

THOUSAND OAKS DAY LABORER SITE

Background

The problem with day laborers gathering at particular sites within the cities of Ventura County has existed for many years. Numerous cities have tried to solve the problem by arresting laborers, writing citations or passing ordinances that do not allow laborers to gather in specific locations. The courts have determined that such ordinances are unconstitutional. The City of Thousand Oaks, after many studies and complaints from citizens about the location day laborers were previously gathering, established a new day laborer pick-up place in a greenbelt area. The new site is located several blocks away from the previous area. Day laborers can gather; contractors and the general public can pick them up.

As a result of this action by the City of Thousand Oaks, the Ventura County Grand Jury received a citizen's complaint regarding the new area and the way the city went about constructing the site.

Methodology

Grand Jury members visited the new site at Fairview Road and Royal Oaks on many occasions. These visits were conducted at various times of the day including weekends. The old site at Fairview Road and Crescent Way was also visited. All of the Grand Jurors who visited both sites commented on the vast improvement of the new site.

Findings

F-1. The laborers are not as visible to the general public in their new pick-up site as they were at the old location. The area appeared to be clean and well maintained on each of the Grand Jury visits.

F-2. The site chosen was City-owned property. All construction was funded by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The improvements included picnic tables with benches, a bicycle rack, trash receptacles and turnaround access.

F-3. Two (2) portable sanitary units provided temporary restroom facilities.

F-4. On the various visits made by members of the Grand Jury, there were 6 to 12 cars parked in the vicinity of the day labor pick-up site. It was unknown whether these were resident or day laborer owned vehicles.

F-5. The turnaround area provided for contractors and the general public to pick up the laborers is not marked, and unless one is familiar with the turnaround, it might not be used.

Conclusions

C-1. Other cities that are still wrestling with day laborer problems might want to consider using CDBG funds to create similar areas within their cities. (F-2)

C-2. The citizen's complaint appears to be "it's a great idea but just not in my neighborhood, please." (F-1)

C-3. The temporary restroom facilities serve the immediate needs of the day laborers. If permanent facilities were made available, the aesthetic appearance of the entire area would be improved. (F-3)

C-4. A traffic survey in the area would provide an indication whether the parked vehicles were causing hazardous conditions for moving vehicles or pedestrians in the area. (F-4)

C-5. The new site is located in an out-of-the-way low population area. (F-1, F-5)

Recommendations

R-1. Recommend that permanent toilet facilities be installed. At the time this report was being written, the city had approved funding to accomplish the construction with the next CDBG fund application. (C-3)

R-2. Conduct a traffic safety study at the corner of Hampshire Road and Royal Oaks to determine if the new day laborer site has created a traffic hazard that would warrant installing "No Parking" signs in the immediate area. (C-4)

R-3. Install a permanent sign at the turnaround indicating where contractors and the general public can pick up the day laborers. (C-5)

Response Required

City Manager, Thousand Oaks (R-1, R-2, R-3)

CC: Thousand Oaks City Council

Commendation

The City of Thousand Oaks has done a commendable job in helping to solve the problem of what to do with locating day laborers.