

# September Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2024 VOLUME 54 NUMBER 8

## ECO-LOGIC

The Official Newsletter of the Tri-City Ecology Center



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[www.Tri-City-Ecology-Center.org](http://www.Tri-City-Ecology-Center.org)

## **Homeless Strategies in Fremont**

There are multiple county and municipal approaches to the issues of homelessness and encampments and this issue of Ecologic will touch on some of the possible solutions and concerns. A query was sent to two of the Mayoral candidates. Included below are their recommendations. The first response came from Vinnie Bacon.

Combatting Homelessness in Fremont – The status quo isn't working – Vinnie Bacon

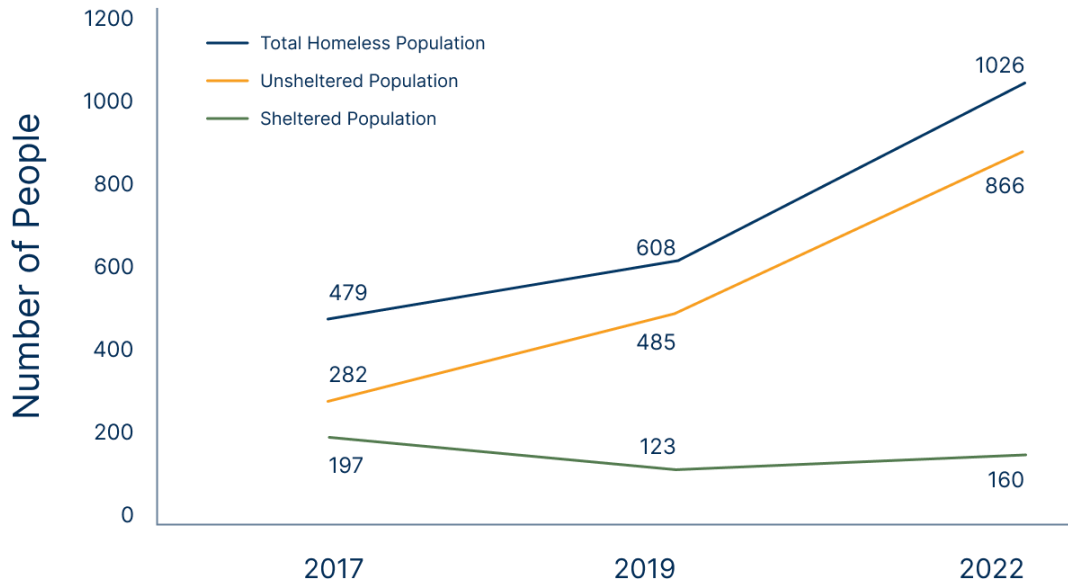
The City of Fremont In 2016 has hired a consultant to work on a Homelessness Response Plan. On February 29, I attended the presentation on the draft plan. It was interesting to see that a number of things that I have proposed or voted for in the past were suggested as part of the solution to the problem. Unfortunately, the current Council has rejected most of these proposals. Not surprisingly, the problem of homelessness in Fremont has only gotten worse as a result.

The City Council unanimously signed onto a “Compassionate City Charter” which says that the City should act compassionately in implementing its policies. I've often said that these words are just words unless we develop policies that show compassion. There are few better ways to show compassion than helping our fellow residents who have fallen on tough times.

### **Homelessness is on the Rise**

The data presented show that the problem is only getting worse as many staff recommendations are simply not being implemented.

Homelessness in Fremont grew at a rate of 23% annually between 2019 and 2022.



The study estimated that the number of homeless in Fremont would nearly triple to 2,750 in the next four years if we maintain the status quo, which is what the City Council has been doing for the last several years, refusing to act on recommendations by staff to address the problem. The common themes in a survey of community residents included the problem is getting worse, homeless people aren't getting the help they need, and more services should be provided.

### **What hasn't been done?**

In 2015, I brought a referral to provide stronger tenant protections. One of these is just cause eviction which defends tenants against unwarranted evictions. My referral also suggested caps on annual rent increases. Sadly, not a single other Councilmember, including my Mayoral opponent Raj Salwan, voted to implement any tenant protections that would prevent people from falling into homelessness through no fault of their own.

- In 2021, City staff proposed three items to address the growing number of people living in vehicles:
- Safe Parking\* implemented at non-profit locations such as churches.
- Development of new City-run Safe Parking sites
- Bringing City services to those locations where people are already living in their cars

We now have a waiting list for the current safe parking program as more and more people fall into homelessness and are living on our streets in vehicles with no safe place to go. In 2019, when we were discussing the Homelessness Navigation Center (HNC), I advocated that the City increase its spending on combatting homelessness. Unfortunately, my fellow Councilmembers (again including Councilmember Salwan) did not agree with this. They only wanted to use the grant money provided to build the HNC. Services would be provided to the users of safe parking sites to help them find permanent housing. Sadly, the Council decided to only implement staff's first recommendation (with Councilmember Salwan once again agreeing with the majority opinion). It's no surprise that the homelessness problem in Fremont has only gotten worse as Council failed to implement policies and services that would have helped to address the problem.

