

YOUTH COMMISSION

September 27, 2021

6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

**I. CALL TO ORDER & ORDERS
OF THE DAY**

A. ROLL CALL

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

II. PUBLIC RECORD

III. OPEN FORUM
(2 MINUTES OF SPEAKING TIME IS
AVAILABLE)

IV. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. APPROVE AUGUST 23RD, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

B. APPROVE AUGUST 23RD, 2021 ATTENDANCE
RECORD

C. APPROVE DISTRICT SPECIFIC YOUTH ADVISORY
COUNCIL (YAC) WORK PLANS

D. APPROVE DISTRICT SPECIFIC FLIERS

E. APPROVE DISTRICT SPECIFIC PROJECT
PROPOSALS

F. APPROVE LETTER TO DISTRICT 5 COUNCILMEMBER
TO FILL THE DISTRICT 5 VACANCY ON THE YOUTH
COMMISSION

G. APPROVE TOWN HALL SCHEDULE FOR FISCAL
YEAR 2021-2022

V. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

**A. DISCUSS AND APPROVE
THE AD-HOC PROJECT
PROPOSAL (N. HOANG)**



YOUTH COMMISSION – PROJECT PROPOSAL

Date written: September 3, 2021

Date of Event: TO BE DETERMINED (Preemptively October 2021 - February 2022)

Name of project proposal here:

Youth Commission Ad-Hocs

One time event on-going event

The San Jose Youth Commission Ad-Hocs will be teams of Commissioners and public youth who work in small groups to write policy proposals, letters, or other deliverables at the discretion of the Commissioners and youth in order to address areas of the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year focus, including but not limited to: the digital divide, the environment, LGBTQ+ issues, mental health, civic engagement, and marginalized communities.

History/Background

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, in the 2018 - 2019 Fiscal Year, the San Jose Youth Commission hosted ad-hocs lasting from October to February. These youth met on a basis of at least once a month in City Hall to draft policy proposals and other deliverables. In the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year and onwards, the Commission was unable to continue Ad-Hocs. This year, in order to increase youth engagement civically, we will be opening the program again to engage more youth in policy writing.

Connection to YAC and Youth Commission Work plan

This project ties into Objective 1, Action Item 4 through providing a platform for youth to be civically engaged.

Vision

A platform for youth to write policy proposals and other deliverables on topics of youth concern and interest.

Goals

1. Goal #1: Diversity of thought.
2. Goal #2: Youth attendance will be average to high.
3. Goal #3: All ad-hocs will complete a deliverable.

Objectives

Goal #1 = Diversity of thought.

Objective 1 = Collaborate with the Library department and local high schools to outreach.

Objective 2 = If in person, host the ad-hocs in a central area that is not inaccessible to youth. If virtual, ensure tech accommodations are available.

Goal #2 = Youth attendance will be average to high.

Objective 1 = Collaborate with the Library department to outreach to youth.

Objective 2 = Ensure retention rate by creating a contact list of youth to inform them of upcoming meetings.

Goal #3 = All ad-hocs will produce a deliverable.

Objective 1 = Inform and educate youth on the different types of deliverables (policies, letters, projects, etc.)

Objective 2 = Set a deadline for youth to finish their deliverables by.

Resources and Collaboration

If in-person, we will need food, proper outreach, fliers, and a room to meet in. We will also need a projector and a slide deck for each day.

If virtual, we will need a slide deck, a Zoom meeting room, fliers, and outreach.

For collaboration, the San Jose Youth Commission will be working with the San Jose Library Department to outreach to youth.

Critical Factors of Success

1. Youth attendance and interest are extremely important, and;
2. Tangible and specific deliverables need to be produced.

Potential Obstacles

1. Lack of youth retention, leading to needing to orient new youth constantly;
2. Lack of preparation, leading to disorganization in deliverables and research;
3. Time mismanagement, leading to only a few teams being able to create deliverables.

Strategy for Recruitment & Marketing

The San Jose Youth Commission will be creating a flier in order to market the ad-hocs to all schools and in libraries. We will also be each individually outreaching to our schools in order to gain youth attendance.

Overview of Event

As this is a multiple-month event, we will create the daily schedule as-needed, however, a meeting day will usually follow this structure:

6:00 - 6:10 - welcome, norms, rules

6:10 - 8:00 - research and writing of the deliverable

Materials Needed

If in person:

- 1 projector
- 1 screen or flat surface
- 1 slide deck per day
- 1 master folder for all youth to write deliverables in

If virtual:

- 1 zoom meeting room
- 1 master folder for all youth to write deliverables in

Timeline

September 27, 2021 - Project Proposal approved; flier approved
 September 27 - October - outreach
 (Fridays) October 2021 - February 2022 - monthly ad hoc meetings
 February 2022 - Deliverable completed

Cost Implications

If virtual, there will be no cost implications.

