



Department of Public Works

Golden Gate Park Illegal Encampment Project 2006

Setting the Stage to Increase Cleanliness Standards in the Park



Mayor, Gavin Newsom
Department of Public Works Director, Fred V. Abadi, Ph.D.
Deputy Director of Operations, Mohammed Nuru



DPW Crew at Work





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Chapter One

Overview

In order to preserve the natural beauty of Golden Gate Park, Mayor Gavin Newsom has called for an interdepartmental effort that encompasses both a plan to provide outreach services to homeless individuals living in the Park and to clean up the Park, including the removal of illegal encampments that have created significant health hazards.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) and other City agencies implemented the Golden Gate Park Illegal Encampment Project which covered the entire park from the Great Highway to Stanyan Street and from Lincoln Way to Fulton Street. The primary objective of the



Mayor Gavin Newsom, right, speaks with Robert Bearden, who has been homeless for 28 years, during the mayor's tour of Golden Gate Park in November 2006. Photo: Examiner 11/20/06

90-day initiative (September 29 – December 29) was to achieve positive and sustained

"For the next 90 days, city crews from the Department of Public Works and the Recreation and Park Department will canvass the park seven days a week to clean up encampments, moving from east to west. Over the past two weeks, city crews have found sites with couches and bookshelves – and even with running water where people have tapped the park's irrigation system."

- San Francisco Chronicle, 10/1/2006



outcomes where the Park would be free of litter, hazardous materials, and illegal homeless encampments, and to help the estimated 200 homeless individuals living in the park to transition into services to improve their lives.

The Human Services Agency and **Department of Public Health** deployed their Homeless Outreach Teams (HOT) to all six sections of Golden Gate Park in order to engage individuals in services and to provide them with an alternative to living in the Park. HOT case workers provided homeless individuals with access to temporary housing, shelter, and/or transportation home through the City's Homeward Bound Program. Individuals placed in temporary housing engage in a case managed "Street to Home" plan with the goal of obtaining permanent housing and needed

supportive services.

The Department of Animal Care & Control

responded to and investigated complaints of animal neglect or cruelty, and reports of vicious and dangerous animals in Golden Gate Park as

part of the Golden Gate Illegal Encampment Project. The Department of Animal Care & Control is often called to assist the San Francisco Police Department, and would pick up, transport, house and care for the pets and



Officer Sadler with Stray Dog



animals of people detained, hospitalized or institutionalized as part of the Golden Gate Illegal Encampment Project.

SFPD officers assigned to the Operation Outreach Program have worked collaboratively with the Homeless Outreach Team to help individuals into housing and/or to receiving services. The Homeless Outreach Team was able to get some individuals out of the park and into the Homeward Bound Program. “The mission of Operation Outreach is to determine the places most frequented by the homeless, provide strict attention to those areas, contact the homeless, determine their needs, and work collaboratively with various City agencies resulting in the administering of homeless services for those in need.”

The San Francisco Recreation and Park

Department is the official steward and authority of famous Golden Gate Park. The crowning jewel of the Department’s 3,400 acres of jurisdiction, it is 1,017 acres in size and is visited by approximately 20 million people per year from all over the world. There are hundreds of noted destinations throughout the Park and the Department maintains all aspects of the Park’s operations maintenance, horticulture, concessions, publicity, stewardship, and administrative oversight. The Department’s role in the recent Illegal Encampment Project was to: provide collaboration with all other participating agencies, assist with the physical removal and dismantling of the camps, assist with public safety efforts, store and make available to the public any recovered property, dispose of and keep track of tonnage of removed debris, direct



press/media and public inquiry requests, and provide overall expertise, background data and institutional knowledge relating to the location, frequency and magnitude of illegal camps throughout the Park.

Park Rangers provided security for the Recreation and Park Department and the Department of Public Works crews as they entered into campsites throughout Golden Gate Park. Park Rangers offered outreach services to illegal campers and assisted in defusing hostile campers who were uncooperative and abusive toward City workers. In some cases Park Rangers cited people for illegal camping or dumping.