### **What Can Be Done?**

The study makes it clear that something more needs to be done if we do not want to see homelessness continue to skyrocket in Fremont. It recognized three goals that could be achieved. We now have a waiting list for the current safe parking program as more and more people fall into homelessness and are living on our streets in vehicles with no safe place to go.

**GOAL A:** Stop the growth of how many people experience homelessness

**GOAL B:** Serve more people on a path to housing

**GOAL C:** Reduce the impact of homelessness on the Fremont community

Some of the draft recommendations are listed below. Yes, these items will require an investment by the City, but doing nothing also costs a great deal in terms of enforcement and clean-up of encampments. Of course, trying to help unhoused community members to live with safety and dignity is also the only compassionate and ethical choice

- Consider tenant protections such as just cause evictions. As noted, this is something that I brought before the Council in 2015, but it was voted down.
- Support policies to increase housing supply. I must note here that some will argue that market rate housing will solve the problem. This problem will be helped with targeted affordable housing, not townhomes costing well over \$1 million each. (See issue paper on YIMBY/NIMBY.)
- Triple Safe Parking options by year three. Again, adding more Safe Parking was recommended to the Council by staff back in 2021 but the Council chose the option to create only a few of these that would be run by non-profits. The City should take the lead in establishing more of these locations. These would be established in coordination with parking restrictions in certain areas.

### **What Can Be Done?**

The City Council hired a consultant with expertise in what it takes to address homelessness. The recommendations resulting from the consultant's analysis of the situation in Fremont are sound, yet they are not new. As a City Councilmember, I advocated for these actions for years, but a majority of the Council continues to refuse to take any action, as they watch the problem get worse. As mayor I will

work hard to implement data-driven solutions to address homelessness immediately.

\*Safe Parking is providing locations where people who are living in their cars can park safely. Services are provided, including assistance with finding permanent housing.

## **Answers from Raj Salwan to Sierra Club on Homelessness**

Access to housing and support services for the unhoused is a critical issue in Fremont, and I have been a strong advocate for policies and programs that address this challenge. I have supported the expansion of shelter options, including the creation of transitional and permanent supportive housing, to provide safe and stable living conditions for our unhoused residents. Additionally, I have worked to secure funding for affordable housing developments and have advocated for policies that protect tenants from eviction and displacement.

I have also collaborated with NGOs like Abode Services as a former Board Member, which play a vital role in providing services to the unhoused. This includes supporting their efforts to connect individuals with housing, healthcare, and employment resources. I believe that addressing homelessness requires a comprehensive approach that includes not only housing but also access to mental health and substance abuse services, job training, and other forms of support. I also have been a member of the Homebuilder Society which pledges money every year for five years to support the efforts of Abode Services. As Mayor, I will continue to work closely with organizations like Abode to ensure that we are doing everything we can to help our most vulnerable residents.

## **Anu Natarajan addresses Homeless solutions**

### **HOMELESSNESS IS A HOUSING PROBLEM**

Homelessness in the Bay Area, as in many urban regions, is fundamentally a housing issue. The skyrocketing costs of housing, coupled with a shortage of affordable units, have left many individuals and families unable to secure stable living conditions.

The Bay Area's crisis is compounded by inflated housing prices far beyond what low- and middle-income earners can afford. The region has seen a lag in the construction of affordable housing units, exacerbated by restrictive zoning laws, community opposition to new developments, and bureaucratic delays. This situation has forced many people into homelessness, as even those with steady employment find themselves unable to keep pace with rising rents.

While homelessness is a complex problem with many causes, the high costs of housing is a significant factor in the state's homelessness crisis. More people experience homelessness in California than any other state.

Addressing homelessness in the Bay Area requires a multi-faceted approach centered around the expansion of affordable housing. Fremont has been proactive in implementing many policy interventions such as inclusionary zoning, which mandates that a portion of new residential developments be reserved for low-income households. Another vital component is the preservation of existing affordable housing, ensuring that current tenants are not displaced by rising property values or redevelopment pressures.

Over the years, Fremont has implemented several policies to increase affordable housing and address homelessness in the city. To ensure that we continue to address the affordable housing and

homelessness crisis in Fremont and the region, Fremont must continue to be creative and innovative.

### Expand Affordable Housing to Include Middle Income Housing

Including middle-income housing within the affordable housing spectrum is essential for creating a diverse, resilient, and economically balanced community. Middle-income households often face significant challenges in high-cost areas like Fremont, where housing costs can outpace wage growth. Addressing this issue involves expanding the definition of affordable housing to include housing that is accessible to middle-income earners, who are often overlooked in traditional affordable housing programs. Consider innovative financing such as middle-income housing trust funds, municipal bonds for middle income housing to add to the affordable housing funds.