If in-person, and IF we choose to provide food:

- Pizza (20 youth x \$10 per person x 4 meetings) = \$800

Grand total: \$800

Approval

Youth Commission approval _____ YES _____ NO Date _____

Notes _____

**B. DISCUSS AND APPROVE
THE DECEMBER RETREAT
PROJECT PROPOSAL (N.
HOANG)**



YOUTH COMMISSION – PROJECT PROPOSAL

Date written: September 3, 2021

Date of Event: TO BE DETERMINED (Preemptively December, on Saturday)

Name of project proposal here:

X One time event on-going event

Youth Commission December Retreat

The San Jose Youth Commission will have a retreat to develop leadership and teamwork skills, listen to guest speakers, to facilitate group bonding, and to check up on Work Plan progress for the 2021 - 2022 Fiscal Year Work Plan.

History/Background

In the 2019 - 2020 Fiscal Year, the Commission was considering a December retreat, but the event got side tracked due to policy proposals and other projects. This year, there is a chance of making the event a possibility as COVID-19 lessens.

Connection to YAC and Youth Commission Work plan

This retreat serves to check up on the Youth Commission's progress on their Work Plan and to adjust their workflow and production from there.

Vision

Youth Commissioners will reconvene in a retreat in order to celebrate the progress made so far, to gauge the remaining work on their work plan, and to develop leadership skills through guest speakers and team building activities.

Goals

1. Goal #1: Develop leadership skills and broaden mindsets.
2. Goal #2: Assess progress in Fiscal Year Work Plan.

Objectives

Goal #1 = Develop leadership skills and broaden mindsets.

Objective 1 = Have team-building activities.

Objective 2 = Have a guest speaker(s) presenting on skills to Commissioners.

Goal #2 = Assess progress and work to be done in Fiscal Year Work Plan.

Objective 1 = At the beginning of the event, have the Fiscal Year Work Plan printed out for each Commissioner.

Objective 2 = Each Commissioner reviews whether or not the Work Plan item has been met yet.

Resources and Collaboration

This event requires team building activities, a venue, food, printed out work plans, and a guest speaker. We will collaborate with the Library department in order to host this event. Let it be noted that nothing will be approved or voted on during this retreat.

Critical Factors of Success

1. Each Commissioner will need to be aware of what they have done in their Districts and their initiatives.

Potential Obstacles

1. Not enough Commissioners arrive; as this time is near finals and break, there is a chance that not enough Commissioners arrive to accurately assess work plan progress;
2. Not all Commissioners are aware of where they stand in terms of progress, leading to a drawn-out and late event.

Strategy for Recruitment & Marketing

As this is a retreat for the Commission, we will not be conducting outreach.

Overview of Event

11:00 AM - 11:30 PM = Commissioners arrive at venue

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM = Commissioners review Work Plan and assess what has been completed

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM = Guest speaker

1:30 PM - 5:00 PM = Team building activities

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM = Dinner

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM = Movie

8:30 PM - 8:50 PM = Team building activities

8:50 PM - 9:00 PM = End of the event

Materials Needed

- 10 copies of the Fiscal Year Work Plan
- 1 Guest speaker
- 1 Movie
- Food

Timeline

September 27, 2021 = December Retreat approved at General Meeting

November - early December = food preparations, paperwork preparations, movie choice, and guest speaker organized

December = day of the retreat

Cost Implications

For food: (\$20 x 10 commissioners) = \$200

Grand total: \$200.00

Approval

Youth Commission approval _____ YES _____ NO Date _____

Notes _____

**C. DISCUSS AND APPROVE
DISTRICT 4 POLICY PROPOSAL
REGARDING VEHICLES (A.
UYTINGCO)**

Policy Team: *Climate Change*

Discussion Area: Policy

Team Leader: *Britney Sun* (District 4)

Team Members: *Rachel Chen, Ashley Pandya, Medha Mahanta, Jalen Wong*

I. Recommendation

To support the effort to reduce carbon emissions, the San Jose Youth Advisory Council recommends that the city should replace all gasoline based vehicles in its jurisdiction (delivery vehicles, mail carrier trucks, etc.) with electric ones.

II. Background

As of 2020, records have been broken across the globe. Not in the olympics—which had to be delayed due to the pandemic—but in blazing hot temperatures, which have been accompanied by destructive hurricanes and raging wildfires. San Jose is no exception to the overwhelming chaos. The education of thousands of students are put at risk by poor air quality and businesses damaged by destructive flames during the California fires. These phenomena are symptoms of climate change, where excess carbon emissions in the air, specifically greenhouse gases, intensify global warming and its effects. Since vehicles are the second leading contributor of carbon emissions, it is crucial to shift to vehicles that are run on renewable sources of energy, such as electricity.