Mobile Assistance Patrol (MAP) provided transportation to relocate campers to shelters

or medical facilities. MAP is an integral part of Mayor Gavin Newsom's new outreach collaborative, the San Francisco Homeless Outreach Team (SFHOT). MAP outreach workers, licensed mental health workers, and City outreach workers form a skilled team offering comprehensive services to the homeless person on the street.

Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services (MONS) is dedicated to helping the citizens of the City & County of San Francisco receive the highest levels of service possible from all areas of City government. A community liaison was assigned to work on the Illegal Encampment Project to ensure that the Mayor's Office is involved with helping to improve the quality of life for all San Francisco residents.

"Items of obvious value – such as a bike, a pair of leather shoes and a radio – were placed in bags and tagged so owners can later retrieve them from the city."

- San Francisco Chronicle, 10/1/2006

Setting the Stage to Increase Cleanliness Standards in the Park



Chapter Three

Outreach

Overall outreach for the entire Park started in mid-September, when notifications were distributed. After the initial outreach efforts, outreach teams from the City's Public Health and Police departments engaged people who were homeless and notified them that overnight camping is illegal. They were then offered alternatives to sleeping in the Park. These alternatives included: drug treatment, medical detoxification, stabilization housing, permanent supportive housing, shelter, public benefits, and/or transportation.

Notices were left at illegal campsites after DPW crews cleared out the homeless encampments to further convey the message that camping in the Park is illegal. California Penal Code Section 647i, and the City and County of San Francisco Municipal Park Code Article 3, Section 3.12 and



Notices that were left at illegal campsites

Section 3.13 permitted DPW crews to legally remove encampments.

According to Trent Rhorer, Executive Director of the Human Services Agency, "Homeless outreach has been successful, having moved 83 individuals out of the Park and into temporary housing. Another 30 individuals have been





provided transportation to be reunited with their friends or family in cities across the United States.” The majority of the people who were

affected were between the ages of 18 and 34, according to the Public Health Department, and 30 to 40 percent were from out of town.

Setting the Stage to Increase Cleanliness Standards in the Park



DPW strategically divided the park into six sections to ensure that each section received adequate attention and resources. Efforts began on the eastern side of the Park and then moved west. Below is a brief description of each of the sections.

Section 1: Fulton Street from Stanyan Street to 6th Avenue

Hotspots include Horseshoe Pit, McLaren Lodge, Fuchsia Dell, Peacock Meadow, and Racoon Hollow. This section has significant amounts of underbrush, ivy, and poison oak. DPW crews spent a significant amount of time clearing underbrush, raising the tree canopy, and spreading wood chips and mulch underneath tree areas to improve the area and to make camping more difficult. Many of the



*DPW crew canvassing the park for debris:
Whiskey Hill Area*

illegal campers in this section, particularly in the Horseshoe Pit area, were loners between the ages of 16 to 25 years old who would typically panhandle at Stanyan and Haight streets in the afternoon and returned to the encampments at night. Items that were found in this section included bicycle parts, skateboards, needles, and sleeping bags.



Lincoln Way from Stanyan Street to 3rd Avenue

Hotspots include Children’s Playground, Carrousel, Whiskey Hill, and Sharon Meadows. It was evident that campers in this section had lived in the Park for quite a long time due to their large accumulation of belongings and living arrangements. Some of the encampments found in this section were built into the hillsides,



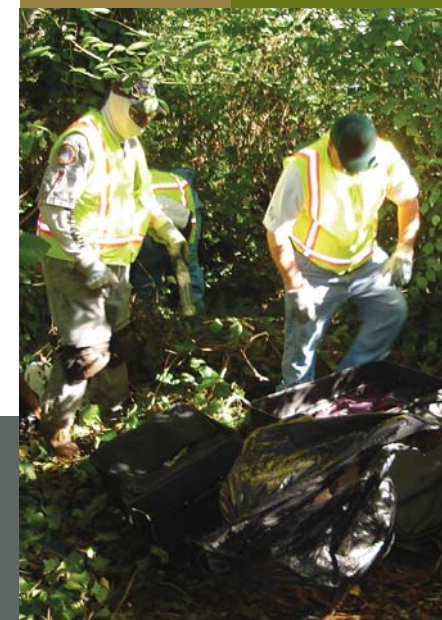
Graffiti on Trees

using tarps and blankets to insolate the walls. Campers in this section were predominantly young adults ages 20 – 30 years old living in pairs. Items that were found in this area included large amounts of sleeping bags, needles, alcohol, and debris. Many residents along Lincoln Way at this area complained to DPW crews that their automobiles had been being broken into.