### 3-P Framework

The CASA coalition's 3P framework - Production, Preservation, and Protection - is designed to address the affordable housing crisis in a holistic manner, recognizing that solving the issue requires not only building more housing but also preserving existing units and protecting current residents.

The complexity of homelessness requires a coordinated response, with different sectors working together to pool resources, share information, and implement comprehensive strategies.

Partnerships highlight the necessity of collaboration among government agencies, non-profit organizations, the private sector, and the community

**Subject: Consider not approving South Bay Connect**



The Capitol Corridor South Bay Connect Proposed Project includes new train tracks along the coastal freight railroad system from Oakland to Newark at a cost of nearly \$1 billion, builds a new train stop at Ardenwood near Highway 84, and removes Hayward and Centerville, two existing train stops. The second phase of the Project was omitted from the draft environmental assessment, a new passenger rail extension from Newark to San Jose through the wetlands and future freight rail improvements over Alameda Creek at a total cost of \$4 billion. The Proposed Project location makes it susceptible to sea level rise, flooding and severe damage in an earthquake due to liquefaction. South Bay Connect \$1 billion project is a total of \$4 billion in 2016 dollars proposed to save 13 minutes of travel time between Oakland to San Jose without consideration of long-term hazards.

South Bay Connect Project will begin to require a diversion of freight trains to southern Alameda County and into Niles Canyon, our watershed, exceeding 50 freight trains daily that pass through existing transit oriented communities along the existing Capitol Corridor Route used today. Capitol Corridor did not disclose the tremendous growth in freight trains nor the freight mitigation such as removal of street-level rail crossings to prevent critical lifesaving improvements. See Figure 2-1 below from Capitol Corridors Vision Implementation Plan.

The community was not made aware of the long-term impacts exceeding 50 freight trains daily planned by Capitol Corridor and Union Pacific Railroad since the Capitol Corridor 2016 Vision

Implementation Plan was adopted. Decision-makers and the public should understand the overall impacts of the investment to create passenger rail systems and ifuture intense daily freight trains as a trade-off. We must ask for transparency and accountability.

Your comments are critical to highlight these concerns in the Final Draft Environmental Impact report scheduled for completion by year end.

TCEC is not in support of this Capitol Corridor passenger and freight train project that builds railroad lines without consideration of climate adaptive strategies for our bay shoreline and wetlands, and the Proposed Project will begin the transition of adding over 50 freight trains daily into our communities without protecting people from street-level rail crossings.

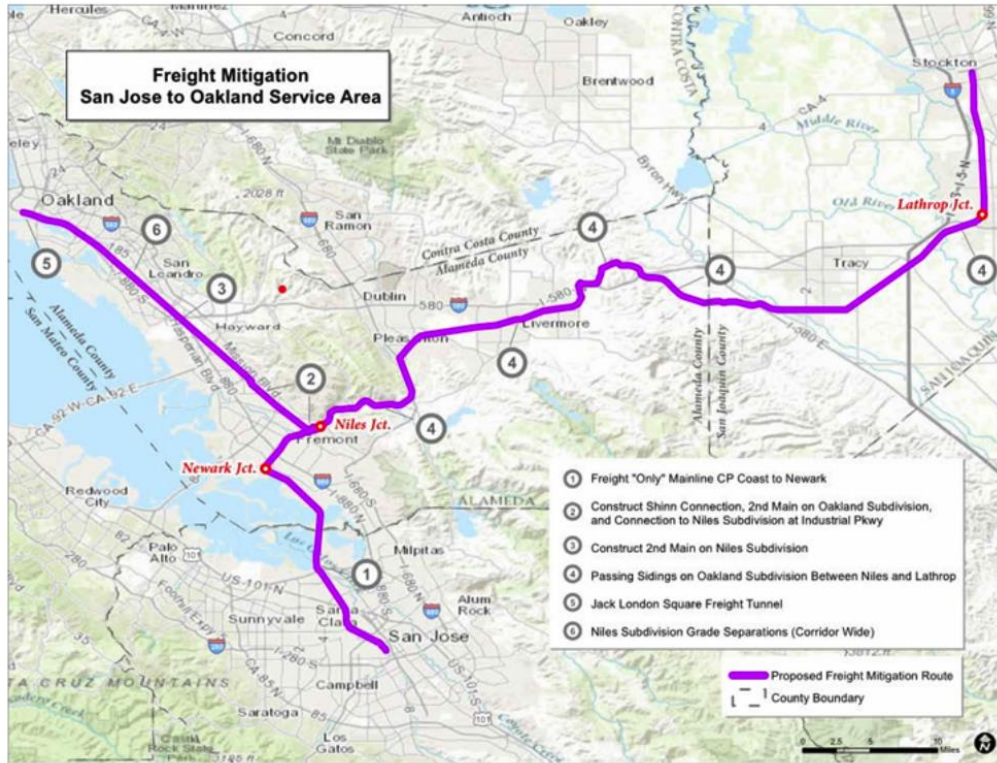
Liz Ames, P.E.

