

# Behind The City Scene

Parts of Ward 4 are trashy. There I said it! Maybe it is because I walk my dog and therefore I see it up close and personal. I can't even describe everything I have seen in a family-friendly publication. The gutters on public streets are open trash containers.

I am old enough to remember regular street sweeping operations. For the younger



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folks those are the big strange looking machines that have rotating brushes on the front. What happened to them? Their use has been cut way back due to budget cuts. This is a short sighted policy that cancels out many other efforts to portray the City as a great place to live. I am a fierce critic of several "fluff" programs. The number one offender is the "Sister City" program. Tens of thousands of dollars of public funds are being used to send high ranking City officials on trips to exotic places for photo ops and cool passport stamps. We even have a full-time City employee who runs the program. Don't get me wrong I know many very nice people with Ethiopian and South Korean heritage. A program like this should be funded by private donations not your taxpayer money. As you can imagine my opposition to this program has not made me many friends at the very highest levels of the City government – who enjoy these foreign trips.

Street sweepers are very boring. They move slowly and make a lot of noise. They clearly need a PR firm to bolster their appeal. But their use in Ward 4 is a lot more beneficial than sending a delegation of City officials to far away places. Ward 4 has many needs including cleaning up trash, road work, more police enforcement, traffic control devices, and just boring old municipal services. There are no "memories of a lifetime" for removing trash from our gutters. When the budget discussion occurs in September, I will try to cut Sister Cities and add more street sweeping operations. *If you are a gambler bet on the continuing exotic foreign trips.*