Section 2:

Fulton Street from 6th Avenue to Park

Presidio Hotspots include Rhododendron Dell, Powell Street Railroad Station, Heroes Grove, and Fulton Playground. DPW crews found a number of trees covered with graffiti and etch markings here. Items that were found in this area included syringes, human waste, sharp objects, and debris.



Lincoln Way from 3rd Avenue to 9th Avenue

Hotspots include Lilly Pond, Big Rec Ball Field, Handball Courts. The fallen tree limbs and the large amount of full size ferns in these areas made it easy for campers to build their encampments. This section consisted of young adults ages 16 - 23 years old. Items found included tents, sleeping bags, clothing, pornographic material, and drugs.



Section 3:

There were no homeless encampments in section 3 because of the San Francisco Botanical Garden.

Section 4:

Fulton Street from Park Presidio to 25th Avenue

Hotspots include the Rose Garden and Stow Lake. There were more than 25 large encampments along the pathway of 14th Avenue to 25th Avenue and many of the encampments have accumulated large amount of debris over the years. People here collected shopping carts filled with bicycle, computer, skateboard, and computer parts. This area required repeated Police assistance.



Lincoln Way from 19th Avenue to 25th Avenue

Hotspots include Speedway Meadow, Marks Meadow, the Pump Station, Crossover Drive, and Overlook Drive. Due to the standing water surrounding the Pump station area, there is a lot of brush and shrubs. This section was predominantly men ages 35 - 45 years old, and DPW found a lot more alcohol consumption and less hypodermic needles than the Fulton side of Section 4. Right above Speedway Meadow, DPW crews found an encampment that was hooked up to an electric wire to provide campers with electricity.

Section 5:

Fulton Street from 25th Avenue to 38th Avenue

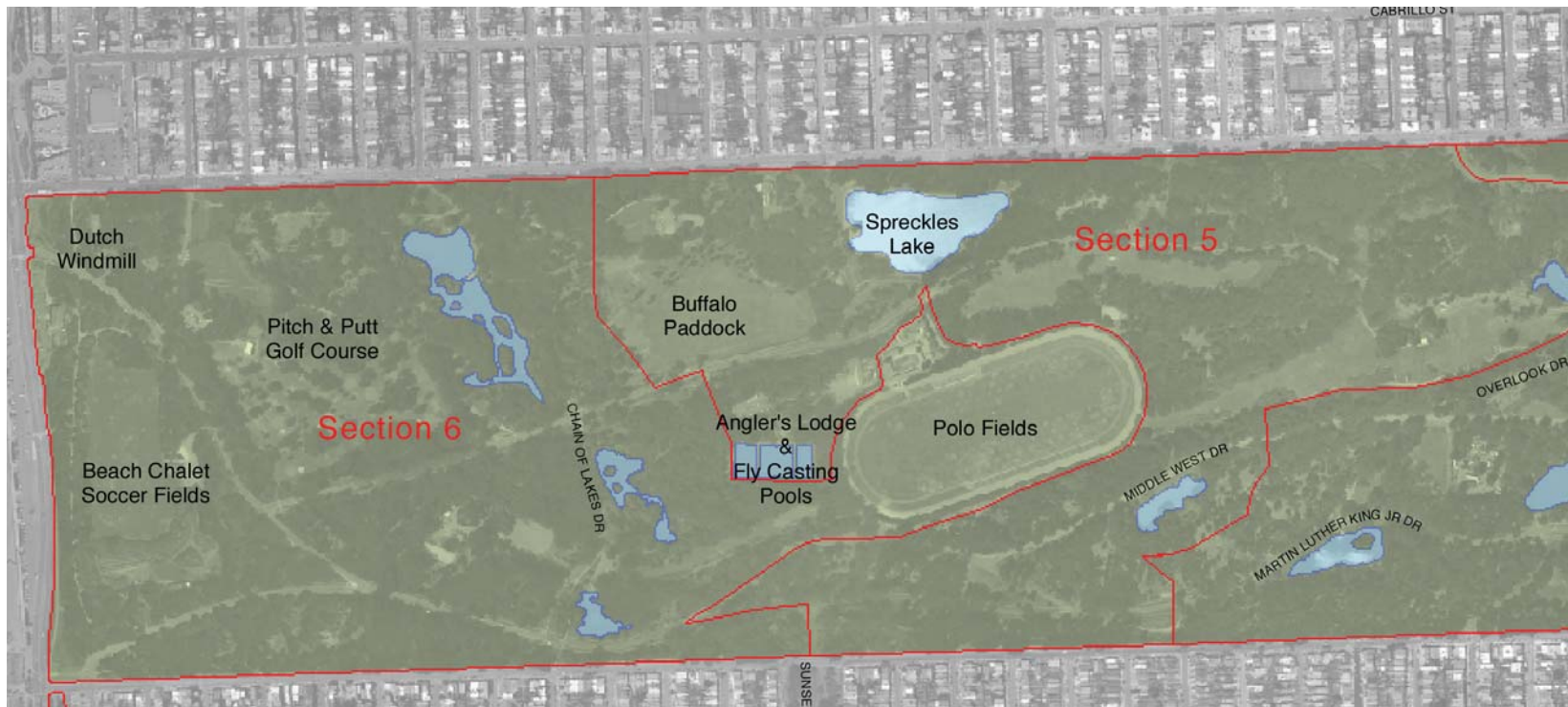
Hotspots include Spreckels Lake, Senior



Hypodermic needles

Citizen's Center, Dog Training Area, Model Boat Club, and Lindley Meadow. DPW found fewer encampments in this area, but more debris. Items that were found in this area include: hypodermic needles, human waste, and sharp objects.





Lincoln Way from 25th Avenue to Sunset Blvd.

Hotspots include Mallard Lake, Metson Lake, Golden Gate Park Stadium/Polo Field, and Anglers Lodge. This section was unique because many of the campers in this area were better prepared to live outdoors and many

had access to a vehicle, which many lived out of. Some had professional camping gear such as warm clothing, cooking utensils, etc. DPW crews found a number of animal abuse incidents in this area and contacted Animal Care and Control.





**Section 6:
Fulton Street 38th Avenue to the Great
Highway**

Hotspots include Archery Field, Visitors Center/Beach Chalet Brewing Company, Dutch Windmill, and Northlake. Section 6 had a lot of abandoned encampments.

DPW found a number of Safeway shopping carts in this area filled with debris.

**Lincoln Way from Sunset Blvd. to the Great
Highway**

Hotspots include Fly Casting Pool, Bercut Equitation Ring, Murphy Windmill. DPW crews



Chapter Five

Illegal Encampment Cleanup

DPW continuously removes dirt, refuse and graffiti from City streets, plazas, stairways and other areas for reasons of public safety, health and beautification; therefore, DPW was able to bring their expertise and resources to the Park.

With less than a week's notice, DPW's Bureau of Street Environmental Services was able to pull together a crew and mobilize resources to tackle the ongoing problem of illegal encampments in the Park and to raise cleanliness standards. Illegal encampments have created significant health hazards that include discarded needles, rodent infestation, feces, and trash.

To ensure that DPW crews were able to operate safely, efficiently, and effectively, DPW crews received comprehensive training



DPW Director of Operations, Mohammed Nuru (right) breaking down an illegal campsite in Golden Gate Park

before entering the Park. Training included procedures for dealing with campsites and the removal of property found in the Park, data collection, radio communication, and safety. Police and park rangers were available to provide reinforcement, when needed, during the cleanup.