BART Director and Caroline Harris Chair TCEC

[South Bay Connect Project's DEIR Now Available for Public Comment - Get on Board! \(capitolcorridor.org\)](https://www.capitolcorridor.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/CCVIP-Final-Report-Appendices-v2.pdf)

2016 Capitol Corridor Vision Implementation Plan Figure 2-Freight Mitigation for San Jose to Oakland Service Area <https://www.capitolcorridor.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/CCVIP-Final-Report-Appendices-v2.pdf>

Figure 2-1 Freight Mitigation for San Jose to Oakland Service Area





OHLONE HUMANE SOCIETY  
WILDLIFE REHABILITATION CENTER

# Open House 2024

Saturday, October 19th

10:00am-2:00pm

**FREE EVENT**

**Rain or Shine**

Ambassador Education Animals 10:30-1:00

Happy Hallow Zoo

Wildcare Rehab Center

Wildlife Rehabilitation Center Tours

Free Crafts and Goodie Bags for the Kids

Beekeeper Talks & Homegrown Honey

OHS Therapy Animal Team

Opportunity Drawings

**37175 HICKORY STREET**

**NEWARK CA 94560**

**PARKING ON HICKORY STREET**



**Help Our Wild Patients**

**Bring a Donation to Open House**

Wild Bird Seed, Dry Dog Food, Latex Gloves, Bagged Garden Soil,  
Laundry Soap, Bleach, and 13 and 33 Gallon Trash Bags



## Upcoming Events

Newark Days Community Info Fair, come visit TCEC info table and kids activity on Sunday Sept 22nd <https://newarkdays.org/>

**“Re-Think Your Lawn: Creating Water-Efficient and Climate Resilient Landscapes” on Saturday, October 26, 2024, from 10 A.M. – 12 P.M. in person at ACWD’s Headquarters (43885 S Grimmer Boulevard, Fremont, CA 94538).** Learn how to transform your water-thirsty lawn into a beautiful, low-maintenance, and water-efficient landscape that can better withstand emerging impacts of climate change, including prolonged droughts.

Information about Alameda County Water District's Lawn Be Gone rebate will be provided. This lecture will be instructed by Frank Niccoli. [Register here.](#)

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TCEC tends the Local History Museum garden at 190 Anza Street Mission San Jose every second Saturday of the month 10 am till noon, drop in to help make the garden beautiful or just watch us work and appreciate the native plant garden.

# NEW Special Price REDUCTION

## BIODEGRADABLE PRODUCTS

	WAS	NOW
7 inch plate (50 per pack)	\$ 3.70	\$ 3.20
10 inch plate (50 per pack)	\$ 7.20	\$ 5.16
11.5 oz bowl (50 per pack)	\$ 2.70	\$ 2.95
8 oz no tree hot cup	\$ 4.00	\$ 3.45
9 oz cold cup (50 per pack)	\$ 4.90	\$ 3.84
10 oz cold cup (50 per pack)	\$ 6.25	\$ 6.25
16 oz cold cup (50 per pack)	\$ 5.35	\$ 5.98
Teaspoon, fork or knife (50 per pack)	\$ 2.10	\$ 1.60
3 gal kitchen pail bag 17"X17 " (50 per roll)	\$ 4.00	\$ 2.85
13 gal tall kitchen pail bag 17"X17 " (50 per roll)	\$ 3.15	\$ 3.15
100 count straws	\$ 1.45	\$ 1.45

\*All prices reflect our nonprofit discount and tax. This benefit is for TCEC members only.

Orders may be picked up at 3375 Country Drive, Fremont, on Thursdays between 11 AM – 2 PM, or by special arrangement. When purchasing please fill out an order form and pay by cash or check. Sorry, we don't have change. Questions? Call Dee Miner at 510 9406272 or email her at muskox44@hotmail.com and please cc Caroline Harris at caroline.harris@earthlink.net.

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# BECOME A MEMBER

## WANT TO JOIN TCEC?

If you want to become a member please click [HERE](#) to fill out this form and mail a check to 3375 Country Drive, Fremont, CA 94536. To know more about TCEC please visit our website at <http://www.tricityecology.org> Board meets on the first Thursday of each month on Zoom due to Covid-1. Please call to verify. If you wish to speak on a subject, please call 510.793.6222 or 510.790.1685. If you have any suggestions or want to contact us, please fill out [THIS](#) form.

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