III. Research

Climate change is a long-term change in the average weather patterns that have come to define Earth's local, regional and global climates. Fluctuations observed in Earth's climate are primarily driven by fossil fuel burning, which increases heat-trapping greenhouse gas levels in Earth's atmosphere and raises Earth's average surface temperature. These human-produced temperatures, commonly referred to as global warming, manifest into irregular weather patterns and extreme natural disasters. San Jose is no stranger to the effects of climate change. According to Cal Fire, "nearly 10,000 fires had burned over 4.2 million acres" come December, making 2020 the largest wildfire season recorded in California's modern history. When combined with distance learning circumstances due to COVID-19, widespread power outages prevented thousands of students in San Jose school districts from receiving access to education. Since the transportation sector is "the country's second-largest source of carbon pollution" ([nrdc.org](https://www.nrdc.org)), switching to electric vehicles will lower the amount of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere and protect residents from extreme weather conditions such as wildfires.

Compared to the traditional vehicle, electric vehicles outperform in both emissions and cost. The Union of Concerned Scientists found that “battery electric cars generate half the emissions of the average comparable gasoline car, even when pollution from battery manufacturing is accounted for.” Since electric cars have zero direct waste, no pollutants are emitted when driving. In addition to dramatically reducing carbon emissions, electric vehicles also have significantly cheaper maintenance costs. Over the anticipated 15-year life span of a vehicle, the electricity required to run a battery-powered electric car can be as much as \$14,480 cheaper than fueling up an internal combustion vehicle. In 2019, the city spent between \$204 and \$386 maintaining each of its electric cars, compared to more than \$1,600 for the average gasoline-powered car.

IV. Advantages

Prior to the pandemic, the United States was experiencing the longest economic expansion in United States history. However, in spring 2020, as a result of the pandemic, the United States economy suddenly plunged into a recession, which lasted until summer 2020. After a very difficult 2020, the economy is anticipated to continue rebounding in 2021, even with the continued public health restrictions. The emergence of the electric cars industry will further elevate the technological sector in the near-term future, as electric cars are heavily technology dependent mostly in the form of software. Therefore, the much-needed software for these cars will continue to be in great demand and help support the economy. In terms of the city-wide budget, switching to electric vehicles will also be more affordable in the long term. With lower maintenance costs and a longer lifespan, electric vehicles rank higher than conventional gas vehicles financially.

Additionally, as the City Council prioritizes climate conscious attitudes, residents will be encouraged to consider sustainability in their lifestyles as well. Cities are the leadership on climate change and can create a ripple effect that benefits the generations to come.

V. Solvency

Sunnyvale has implemented a similar climate change initiative. Drive Electric Sunnyvale is an action in the City’s Climate Action Playbook that strives to help the community reach zero-emission vehicle targets. By 2030, it is anticipated that 20% of all road vehicles will be zero-emission. By 2050, it will be 75%.

In October, Amazon released the first of its planned custom electric delivery vehicles. The company plans to have 10,000 on the road by 2022, and 100,000 by 2030. In support of The Climate Pledge, Amazon is committed to achieving carbon neutral operations by 2040 and plans to achieve this goal with innovations in its transportation network.

Amazon is not the only company exploring new technologies and alternative fuels. Many Electric vehicle manufacturing companies have pledged to build vehicles from 100% sustainable sources. The BMW Group has contractually agreed with its cell manufacturers — CATL, Samsung SDI and Northvolt — that only green energy will be used to produce fifth-generation battery cells from the autumn of 2020. Announced by Markus Shafer, a member of the Board Management of Daimler AG, the production of Mercedes-Benz plants in Germany will operate CO2-neutral from 2022 by abstaining from electrical energy by only using renewable sources. By 2050, Volkswagen plans to operate completely CO2 neutral.

VI. Potential Setbacks

The initial process of manufacturing electric vehicles produces more pollution and requires more money compared to conventional gas vehicles. However, the amount of pollution and costs are insignificant when compared over the life-span of the vehicle.

VII. Closing Statements

The Youth Commission sincerely hopes that the Honorable Mayor and Council will adopt this policy as it reaffirms our City's commitment to environmental sustainability and the fight against climate change while ensuring that our economy and our community can continue to thrive.

