

YBCBD Street Population Outreach Services

Overview

The Yerba Buena Community Benefit District's mission is to advance the quality of life for property owners, residents and visitors of the Yerba Buena neighborhood by fostering a safer and more secure community, enhancing the environmental quality and beauty, and reinforcing the viability of our economic base. To help create a clean, safe and secure community, we contract with Streetplus and the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD). StreetPlus provides on the ground services including Community Guides, Clean Team, two Social Service Specialists, and a 24-hour dispatch service. SFPD provides a bike patrol officer who works 12 hours a day, 7 days a week to address nuisance and quality of life issues. SFPD hours will increase to 14 hours a day beginning July 1, 2019.

The plight of the neighborhood's street population is a complex issue. Community Benefit Districts are a piece of the response to challenges of homelessness, drug addiction, mental health and uncivil behavior. Our role is to work with individuals in our neighborhood to help them connect to available services and resources. In this document, we outline efforts we undertake each day to help those in need.

Approach

The YBCBD's philosophy is to help people in need with compassion and respect. Our approach is to partner with available City and nonprofit services to help create a safe, vibrant and welcoming neighborhood for all. YBCBD's Community Guides, two Social Service Specialists, SFPD bike patrol officer and Clean Team are trained to assist and respond with respect and dignity. We believe it is not a solution to simply have people move from one place to another and that connecting them with services is our first priority. We work closely with City departments and social service agencies and are actively learning from their efforts.

The Yerba Buena neighborhood has changed dramatically since the YBCBD's formation, increasing the need for and importance of our services. The resident population has doubled since 2009, more businesses call Yerba Buena their home base, and there has been a marked increase in visitors to cultural institutions and Moscone Center. More developments are under construction or planned that will fuel long-term growth in the neighborhood.

With growth comes challenges. Our sidewalks and streets are more crowded, office space is limited and expensive, and people continue to live on neighborhood streets. Yerba Buena's street population has grown, and erratic behavior is not uncommon. We've seen a dramatic increase in open drug use – and needles. For example, needle removal by our Clean Team and Community Guides has increased from significantly over the past two years, just as it has increased City-wide. We will continue to work with the City, community organizations and our property owners to be part of solutions to this complex issue.

Services to Help our Street Population

Community Guides: YBCBD Community Guides assist people in the neighborhood by directing visitors to local businesses, they contact our dispatcher to have areas cleaned and report safety issues, and they help those in need – every day 6 a.m.-midnight. They undergo extensive training, which allows for keen understanding and compassionate response in approaching quality of life issues (see more below).

Social Services Specialists: In 2018, after a one-year pilot program, we added a second Social Service Specialist to provide enhanced services to our district's street population and to better connect them with available resources. It's not enough to provide a shelter referral or directions to a hot meal to someone in need. Rather, our Specialists spend time building relationships, establishing trust and helping individuals navigate the complex system of available services. For example, they will help a person make an appointment to sign up for benefits and escort the individual to the appointment.

Training, Specific Services and Approach

Our Social Service Specialists and Community Guides both provide assistance such as shelter referrals, connecting individuals with the San Francisco Homeless Outreach Team (SFHOT) and more. Training that helps inform the Guides' and Specialists' awareness of managing street population issues includes: De-escalation and Situational Awareness Training, SFPD Academy Crisis Intervention Training, Tactical Communications, Mental Health First Aid, Homeward Bound Program, HOT Team Field Training, San Francisco Adult Probation Department, Veteran's Affairs Trainings, Transgender Awareness Training, CPR/Basic First Aid, and more. In addition to ongoing training in these areas, our Guides tour facilities and service organizations throughout the City that serve the street population to obtain information about available resources. Our Specialists receive this training both in greater depth and more frequency. When interacting with someone who is sleeping or camping on the sidewalk, Specialists and Guides first approach the individual to determine if they need assistance, to offer assistance (food, shelter, referrals, etc.), and advise them of the rules restricting camping. If the person accepts services or moves elsewhere, the issue is closed. If the person is uncooperative or needs additional help, the Guide requests assistance from our SFPD bike patrol officer or contacts Police non-emergency for assistance.

Here is one example of an interaction between a Social Service Specialist and an individual experiencing homelessness that occurred in early 2019: *"I was making my rounds in the district when I saw 'Charles' sleeping in his tent on the sidewalk. When I offered service referrals for emergency shelter, he accepted. I placed a call to the City's 311 for its 90-day bed waitlist and was told that he was in the system at the top of the list, but he needed an updated medical record for tuberculosis test. Charles accepted the service referral arranging for a medical tuberculosis test at 330 Ellis Street Glide Clinic and thanked me. I was happy to assist him and find him shelter."*

Additional YCBCD Services

Clean Team: The Clean Team focuses on sidewalk and gutter sweeping, graffiti abatement, cleaning and weeding tree wells, sidewalk steam cleaning, spot power washing, monitoring public trashcan overflow, and reporting illegal dumping to the City for removal. They also work with the City, including the Department of Public Health and the Department of Public Works, to remove needles and human waste. In addition to training on effective ways to clean the neighborhood, Clean Team members receive extensive training in Incident Report Writing, Reporting Issues to 311, SFPD Codes & Ordinances, DPW Training, SF Street Ordinances and Park Codes, Cleaning Products, Safe Working Tips, Hazard Materials and Communication, Customer Service Training, and CPR/Basic First Aid.

SFPD Bike Patrol Officer: The YCBCD contracts with SFPD for 12 hours of coverage, 7 days a week; and starting July 1, 2019, bike patrol officers will work 14 hours a day, 7 days a week. Officers are on-duty, uniformed SFPD bike patrol officers that primarily address nuisance and quality of life issues such as aggressive panhandling, illegal vending, trespassing, littering, permit violations, and noise complaints. The officers also address criminal activity as needed. The officers work closely with the Community Guides, especially when assisting the street population.

YCBCD Dispatch: The YCBCD created multiple ways to access YCBCD services. There is a centralized dispatch center that addresses issues. Property owners, businesses, residents, and visitors can download the mobile app (YCBCD Assist), call, text, email or submit a request for services online at www.ycbcd.org. All issues are received, reviewed and prioritized by a dispatcher who sends a Community Guide, Clean Team member, Social Services Specialist, or the bike patrol officer to address requests.

Community Involvement and Advocacy

In addition to these services and programs, YCBCD staff are actively involved in City efforts to further address issues concerning our neighborhood. We serve on the SFPD Southern Station Community Police Advisory Board; Yerba Buena Gardens Conservancy Board; Tourism Improvement District Board; Better Market Street Community Advisory Committee; Clean Civil Sidewalks Coalition; CleanSafe365 Coalition; San Francisco CBD Consortium; and Yerba Buena Culture Cabinet. Staff also regularly attend hearings on issues related to pedestrian safety, transit, housing, and homelessness and participates in the bi-monthly meetings of CBDs in San Francisco to share resources and information.

YCBCD Services Committee

The largest portion of our annual budget is allocated to clean and safe services. Projected for the FY20 budget, the amount is \$2.5 million. The YCBCD Services Committee meets monthly to discuss and address areas of concern and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors for how best to manage the budget and program. They work to ensure the services offered meet the requirements defined in the Management Plan, oversee the services contract with StreetPlus and the partnership with SFPD. They conduct performance walks to measure the cleanliness of neighborhood sidewalks and are overseeing the Social Services Specialist pilot program. The committee is comprised of YCBCD board and community members.