Initially, DPW was requested to provide temporary services to assist RPD crews in the clean up of Golden Gate Park's illegal encampments. Two teams of six crewmembers from DPW canvassed the Park from east to west, four days a week, including holidays, to clean up illegal encampments. On November 11, 2006 the crews reduced canvassing the Park to two days per week, and on December 29, 2006, a list of recommendations and all duties were returned to RPD. In the end, DPW had spent \$203,464 and accumulated 4,680 labor hours on this project.

Both DPW and RPD crews kept a daily log in order to identify hotspots, or areas that required constant

DPW & DRP GGP Homeless Clean Up Project Daily Log

Supervisor	Class <u>7215</u> Name <u>Youngh Jung</u>	Date <u>11-12-06</u>
Crew Members	<u>9916 Maryn Reed</u>	Day of Wk <u>Sun</u>
	<u>9916 Bridgette Wilson</u>	
	<u>9916 Candyn Fathi</u>	
	<u>9916 Andrea Castellini</u>	
	<u>9916 James Loville</u>	

	Location	Comments	Start Time	End Time	Hours at Location
Sec 5	MARY Meadows	Remove Trash from AREA	0745		
	TRANS VERS DRIVE	2 camps removed from area			
	MIDDLE DRIVE	2 camps removed from area			
Sec I	HORSE SHOE HILL	Occupied camp clean up			
	HORSE SHOE PIKE	Remove Trash from area			
	Stuyvesant/Hutton	Clean up area 3 camps at site			
	Pue Hsia DELL	Clean up area			
Sec I	Stuyvesant/Hayes	Remove Trash from area			
Sec III	Rosewood/Gilbert	Remove Trash from area			
	CARD TABLE AREA	" " " "			
	Area @ Hutton/Kennedy	1 large camp site clean up			
	Area @ Hutton/Playground	Clean and remove trash		5:00p	
Sec 2	Conservation Road @ Both Rows	Remove all litter and debris			

DPW Materials Used 1 Box 3X Tyvek, 1 Box 4X Tyvek, 1 Box latex Gloves, 1 Pack Painter Hooks.

Daily Log Sheet



Chapter Five

Illegal Encampment Cleanup

attention. DPW crews documented pictures of hypodermic needles stuck in trees and piles of needles found near a soccer field used by children.

During the 90-day initiative, DPW removed a total of 1,146 illegal encampments and 70 tons of debris from the Park. Debris consisted of old blankets, sleeping bags, dirty clothes,




Illegal homeless encampment in the Lilly Pond area

dead animals, rotten food, bicycle parts, human feces, hypodermic needles, and other toxic and hazardous materials. Though DPW crews worked in dangerous and hazardous conditions, there were no significant accidents reported.



DPW staff hauling away debris from the park





PROPERTY FOR IDENTIFICATION		
CASE NO.	<input type="checkbox"/> INITIAL <input type="checkbox"/> SUPPLEMENTARY	LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE
DATE OF INITIAL INCIDENT		TYPE OF OFFENSE/OCCURRENCE
DATE PROPERTY BOOKED		SUSPECT # 1
UNIT		SUSPECT # 2
REPORTING OFFICER # 1		VICTIM/REPORTEE # 1
REPORTING OFFICER # 2		VICTIM/REPORTEE # 2
DESCRIPTION OF ITEM - ONE TAG PER ITEM		
STAPLE PROPERTY BAG COPY OF ARREST RECORD OR PROPERTY RECEIPT TO TAG WHEN APPLICABLE		

Tag of Property For Identification

The Recreation and Park Department's Procedures for Property Found in Parks and Recreation Facilities sets forth guidelines and procedures for the proper removal of personal

property from the Park. The policy includes:

- Procedures when no one is with the property
- Procedures for attended property



Chapter Six

Caring for Property Found

- Policies and procedures pertaining to all property
- Procedures for return of property

DPW and Recreation and Park Department crews strictly followed this policy whenever a campsite was cleaned up. Staff removed trash from unoccupied campsites without hesitation and disposed debris in the Corporation yard debris box, separating out the metal and hazardous waste and disposing of that in

appropriate locations. Weapons and/or stolen property were turned over to the Police.