VIII. Sources

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IX. Collaborated with:

District 4 Youth Advisory Council

**D. DISCUSS AND APPROVE
DISTRICT 4 POLICY PROPOSAL
REGARDING ENCAMPMENTS
(A. UYTINGCO)**

Policy Team: Homelessness

Discussion Area: Policy

Team Leader: Benjamin Shih (District 4)

Team Members: Michael Young, Alina Vo, Alicia Vu, Rabia Munir, Praceda Gaddmpally

I. Recommendation

The San Jose Youth Advisory Council recommends that the city establish sanctioned encampments for homeless individuals, and provide services to said encampments including but not limited to water services, food services, waste management, mental health, vocational training, and help for finding housing.

II. Background

Homelessness is a pervasive issue throughout the United States, and San Jose is a clear example. A 2019 city survey¹ found that there are approximately 6,097 homeless individuals living in San Jose, 84% of whom are unsheltered. The survey also found that 54% of people surveyed identified as racial minorities. 65% identified as male, 34% as female, and 1% as transgender. Experiencing homelessness, negatively affects an individual. People experiencing homelessness face a higher risk of disease, a challenge that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis, as well as other health complications - including declines in mental health.² Such individuals are also more susceptible to becoming victims of violence, including sexual violence/exploitation.³ Furthermore, a high homeless population negatively impacts the city and its residents at large: it costs Santa Clara County approximately 520 million dollars per year⁴ to service its homeless population. Large homeless populations also negatively impact the environment, as waste and trash from homeless encampments pollute the city. The COVID-19 pandemic has only further worsened conditions in the city: as mentioned, COVID-19 is more likely to spread among the homeless population, and the economic downturn may cause further homelessness. It is clear that this issue needs to be addressed in order to mitigate the negative effects to both the city and its homeless population.

III. Research

A San Jose city study¹ conducted in 2019 documented 6,097 individuals experiencing homelessness in San Jose, a stark population increase by approximately 1,700 people since the last survey in 2017. According to a CDC report², "Homelessness is closely connected to declines in physical and mental health; homeless persons experience high rates of health problems such as HIV infection, alcohol and drug abuse, mental illness, tuberculosis, and other conditions. Health problems among homeless persons result from various factors, such as barriers to care, lack of access to adequate food and protection, and limited resources and social services." Furthermore, the National Sexual Violence

Research Center³ (NSVRC) found that 21-42% of homeless youth report sexual abuse. Homelessness is not just detrimental to the individual: a high homeless population also negatively impacts the city. In 2015, Daniel Flaming, Halil Toros, and Patrick Burns of the Economic Roundtable⁴ found that homelessness costs Santa Clara County 520 million dollars per year, through services like food stamps and rehabilitation. There are also ecological costs: in 2014, the Santa Clara Water District removed 2,011 cubic yards of debris from homeless encampments along creeks and rivers⁵. The limited healthcare available to homeless individuals and the increased susceptibility such individuals have to health issues make a large homeless population, particularly a nomadic one, a public health issue. San Jose has worked to address homelessness in many ways: one major effort is the creation of bridge housing. Bridge Housing Communities⁶ (BHC) - the first one built in January 2020, provides housing, job training, life services, and mental health services for homeless individuals. There are currently 2 of these communities approved: One for district 3 and one for district 7. Another solution that the municipal government has proposed is an increase in affordable housing: Patricia Wei of the San Jose Spotlight⁷ reported that San Jose is planning to double the capacity of the Plaza Hotel homeless housing. Another example of this is the affordable housing complex Renascent Place, with 160 units. While these solutions are viable long-term measures, they have certain blind spots. One such blind spot is the issue of construction: making permanent complexes requires construction, which takes a while - it can take 1-3 years to build⁹ permanent housing, which is also quite expensive. In the interim, the homeless population of San Jose is still subject to the many disadvantages detailed above. There is also the issue of actually moving the homeless population into shelters: the 2019 homelessness survey¹ also reported that 40% of the homeless population do not want government assistance, and 28% do not believe they are eligible. These statistics demonstrate that actually sheltering the homeless population may also be a challenge, as many are reluctant to accept government assistance. Furthermore, the capacity of these permanent units do not yet match the high homeless population. Another way San Jose has tried to address homelessness, specifically encampments, is by abating (sweeping) them. The city council has voted, in March, to resume the abatement of encampments. However, sweeps are largely ineffective at reducing the homeless population, or even getting rid of encampments. Homeless individuals do not magically become housed when their encampment is abated: when an encampment near Highway 87 was cleared, the San Jose Spotlight¹⁰ reported that “a handful of tents sprang up just outside the abated area along a narrow path facing the freeway ramp.” This process demonstrates why sweeps don’t work: new encampments spring up and the city ends up playing a very costly and ineffectual game of whack-a-mole. Moreover, the CDC itself, especially during the pandemic, advised cities to halt abatements¹¹: “If individual housing options are not available, allow people who are living unsheltered or in encampments to remain where

