



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, Sept. 27, 2024

City of San Diego Conducts Extensive Cleanup at Wightman Street Neighborhood Park in City Heights

MORE THAN 8,000 POUNDS OF TRASH, FURNITURE AND BULKY ITEMS REMOVED DURING MULTI-DEPARTMENT EFFORT

SAN DIEGO – In an extensive cleanup effort this week focused on Wightman Street Neighborhood Park in the Chollas Creek neighborhood of City Heights, City of San Diego crews cleared more than 8,000 pounds of trash – including large appliances, mattresses, boxes and clothing – caused by illegal dumping and encampments.

The City had received complaints about conditions along the Auburn Creek corridor, which is connected to the stormwater channel just behind Wightman Street Park, with large amounts of debris and hazardous items left behind, including fecal matter and syringes. More than 60 Get It Done encampment reports had been submitted for this location.

Planning for a coordinated cleanup operation requires collaboration between multiple departments and service providers.

“Illegal dumping is harmful to our environment and takes up valuable City time and resources that could be used on other services for our residents,” said Mayor Todd Gloria. “I thank our City crews for their hard work cleaning up the park, and I ask all San Diegans to do their part by disposing of waste properly and reporting illegal dumping when they see it happening.”

On Tuesday, Sept. 24, multiple teams from the Environmental Services Department (ESD) and Stormwater Department worked together to clear trash and debris from in and around the channel. Teams from [Urban Corps of San Diego County](#) and [Alpha Project](#) partnered with City crews to get the work done.

“Every San Diegan deserves the respect, health, and safety that comes with living in a clean neighborhood. For too long, nearby residents weren’t able to enjoy those basics, and an entire community of people worked together to overcome the challenges in this area,” said Council President Sean Elo-Rivera. “In addition to the City workers involved in the cleanup, I’m grateful to SAY San Diego, Affirmed Housing, City Heights CDC, PATH, local property owners and residents

who remained engaged with my office throughout this process, monitoring activity in the area and offering services to unsheltered folks which eventually allowed this space to be reopened to residents so that families can once again enjoy Wightman Street Neighborhood Park.”

A 24-hour notice was posted in advance of the cleanup, according to the [City's abatement procedures](#), so that individuals could pack up and remove any belongings. The City's Neighborhood Policing Division also visited the site to connect with individuals in the encampments prior to the abatement. They offered available services and shelter, but the offers were declined.

The area is regularly monitored and cleaned by the Stormwater Department's channel maintenance team. Illegal dumping of trash and large debris can obstruct downstream infrastructure such as stormwater pipes and culverts. Cleanup efforts like this one contribute to improved downstream water quality.

“We are working in close collaboration with the Stormwater Department to ensure that culverts and storm runoff areas are clear and fully prepared for the upcoming storm season,” said Franklin Coopersmith, Deputy Director for Environmental Services. “This is a complex effort involving multiple teams. For this particular cleanup, we had approximately 30 personnel involved, from those operating chainsaws to cutting down trees, to crews removing trash, and others documenting the process. This work will continue on a regular basis to maintain these critical areas.”

Residents are encouraged to properly dispose of bulky items. The City offers a [Mattress Recycling Program](#); for other large items, community cleanup events are held throughout the year, and residents can also visit [WasteFreeSD.org](#) to find recycling and donation options.

It is illegal to dump trash and large items on the sidewalk or into stormwater infrastructure including storm drains and channels. Illegal dumping is dangerous to the environment, contaminating soil and water. Stormwater runoff is untreated and can collect pollutants as it flows into local waterways and beaches. Violators can face fines of \$1,000 for disposing trash and other materials into the stormwater system.

People can report illegal dumping and trash near creeks or stormwater infrastructure on the [Get It Done](#) app, or by calling 619-235-1000 or emailing swppp@sandiego.gov to report any instances of illegal dumping.



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