The Recreation and Park Department stored all other personal belongings for 90 days at the storage container located next to the Kezar Stadium Parking Lot on Stanyan Street between Frederick and Waller. After the 90 days, the Recreation and Park Department disposed of stored property, as required.

"Dozens of used hypodermic needles littered the sandy pathways between campsites, and at times, crews found them stuck in the trees. Also a concern to crews: the prevalent use of park undergrowth as a toilet."

- San Francisco Chronicle, 10/1/2006





Director of Public Works, Fred V. Abadi, Ph.D. (center), DPW BSES Assistant Superintendent, Tim Hines (lower right), and DPW crew assigned to the project

crew to gather in-depth information on their experience and to get frontline recommendations to remedy the problem of illegal encampments in Golden Gate Park. To get a wide range of responses, the focus group consisted of General Laborer Supervisors, Environmental Service Workers, and General Laborers. Comments included:

On December 21, 2006, a focus group was conducted with the Department of Public Works' Bureau of Street Environmental Services

"We saw an unbelievable amount of dangerous and hazardous materials in the Park, from knives laying out in the open to bags of feces tied in



trees. Someone could easily get hurt.”

“Some of the areas were more hostile than others.”

“Within a matter of weeks, illegal campers figured out our schedule and routes. By the time we returned on Friday, the sites were filled with debris again.”

“We found hypodermic needles, and other hazardous materials near the Fulton Playground located on Fulton Street at 8th Avenue.”

“At one location, illegal campers built their home by digging a huge hole and water proofing it with tarps. You would have never guessed it was there.”

Recommendation

The recommendations in this report are not exhaustive but should serve as a foundation for exploring the options available.

- ① 7 day a week cleaning to deter campers from returning between cleanups
- ② 4 crews with 5 members assigned to various sections of the Park
- ③ Designate equipment such as packer and pickup trucks for cleanup; therefore, having the ability to track tonnage of debris removed
- ④ Clear underbrush and remove any pruning so makeshift huts cannot be built from tree limbs or brush



- ⑤ More trash receptacles throughout the Park
- ⑥ Coordinate with outreach groups to define areas that have been notified of services and alternatives to camping in the Park
- ⑦ Specific training for the removal of hazardous materials such as syringes, human waste, sharp objects and poison oak
- ⑧ Enforce the no loitering law in the park to prevent people from camping in their cars and generally discouraging people from staying in the park after hours.
- ⑨ Create a volunteer program that provides outreach to people who may want to camp in the park on a year round basis. Volunteers could also help with cleanup activities.

"The undergrowth and trees are so dense in parts and some encampments so well concealed that crews could be just feet away from someone before realizing a person was there."

- San Francisco Chronicle, 10/1/2006





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WHAT'S NOT WORKING

Thick undergrowth conceals shady activities: A labyrinthine thicket of trees and bushes on a slope just outside Golden Gate Park on Lincoln Way conceals what appears to be an illegal encampment. When we visited at the request of a tipster, ChronicleWatch found a pile of clothing and blankets across Lincoln from a residential neighborhood near 16th Avenue and nestled between gnarled tree trunks. Three syringes, a crack pipe and a lighter were at the base of one tree. Broken glass, more syringes, syringe caps, cigarette butts and other debris were strewn on the ground. The hidden crash pad is the sort city crews attempted to flush out of the park during a cleanup campaign begun by Mayor Gavin Newsom in late September. The tipster who reported the problem to us said she first alerted the mayor's office, members of the Board of Supervisors, police, the district attorney and the Department of Public Works. "The crime continues unchecked, just yards



Who's looking into it: Yomi Agunbiade, S.F. parks manager, (415) 831-2700; yomi.agunbiade@sfgov.org