they are. Clearing encampments can cause people to disperse throughout the community and break connections with service providers. This increases the potential for infectious disease spread.” Sweeping encampments does not lower the amount of homeless individuals nor does it lower the number of encampments: all this strategy does is make the homeless population more nomadic and dispersed, increasing the difficulty of providing public services to such encampments, like health services or trash pickup, exacerbating the health and ecological issues homelessness gives the city. Housing advocates have long pushed for better short term solutions, and creating sanctioned encampments is a necessary response to many of the problems currently facing the city regarding homelessness.

IV. Advantages

Creating sanctioned encampments would work to remedy many of the negative effects homelessness has on both the individual and the city. Having a few stationary areas where non-sheltered homeless individuals can set up camp will make it easier for the city to provide services like health and waste management. This would work to reduce disease transmission among the homeless population, and as a result, the city in general. It would also reduce the environmental impact that results from non-sanctioned homeless encampments: waste management services can periodically collect waste from the encampments and bring it to designated waste collection sites, not creeks, rivers, or parks where litter may devastate the ecological balance. Moreover, these encampments would negate the need for homeless individuals to create their own encampments, eliminating the city’s need to police them, saving time, resources, and allowing the homeless population to experience a more humanitarian side of government. Finally, sanctioned encampments can serve as a scaled-down version of a bridge housing community. While these encampments would not provide actual shelter to the homeless population living there, the sedentary nature of these encampments would allow the city to service homeless individuals in many ways BHC’s do: with food, mental health services, job training, etc. No major construction would need to be done, so the costs in comparison to permanent housing is low. Sanctioned encampments, if created, will provide a more humanitarian transition between outright homelessness and entering a BHC or affordable housing, will allow the city to service a larger amount of the homeless population as, and a more effective short-term way to service the homeless population while better equipped, but more time-consuming and costly, housing units continue to be built.

V. Solvency

One major city that has enacted a plan similar to the one proposed is Seattle. While there is one major difference: Seattle provided tiny homes to the homeless - our plan does not call for more construction: just land plots that residents of the encampment can set their

own shelter up on, although the city can and should purchase tents or other such portable shelters if a major lack of shelter becomes evident in the encampments once the proposed initiative starts. A report¹² of Seattle's program demonstrates a potential success for sanctioned encampments: "An important feature in the operation of the villages is the presence of dedicated case managers and social workers who link residents to services. The rate of successful housing placements in 2017 was 39 percent." While this may seem low, 39% placed in housing is still better than the 0% of the homeless population placed in housing if nothing is done. It should be noted that the report also describes the ineffectiveness of tents as opposed to tiny houses: tents are uncomfortable especially in more extreme weather. However, the city, as mentioned before, is still working on building tiny homes more akin to the shelters described in the report in the form of BHC's. These efforts should certainly be expanded and intensified, but that doesn't mean other methods should be cast aside. Despite the flaws in tents, the services that will be provided at the sanctioned encampments will still make these encampments better than the alternative: on the streets. Sanctioned encampments are not supposed to supplant BHC's or construction efforts, but work in tandem with them to address some of the challenges that construction faces.

VI. Potential Setbacks

There are, admittedly, many challenges that this initiative will face should it be enacted. One major problem is the cost: the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, (USICH) claimed¹³ in 2018 that the creation and maintenance of sanctioned encampments is expensive. This is true: Vicente Vera of the San Jose Spotlight reports¹⁴ that the operation of one such encampment may reach up to 1.5 million dollars annually. However, this is money well spent. It would be used to establish a more stable environment for potentially thousands of San Joseans, providing them with essential services, significantly improving living conditions for both the homeless population and residents of San Jose at large. Another problem regarding sanctioned encampments are the conditions: negligence or mismanagement could result in sanctioned encampments being no better than living on the streets. This problem, however, can be solved with sufficient oversight and governmental action. The city should send investigators to visit the encampments to ascertain and recommend what needs to be done in order to make sure all promised amenities are being provided and to maintain an adequate standard of living for the residents of these encampments. Another setback that sanctioned encampments face is the possibility that they may be potential hotbeds of drug use and violence. This is a major limit of sanctioned encampments, and demonstrates the need for other policies to work with this one. For example, more readily accessible rehabilitation centers, even publicly run ones, and more expansive mental health resources provided to the homeless population will mitigate this risk. However, there is no guarantee that these

