



# CITY OF TUCSON

## LITTER FEE

## CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

January 10, 2012  
Study Session

## **Introduction**

Interim City Manager Richard Miranda created the Clean City Task Force in the fall of 2009 to confront the litter problem in Tucson as well as the deterioration in the city's physical appearance (junk motor vehicles, graffiti, pot holes, etc). From this task force, a Litter Fee subcommittee evolved to establish how to utilize City of Tucson's Litter Fee to clean up Tucson and is managed through the City Manager's office by Yvonne Espino and Andy Quigley.

The committee is comprised of several departments including Police, Housing and Community Development, Environmental Services, Transportation, Budget and Internal Audit, Planning and Development as well as Tucson Clean and Beautiful. The committee meets monthly for collaborative discussions and to prioritize our efforts. Each participating entity has a role to provide continuous resolutions to the City's unkempt appearance. Many ideas were supplied and decisions were made. Each department provided a written report to elaborate on their project's progresses.

Additional funding was required to meet the goals of the Clean City Task Force. On July 1, 2010 the Litter Fee was implemented. The new permit revised the Tucson City Code (sections 15-70 to 71) to require commercial refuse and recycling haulers who operate front load, rear load, side load and roll-off collection vehicles to obtain a permit for each vehicle. Proceeds from the permits are used to administer and implement litter collection activities in the city.

The commercial hauler is required to submit an application to the city and pay an annual license fee of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per vehicle used in the collection of refuse within the City of Tucson. Each permitted vehicle receives a sticker from the City of Tucson that is placed on each vehicle. Fees for vehicles added after the initial applications are prorated at a monthly rate of \$83.33 per vehicle per month.

The Finance Department is tasked with informing existing and new commercial haulers of the litter fee. A form letter is sent to commercial haulers giving instructions on completion of the license application form, the fee amount for each permit and the requirement of a certificate of insurance. Once the application is processed the Business License Section mails the litter fee permits to the commercial hauler. The Business License Section also informs new commercial haulers who apply for a city's business license the requirement of having the permit.

The Revenue Division also mails reminder notices to registered commercial haulers to renew their annual permits. Applications for renewal are to be made at least 45 days prior to the expiration of the current permit.

## **Housing and Community Department (HCD)**

Code Enforcement has completed the inspections of the front yard exterior (what can be seen from the front right-of-way) for the airport route which begins at Tucson Blvd. to the south, runs north up to Benson Highway and over to Kino/Campbell then runs north and ends at Fort Lowell and Campbell.

Four hundred twelve properties were inspected. The majority of the properties were in compliance and the issuance of a notice of violation was not required. The following is the results of our inspections:

- 36 properties were referred to Transportation Dept. to address the violations.
- 57 properties had violations and were sent a letter explaining the project plus a Notice of Violation. Of that, 49 are now in compliance, 7 are still pending and one citation was issued (owner was found responsible at infraction hearing in October, compliance hearing set for mid November).
- 319 properties had no exterior property maintenance violations. Each owner of these properties was then sent a letter thanking them for maintaining their properties.

In October, inspection began with the properties abutting the Frontage Road from Miracle Mile Road to the north down to the entrance to I-19 to the south. Initially 33 properties were identified that will require a letter that includes the notice of violation. Contact has also been made with the Arizona Department of Transportation to assist with cleaning any state owned properties where needed.

## **Planning & Development Services Department (PDSD)**

As part of the original Clean City Task Force report, PDSD was responsible for assessing the condition of City properties to gain an understanding of the general aesthetic condition of City property, prior to taking any enforcement action on any non-City property.

As the Clean City project progressed, priority focus was given to six corridors and areas in the City: 1) the Airport Corridor from TIA to I-10/Kino Parkway, 2) the Downtown area bounded roughly by 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, I-10, Speedway and Euclid 3) the I-10 frontage roads from 29<sup>th</sup> to Miracle Mile 4) Starr Pass west of I-10 to City limits, 5) Ajo Way from Alvernon/Golf Links to Mission Road and 6) Valencia-Houghton to I-10.

PDSD's task has been to list and map all City properties within the focus areas in order for the list and map to be used as a tool for HCDD's Inspection/Enforcement unit when performing enforcement activities.

### **Tucson Police Department (TPD)**

The Tucson Police Department was asked by the subcommittee to deploy extra patrol on Valencia and Kolb since there were complaints of excessive litter from the sanitation side loader vehicles. The Traffic Division conducted a six day deployment in September 2011 to determine if any city sanitation side loader vehicles trucks were in violation. At the end of the deployment, no citations were given.

In addition, Captain Wilson is in collaboration with Joan Lionetti and Evren Sonmez from Tucson Clean and Beautiful in removing junk motor vehicles for citizens in Operations Division West's neighborhoods for free.

### **Transportation Department (TDOT)**

In the FY 2011, Streets and Traffic Maintenance Division spent \$52,800 from the litter fee revenue source. Clean up work was contracted through the landscape contractor, Groundskeeper. They utilized four crews to pick up trash and debris along the gateway routes during the month of June, 2011.