The San Francisco Chronicle, December 11, 2006





RESULTS: DAY 10

Illegal encampment cleared: ChronicleWatch tipster Linda Nelson is sleeping better now that the illegal encampment outside Golden Gate Park and across the street from her home has been cleared. After The Chronicle revealed last week that thick undergrowth outside the park was concealing evidence of illicit drug use by campers, San Francisco police and other city agencies sprang to action. Public works crews cleaned up syringes, syringe caps, feces and other litter from the location on Lincoln at 22nd Avenue. Park and Recreation workers pruned foliage and removed plant material to make the spot more visible. The collaborative response is emblematic of efforts to flush out hidden crash pads after Mayor Gavin Newsom addressed the problem of illegal encampments in September, said Rose Marie Dennis, city Park and Recreation spokeswoman. “They have all





worked together, and I'm — finally — very happy with the response," Nelson said, adding that the city should keep a close eye on the spot to prevent its former inhabitants from returning. "There was a guy out there this weekend," she said.

— *Vanessa Marlin*

The San Francisco Chronicle, December 21, 2006



EXAMINER.COM

City march to clean park, relocate homeless goes on



Sajid Farooq, The Examiner
Nov 10, 2006 2:00 AM (68 days ago)

SAN FRANCISCO -

The City has torn down 380 homeless encampments and is removing a ton of garbage a day from Golden Gate Park since it implemented a plan two months ago to evacuate the homeless, officials said.

(Cindy Chew/The Examiner)
Mayor Gavin Newsom, right, speaks with Robert Bearden, who has been homeless for 28 years, during the mayor's tour of Golden Gate Park on Thursday.

Halfway through an effort to beautify the park, city officials placed 66 homeless people in housing and another 33 have been given services, either for substance abuse or mental illness, according to Recreation and Park Department General Manager Yomi Agunbiade. The majority of the people removed from the park were between the ages of 18 and 34, according to the Public Health

Department, and 30 percent to 40 percent of them were from out of town.

In September the mayor began a 90-day campaign to remove homeless encampments, provide services for an estimated 200 people living in the park and haul away trash from the 1,017 acres of



The City's largest green area, after residents complained about safety and trash in the park. The City began sweeping through the eastern part of the park near Haight and Stanyan streets and is making its way west. On Thursday the mayor toured the park and said that, despite being shocked by what he has seen and heard, the cleanup of the park was "looking good."

"The goal is to make this a long-term concerted effort," Newsom said, adding that on the surface the park does not look too bad but "when you get deep into the park I'd see things I never [have], and I grew up here."

The City has had five employees — from the departments of Public Health, Public Works, and Recreation and Park — working seven days a week to first make contact with the homeless and offer them services and then to haul away trash.

"People are taking the services and as we come back to the park we are seeing less and less people," Agunbiade said. "We are hearing back from people that the park looks clean."

After the 90-day period is over, The City will examine how clean the park is and if the number of homeless people seeking shelter in areas such as Hippie Hill has declined. Agunbiade said The City has to continue a sustained effort indefinitely. The mayor said there has been some discussion about creating a police force to monitor the park. The Recreation and Park Department has five rangers patrolling the park.

"It's something that people are discussing [and] that's something we are discussing but nothing we are advancing," Newsom said. "We have resource problems."





A Special Thanks to our DPW Staff

Mohammed Nuru, Deputy Director of Operations

James Armstrong, BSES Superintendent

Phil Galli, BSES Assistant Superintendent

Tim Hines, BSES Assistant Superintendent

Chris Montgomery, BSES Assistant Superintendent

Cesar Luna, Crew Supervisor

Vaughn Taylor, Crew Supervisor

Amy Craven, Crew Supervisor

Jose Cabrea

Andrea Celestine

Steve Cobb

Walter Edison Jr.

Carolyn Foster

Jayme Loville III

Marcus Ross

Jerry Sample III

Brigitte Wilson





Bicycle Parts

Items Found



Hypodermic Needles



Knife



Bullet



Litter

Mattress





Department of Public Works
Operations Bureaus
2323 Cesar Chavez Street
San Francisco, CA 94124
(415) 695-2003
www.sfdpw.org