policies will be passed as well, and as a result, there needs to be a way to deal with crime in the proposed encampments. We propose a more lenient method with drug abuse: the city could provide the encampments counselors or other social workers to put addiction-afflicted residents of the encampment into existing rehabilitation facilities, ideally ones that provide free treatment. We also recommend that the health services provided include treatment for withdrawal symptoms. With more violent crimes, unfortunately, a stricter method should be employed. We recommend that, for the safety of all other residents of the sanctioned encampments, residents who commit acts of violence and clearly demonstrate an intent to harm another person should be removed from the sanctioned encampment. This feels, rightfully so, inhumane, but it is an unfortunate necessity to ensure a high standard of living for all residents of the camp. The violent tendencies of certain members of the homeless population should be addressed through other policies - one possibility being creating a separate encampment for those who have committed violent acts, with a combination of mental health professionals and law enforcement officers in order to reduce acts of violence and violent tendencies in people. The final major setback that these encampments face is public backlash. Repeated attempts to establish sanctioned encampments in San Jose and other cities have been met a fierce backlash from residents who fear that such encampments will bring drug use and crime to their communities. The same report from the San Jose Spotlight¹⁴ mentioned earlier in the paragraph notes that “few people want to host encampments in their neighborhood—nor is the housing department eager to run them. ‘Keep’em out of my neighborhood!’ Ben Sanchez, an Alum Rock resident, wrote in a public Facebook group.” Other cities have also seen this same problem: an Upworthy article¹⁵ reported that a ‘tent city’ in Santa Rosa was also met with backlash from the community. However, this article also describes another development: the citizens eventually grew to like having the camps there. Those protesting the camps realized that their fears were unfounded, and soon accepted the tent city. This is the path the city should take as well: just set one up regardless of public outcry. Effective management will prove that the outcry is unjustified and it will eventually subside.

VII. Closing Statements

While most of the discussion thus far has been centered around statistics, facts, and logic based arguments, allow us to take a step back and wax philosophical for a moment. What this policy boils down to is treating people like people. Everyone deserves healthcare, a safe and clean place to sleep, water, and food. Rejecting this policy and similar alternatives would be denying thousands of San Jose residents their basic human rights and treating them with a disgraceful degree of inhumanity. As representatives of the youth community, many of whom suffer from homelessness, the District 4 Youth Advisory Council implores the city to adopt the policy of creating sanctioned

encampments, and, if not, take bold action to ensure that the homeless population are ensured basic human rights and dignities.

VIII. Sources

Cited

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- IX. Collaborated with:
District 4 Youth Advisory Council

**E. DISCUSS AND APPROVE THE
YOUTH COMMISSION
NEWSLETTER (A. GHOSH)**

VOL. 3 | OCTOBER 2021

THE YOUTH HERALD

Updates for the youth in San Jose directly from the San Jose Youth Commission



INSIDE THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

Championing Students Voices:
IHS Student Advocacy Club

Attack on Titan: Breaking
Stereotypes with Cannibalism

About the San Jose Youth Commission

The San José Youth Commission is the official youth advisory group to the mayor and city council. We represent all the youth and work to:

- Empower youth to pursue their careers and encourage them to be civically engaged through local and city-wide events and initiatives.
- Foster a safe, inclusive, and accessible space for youth in San Jose to express their passions and interest.
- Provide equitable access and support to marginalized youth communities.
- Promote awareness about various issues and opportunities to San Jose youth.
- Advise and prompt City Council to act upon youth priorities and input.

Garbage in and out: Why is sleep so important for GenZ teenagers?

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Youth Advisory Council
Orientation
10/23/21

Civic Engagement Town Hall
11/08/21

CHAMPIONING STUDENTS VOICES: IHS Student Advocacy Club

By Amelia Uytngco

Independence High School is the home to an extensive roster of student organizations, however, one stands out in particular. The Student Advocacy Club (SAC), gives students the platform to voice their opinions on school facilities and services, while championing student voice in initiatives of their counterpart, the Student Governing Board, in Board of Education discussions. The Board is an elected representative body composed of students from each East Side Union High School District (ESUHSD) school, composed of the Student Governing Board

who has upper, voting rights, and the Student Assembly, which has lower, no voting rights and advises the SGB. Both assemblies represent student/stakeholder needs and present them to the ESUHSD Board of Directors.

In the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the Independence representatives drafted a policy to the ESUHSD Board to propose mandatory mental health resources be available at each ESUHSD school. After conducting a survey in late November 2020, asking for students' input on their mental health during distance learning, the SGB learned that students hoped for a better learning environment considering the importance of mental health and resources at the school, thus prompting the IHS SGB and ASB to come forward

with a policy that will bring awareness to the students and their remarks on mental health. A proposed solution was to demand the East Side Union High School District (ESUHSD) approve the organization of 'Mental Health Day' at Independence High School (IHS) in order to (1) develop a mindful understanding of the importance of mental health, (2) promote an academic and non-academic safe space for non-stigmatized discussions, and (3) prioritize self-care and balanced well-being. Their goal is to establish communication at the district level to begin transparent conversations about mental health.