During the month of June, Groundskeeper completed the following:

- Kolb Road Medians and Roadsides, weeds and trash were removed from Valencia to Tanque Verde.
- Kolb Road Medians and Roadsides between Irvington to Valencia were cleaned on three separate occasions during the month of June.
- Valencia Road Medians and Roadsides, weeds and trash were removed from Desert View High School to Sand Piper to the end of City Limits.
- Broadway Blvd Medians and Roadsides from Camino Seco to Country Club were cleaned twice in June.
- Tucson Blvd Medians and Roadsides, weeds and trash were removed from the Airport to Irvington.
- Benson Highway Medians and Roadsides, weeds and trash were removed from Irvington to Campbell.
- Campbell/Kino Medians and Roadsides, weeds and trash were removed from Benson Highway to Grant Road.
- Golf Links Road Medians and Roadsides, some weeds and mostly trash were removed from Ajo Way to all the way to Houghton Road.
- Oracle Road Medians and Roadsides, weeds and trash were removed from Miracle Mile to River Road.

- Valencia Road Roadsides, trash was removed from Houghton to Kolb Road.
- Valencia Road Medians and Roadsides, weeds and trash were removed from Wilmot Road to Swan Road

Golf Links Road was by far the worst Gateway for trash. The section of Golf Links from Ajo Way to Swan, the crew averaged 128 bags of trash per day and took almost 4 days to complete. On the other roadway sections, crews were averaging 40 bags of trash per day. The Groundskeeper picked up 4,500 bags of trash, just in the month of June.

In FY 2012, the Streets and Traffic Maintenance Division has been allotted \$85,000. This \$85,000 will be utilized for (2) crew leader positions plus an additional 10 inmates. They will focus solely on removing trash and debris from the identified gateways.

Since July 1, 2011 we have utilized in-house crews for clean up along the following roadways:

- Kolb
- Valencia
- 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Tucson Blvd

Crews have taken 100 bags of debris of trash and 200 yards of material to the landfill. Inmate crews that are already on board are being utilized for emergency situations along the gateways until the filling of the two (2) crew leader positions and establishment of the dedicated inmate crews.

### **Tucson Clean and Beautiful (TCB)**

Tucson Clean & Beautiful (TCB) has been granted \$28,000 for a landscaping and beautification project along the airport gateway corridor, at the Southeast corner of Tucson Boulevard and Irvington Road. The project site is located in the public right-of-way and is approximately 14,500 square feet. Tucson Clean & Beautiful will act as the main project manager, facilitating collaboration among the City Departments, recruiting volunteer labor, and overseeing project implementation. Gary Wittwer with the Department of Transportation will be the landscape architect for the project. The project will improve both the environmental and the aesthetic quality of the well-traveled airport route, featuring native and desert-adapted plants, on-site water harvesting, and possibly a piece of public art.

In addition to the above-mentioned project funded with the Litter Fee dollars, TCB has also been approached by the Tucson Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce for a median enhancement project on Tucson Boulevard between Corona Road and Valencia Road, just north of Tucson International Airport. TCB is involved as a project partner, facilitating discussions with the City to get project approvals and will also be providing

trees through its Trees for Tucson Program. The landscape design is being prepared by AAA Landscape, whose crews will also be responsible for post-implementation site maintenance. Golden Eagle Distributors will lead the fundraising campaign to finance the project.

TCB has also provided trees and coordinated plant selection and delivery for the Toole Avenue Streetscape Project which took place on October 22, 2011. Even though Toole Avenue is not a designated gateway route, it is a key downtown street at the heart of the Tucson Historic Warehouse Arts District and it is the recommended site for an "urban artwalk" according to the 2004 Tucson Historic Warehouse Arts District Master Plan.

Adopt-a-Park & Public Areas Program is presently working with 203 groups who have adopted parks, washes, and streets in the Tucson region. Program volunteers have put in over 17,000 service hours during the fiscal year 2010-2011, with an estimated value of volunteer time totaling \$332,000. Tucson Clean & Beautiful has held meetings with all the ward offices over the past year to update the staff about the Adopt-a-Park & Public Areas Program and its new emphasis on gateway routes. Cleanup of gateway routes has been prioritized and promoted to new volunteer groups seeking project sites and 6 additional miles of gateway routes were adopted. Additionally, several streets have been made available for adoption through Tucson Clean & Beautiful in areas where City maintenance contracts have been cut back due to budget constraints. TCB has received \$4,000 from the Litter Fee Fund, which was used for purchasing additional supplies for gateway cleanups.

TCB is currently developing a plan to remove abandoned and junk vehicles in targeted neighborhoods in collaboration with TPD, MVD, and a salvage company.

**Available Funding**

<b>Litter Assessment Program</b>	
Funds available as of 10/21/11	
FY 2011 Total Revenue Collected	\$ 271,250
Expenditures	(53,340)
Amount Available for FY 2012	217,910
FY 2012 Revenue Collected	108,874
Obligations:	
HCD Inspector Position Funding	(69,300)
Crew Leaders & Inmates for Cleanup	(85,000)
Tucson Clean & Beautiful (TC&B)	(28,000)
TC&B Supplies	(4,000)
Remaining Amount Available	\$ 140,484

## **Conclusion**

The restoration of the City's physical appearance is an imperative. Resource constraints limit the City's ability to maintain its appearance. The Litter Fee is a very limited funding source and optimizing these dollars is critical. It is crucial that we develop community partnerships to assist us with our short and long term goals. In addition, we should amplify our successes to the community so that they are aware of our accomplishments. By communicating our accomplishments, we can re-establish our community's pride within our citizens.

