

Mission Beach flies in the face of tourists, residents

By Dave Schwab, 19th May 2016, California, USA

Ideally, Mission Beach would like to become a no-fly zone.

Unfortunately, given its ideal breeding conditions, the beach community is presently a free-fly zone.

Each summer, MB experiences a severe, filthy fly problem, with an overwhelming infestation of pesky flies negatively impacting residents, visitors, vacation rental agencies and businesses. Additionally, MB restaurants have chalked up more than 250 negative Yelp! restaurant reviews and a multitude of health department citations, largely attributable to the insect infestation.

“The fly and filth problem, especially in the alleys, is horrible,” said Dawn Reilly, project administrator for Beautiful MB Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to Mission Beach's improvement and enhancement. “It looks like some ghetto in some war-torn destination,” Reilly said.

Reilly is working with others in the community to create a special district to help eradicate MB's fly problem.

“It is clear the City of San Diego will not provide the level of services and amenities our unique community needs and deserves,” said Reilly. “We have refocused our time and energy to accomplishing those goals ourselves, attempting to expand the current Maintenance Assessment District (MAD).”

Reilly noted that “the logical next step (is) to look into forming a Community Benefits District (CBD).”

The area has been determined to be an ideal breeding ground for flies due to several unique factors: high population density with 20,000 new transient occupants every weekend at the beach community; MB's unique geography, with the ocean and bay creating a moisture-rich environment for flies to reproduce; overflowing, unsecured, unlocked trash cans and bins accessible to “scavengers” who rip open bags; unlined and unclean trash cans; unswept alleyways with trash cans and the heat that speeds up the fly life cycle.

“In essence, we are manufacturing flies in Mission Beach,” concluded Reilly.

Second District Councilmember Lorie Zapf along with Supervisor Ron Roberts' office, Beautiful Mission Beach and the Mission Beach Town Council will host a Fly Summit to address community pest concerns and work toward solutions Wednesday, June 8 at 11 a.m in the Belmont Park Community Room.

The City and MB civic groups have been working for years to solve the fly problem. The City's Environmental Services Department steps up its code enforcement during summer months. Inspectors look for overflowing refuse containers and illegal dumping and work to ensure waste containers are moved out of the public right of way after 6 p.m. on collection day.

The City's Transportation and Storm Water Department has also amended its street-sweeping schedule to reduce the amount of debris/material on the ground that may attract flies. The department also provides street sweeping services in the alleys of Mission Beach during the summer months.

Additionally, the City and local community groups have worked extensively with businesses and property management companies to encourage them to maintain trash and recycling containers and dumpsters in good operating condition, to increase collection frequency of dumpsters and to ensure waste containers are free of holes and cracks and have functioning lids.

Reilly said a CBD, if approved, would assess businesses and residents prescribed amounts: about \$125 a year for a basic residence, \$163 a year for residences on the boardwalk/bay and \$1,195 annually for businesses (who'd benefit the most) of 8,000 square feet or more in high-traffic areas.

“Every property owner would be assessed between Pacific Beach Drive and the jetty, including the Catamaran and the Bahia (hotels) and Belmont Park, obviously the biggest properties,” said Reilly. “They are all in support of the CBD, aware of their assessment amounts, and are happy to contribute to our community.”