The Student Advocacy Club's work is incredibly valuable to the Independence

(Continued on Page 3)



Youth Advisory Council Orientation

By San Jose Youth Commission

The annual Youth Advisory Council Orientation is coming up on *October 23rd*, Saturday, via Zoom. Get involved in local politics, meet your youth district representative, and start your experience with your representative's Youth

Advisory Council, a group of youth that write policy proposals and host district events!

For more information about this event, please contact Commissioner Hoang at YouthCom3@sanjoseca.gov

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High School community, and paves the way for discussion at the district level to promote transparent conversation between administrators and students about the importance of mental health. Their initiative aligns with the mission of the San Jose Youth Commission, which is to give students a platform to use their voice to work towards the change they would like to see.

Civic Engagement Town Hall

By San Jose Youth Commission

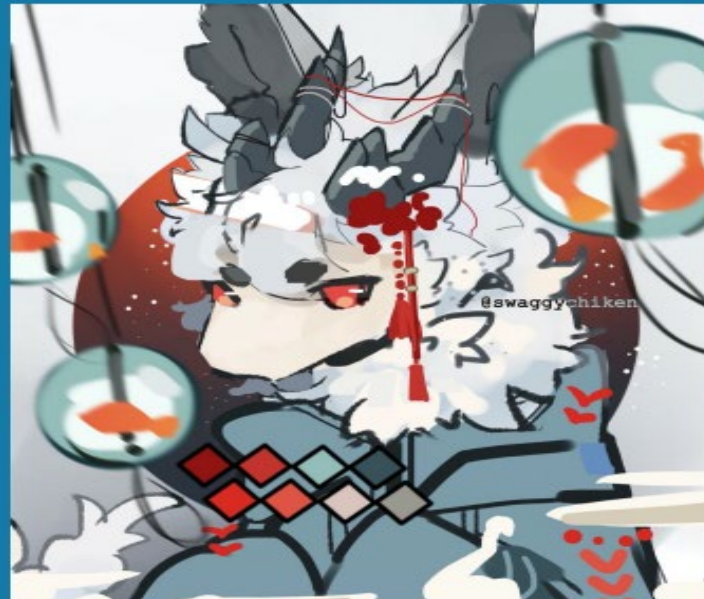
The San Jose Youth Commission's Town Hall is coming up on November 8th, 2021. The online event will feature speakers on civic engagement and will foster youth involvement in local politics through the San Jose Library and San Jose Youth Commission. Come join us online! Please contact Commissioner Ghosh at YouthComCW@sanjoseca.gov



OCTOBER ART SHOWCASE



ISABELLE ERIKSSON
BASIS Independent Silicon Valley



OCTOBER ART SHOWCASE



KEVIN ZHANG

Grade 10
District 1



**LEFT: YOUTH
RIGHT: WISDOM**

ATTACK ON TITAN: Breaking Stereotypes with Cannibalism

By Aroshi Ghosh

Most anime fans would hesitate to set foot into the cruel, bloodthirsty dystopia of "Attack on Titan", where man-eating humanoids roam free, bathed in viscous, crimson blood. The parental unit was definitely worried by the terrifying, otherworldly sounds of murder and mayhem emanating from my room

and seriously considered therapy as I watched the show in the dead of night.

Though the violence is graphic, once your scruples are overcome, the macabre savagery grows on you. Who would have thought that splatters of blood could bring such joy? Soon, you begin rooting for the "shonen" style plot and its bloody-minded protagonist, Eren Jaeger, whose anger issues rival the Hulk. Empathy for this edgy teen comes naturally as we witness the inevitable

moments of stupidity that lead to his friends becoming red stains on Earth. Eren is the ultimate addictive tragic hero, who perseveres against all odds and embarks on a quest to eliminate the misshapen, zombie-like Titans. The drama toys with your emotions like the beat of Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" and each spurt of blood and each character's death draws the audience deeper into a world where you eat or be eaten.

Surprisingly, despite a fan

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base of adolescent males, "Attack on Titan" celebrates the feminine ethos, through Eren's adoptive sister and childhood friend, Mikasa and Armin. The series turns gender stereotyping on its head. Mikasa is fiercely protective of Eren instead of the other way around. Armin seems androgynous, with his weak physique and lack of confidence, yet stands firm in times of trouble. Sexuality is explored through honest characterization and you better believe that my jaw hit the floor when Ymir and

Reiner accused each other of being gay.

