background process.

Campsite Cleanups

Parks and Recreation Department is managing the City's current campsite cleanup efforts in partnership with the Santa Cruz Police Department, County of Santa Cruz Public Works Department, Caltrans and the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC). A camp clean-up crew is currently being staffed by seasonal parks workers. This crew along with additional labor from "Labor Ready" continues to address and clean up camps throughout the city both on public and private property. Funding for this project of \$50,000 was approved by City Council for Fiscal Year 2014.

Partnerships with Community Organizations for Cleanups

City staff recently walked the San Lorenzo River Levee with the community group "Levelies" to explore existing conditions there and potential remedies. Additionally, staff met with several property owners in that area to discuss collaborative efforts we can undertake to deter criminal activity. Finally, the City will place a 24-hour portable restroom in the area later in September, with several security measures in place to reduce vandalism and misuse.

Regional Cooperation/Public Safety Citizen Task Force

The Public Safety Citizen Task Force had its inaugural meeting on May 7th. Meeting every two weeks, the Task Force is two-thirds of the way through its six-month process. The Task Force has invited many regional partners to the table for candid discussions around drug abuse and related crime, mental illness, behaviors and activities being experienced in our public spaces, violent crime, gangs and the criminal justice system. Thus far, the Task Force met with 20 experts, most from neighboring jurisdictions, to hear their perspective on solutions and build new collaborative approaches. The Task Force will hold three more educational meetings on September 18th, October 2nd and October 9th, before it begins deliberations on recommendations. Another community input/comment session is scheduled for October 9th. Details of that meeting will be available on the City's website at www.cityofsantacruz.com/safetytaskforce

Needle Exchange Reforms

Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency reformed the needle exchange program this past April, and issued their first 90-day report. Their new practices include using professional County staff to administer needle exchange services onsite at the County's Emeline and Watsonville health clinics. According to their report, in total, the clinics received more needles than they provided in exchanges with clients. The next

report will include more information regarding the home delivery segment of the service that is operated by volunteers. Additionally, HSA is leading an inter-agency task force on needle exchange reforms, with City Management and SCPD staff participating in the effort.

Cowell Beach Water Quality

Parks and Recreation Department is managing the City's current program for monitoring and addressing water quality at Cowell Beach in partnership with the California Coastal Commission and City Public Works Department. The City's plan consists of three proactive approaches: daily cleanups along the beach and Wharf, testing and potential diversion of various storm drain outlets, and continued water quality testing with Stanford University and County Environmental Health.

The current work schedule to improve Cowell Beach is as follows:

1. Fix the identified gutter seep on lower Pacific Avenue. Work is scheduled to be performed after Labor Day as this is a high pedestrian traffic location. Work will be completed by October 25th. To eliminate current impacts before work can commence, the gutter drain has been plugged and all flow has been contained. This catch basin will remain plugged until the "diversion" project is complete. Staff inspected all of the properties in this area and have found no additional private sewer issues.
2. The storm drain manhole at end of Bay Street has had high bacterial levels. Staff plugged the outlet from that manhole and are following up with more testing including human marker testing. As a preventative measure, the manhole will remain plugged for the rest of the summer.
3. The County and Stanford University are performing human marker testing at 10 locations throughout the summer and into the fall. Locations include Cowell Beach, several manholes on Neary-to-Cowell pipeline and several locations in Neary Lagoon. Test results are not yet available. However, previous human marker testing at Cowell and Neary Lagoon has ruled out the Wharf, San Lorenzo River and wrack (kelp) as significant contributors to water quality issues.
4. Staff will submit an application for installing a gate to shut off Neary Lagoon from the beach. The City will need Coastal, Fish and Game, railroad permissions and the Army Corps of Engineers to proceed. The project is schedule to receive a coastal permit at the City Zoning Administrator meeting on September 18. We hope to install the gates in November.

Water quality data this summer at Cowell Beach is mixed. Overall the test results used by the "Heal the Bay" annual report are better than last year. As an example, there were fewer postings this summer compared to last for exceeding enterococci limits. Even with this improvement Cowell is receiving an "F" grade in the weekly Beach Report. The Beach Report uses a complicated system to rank beaches so it is impossible to tell if the Cowell Beach west of the Wharf site will be off the "bummer" list, but test results are improving incrementally.

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Next summer with the gates installed (item 4 above) and the fix to the gutter seep (item 1 above) should result in better water quality at the beach.

Park Ordinances

Parks and Recreation Department is managing this program for the City. The goal of the program is to offer enhanced safety for park employees and visitors by empowering Park Rangers to issue stay-away orders to patrons that are violating Municipal Codes or park rules. The Police Department is playing an integral role in enforcement and reports have been favorable thus far. As a whole, most patrons have received a citation and have willingly removed themselves from the park. Enforcement and overall safety monitoring of our parks will be slowly moving to seasonal Park Rangers rather than First Alarm officers.

Miscellaneous

The San Lorenzo River is maintained by Public Works per the San Lorenzo Urban River Plan (adopted by Council on June 24, 2003). The river plan specifies the vegetation that is allowable with regards to flooding. In order to comply with the plan, Public Works thins Levee vegetation in August/September to prepare for the rainy season. This work reduces flood potential along the Levee, while also eliminating opportunities for illegal activity and encampments in the area.

Additionally, Public Works recently upgraded the lighting (with energy efficient LEDs) in the parking lots near the Kaiser Permanente Arena, the San Lorenzo Benchland Park and along the pedestrian bridge over the San Lorenzo River. This lighting upgrade has resulted in fewer instances of loitering in those areas at night. The City continues to evaluate lighting upgrades throughout the levee area to improve safety.

City and County Contact Information:

For Emergencies, any suspicious behavior, or found needle syringes PLEASE CALL 9-1-1

It is appropriate to call 911 for calls which involve a crime, accident or incident requiring a uniformed police officer to respond. Please do not hesitate to call 911 for anything that requires a police response.

However, if you are experiencing a non-emergency situation and prefer to report a crime online, visit www.santacruzpolice.com, or call 831-471-1131 (**only if the statements below are true**):

- This is **not** an emergency
- This incident occurred within the Santa Cruz City limits (visit www.cityofsantacruz.com/maps)
- There are **no known** suspects
- This did not occur on a state freeway
- You have a valid email address to receive a copy of this report

Anonymous information can also be placed with the Police Department by calling 831-420-5995. You can leave a crime tip online at www.cityofsantacruz.com/crimetip

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Illegal campsite hotline – 831-420-5892

Illegal dumping/garbage – 831-420-5548

Graffiti – 831-420-5303

Issues with Needle Exchange, contact the County Human Services Agency at 831-454-4000