The dark humor recalls puny knights engaged in dangerous swordplay, precise, deadly, yet ridiculously funny. You can never be sure if the stakes are life and death or if the moment is perfect for an "ass" joke. Nothing is done in half-measures. If you must torture a political prisoner, why not opt for the cruelest techniques ever devised? If your friend was just eaten by a Titan, at least it was the sexy one.

Although humor and violence may feel like oil

and water, "Attack on Titan" pulls off the combination spectacularly. It is easy to forget that most of the characters are kids, yet their complex personalities are a testimony to the time and effort invested by the animators. You believe you are hanging out with your friends and being a badass fighting Titans.

Although not recommended for the faint of heart, "Attack on Titan" is an engaging watch that pulls no punches. It challenges the illusion of stability and creates a world, where humanity is under constant attack.

OCTOBER ART SHOWCASE



AROSHI GHOSH
Grade 12, Leland High School
District 10



GARBAGE IN AND OUT:

Why is sleep so important for Gen Z teenagers?

By Aroshi Ghosh

After a night of grinding League of Legends, face-timing friends, watching Netflix and finishing that long-overdue English essay, it is an unlovely prospect to be dragged out of bed to face the cruel light of day. The sound of the alarm going off is not a symphony for the ears but a cacophony of jackhammers clattering and drumming, threatening to spill the brains on the pavement.

I have often wondered, "I don't get to go to bed until 2 pm because my cell phone keeps pinging with notifications of deadlines and friends wanting to chat. But I still wake up on time for school." But is that really true? Based on my research, it is a big NO.

Externally, we may feel fine because the adolescent adrenaline convinces us of our invincibility. Pandemic-induced remote learning has also made set schedules to merely be polite suggestions and melatonin secretions that trigger sleepiness, shift forward to play havoc with the body's natural sleep patterns or circadian rhythms. Like an orchestra

without a conductor, the circadian rhythms now start misbehaving and no longer respond naturally to night and day. Yet, each day and every day we must rise and shine for school due to early start times and end up being chronically sleep-deficient.

Neurologist Jeffrey Iliff explains that for most organs of the body, the lymphatic system acts as a trash collection mechanism. Yet, the brain constantly pumps new molecules and builds-up toxic debris, constricting blood vessels throughout the day as it has no such mechanism for waste clearance. Only as we sleep, cerebrospinal liquid floods through our brain to clean the excess build-up. As early as 162 AD, Galen identified sleep as a "detoxifying process" and only in the 1800s, was sleep falsely perceived as "a mark of slothfulness".

Why does our brain wait until night time to clean the waste? Just as people working 9 to 5 jobs during the week postpone house-cleaning to the weekend when they have significantly less work to do, our brain chooses to clean the gunk at night when we do less.

What happens if we postpone sleep? Just as ignoring housecleaning for too long makes a house unlivable, similarly, the

teenage brain that gets insufficient sleep may nap uncontrollably at odd times in class or behind the wheel. While some brain areas, such as the thalamus may stay in sync with the circadian clock, other areas may push the body to sleep.

If you wonder why hardworking, insomniac students fail to perform while their peers crack their exams with flying colors after a good night's sleep, the correlation between deep learning and sleep cannot be ignored. Immune cells called microglia help to develop neural connections and repair the grey cells to consolidate learning and memory.

The "physiological necessity of sleep" is real. Next time when you are debating whether to stay up for one more episode of Avatar or Riverdale, choose SLEEP because nonsense input data produces garbage output data.

**INTERESTED IN
FEATURING YOUR
ART OR WRITING IN
OUR NEWSLETTER?**

Please contact City Wide
Commissioner Aroshi Ghosh at
YouthComCW@sanjoseca.gov
for more details on how to submit your
work! Submissions are open to any
student from the ages 12-18
currently residing in the City of San
Jose.

**F. DISCUSS AND APPROVE
STANDARDIZING YAC
RECRUITMENT MATERIALS (A.
SOMALWAR)**

VI. REPORTS AND INFORMATION ONLY

A. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

B. SAN JOSÉ LIBRARY REPORT

C. COMMISSION CHAIR REPORT

D. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS PER CITY DISTRICT

**VII. ITEMS FOR FUTURE
COMMISSION MEETING
AGENDAS**

VII. ADJOURNMENT

THE NEXT REGULAR
MEETING OF THE YOUTH
COMMISSION WILL BE
MONDAY OCTOBER 25TH,
2021 VIA ZOOM WEBINAR
AT 6:30 P.M.