



City Administrator's Report

March 2004

Dear Reader,

This monthly report summarizes and provides updates on major activities, events, projects, and programs that impact the Santa Barbara community. Feel free to give us your comments and suggestions.

E-mail copies of this report are available to members of City of Santa Barbara boards, commissions, and committees. E-mail delivery conserves paper, trees, ink, saves time, and reduces costs. To receive your copy electronically, send your name, city affiliation, and e-mail address to Mindy Jackson at mjackson@ci.santa-barbara.ca.us.

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Key Meetings:

March 2, 16, 23, 30 City Council Meetings

Flags on State Street:

March 1-9 American Red Cross
March 9-22 Navy League
March 22-April 1 Whale Festival

Community Events:

- March 1 - 14 ▪ Designer Showcase to benefit CALM (Child Abuse Listening Mediation). Tickets \$30 per person, (805) 965-2376
- March 6 ▪ Electronics Collection and Recycling Day, Earl Warren Showgrounds and Raytheon Company, (805) 882-3616
- March 11 ▪ Santa Barbara State of the City Address, Fess Parker's DoubleTree Resort, 7:30 a.m., Reservations: (805) 965-3023
- March 19 – 21 ▪ Santa Barbara International Orchid Show, Earl Warren Showgrounds, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Admission \$10, (805) 967-6331
- March 21 ▪ Kite Festival, Garvin Theatre, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., (805) 682-2895
- March 27 - 28 ▪ 10th Annual Santa Barbara Whale Festival, lower State Street between the train station and Stearns Wharf, 10 a.m.- 5 p.m., www.sbwhalefestival.com, (805) 969-5244

City Administrator

State of the City

On March 11th, Mayor Blum will deliver the fourth annual State of the City address at the Fess Parker DoubleTree Resort in downtown Santa Barbara. The presentation gives an overview of the city's accomplishments in the past 12 months, along with a financial status report by City Administrator Armstrong, and a summary of major challenges and opportunities facing Santa Barbara today and in the future.

Alisos Street cleanup

As part of a Neighborhood Improvement Program, the City of Santa Barbara launched an extensive clean-up effort in the 300-block of South Alisos Street. The work involved equipment and personnel from Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Police, Fire, Community Development, Caltrans, and the City Administrator's Office. In addition to towing away a number of abandoned vehicles from the area last month, the city removed garbage, debris, human waste, trees and brush totaling about 85 tons. There is much more to be done, including working with property owners to correct a number of zoning violations and building code problems. The Neighborhood Improvement Program is a work-in-progress effort to resolve unsatisfactory conditions that have been in existence for several years.

State Ballot Initiatives

California voters on March 2nd approved Propositions 57 and 58, important budget-related ballot initiatives strongly backed by Governor Schwarzenegger. Proposition 57, *The Economic Recovery Bond Act*, authorizes the issuance of up to \$15 billion in deficit reduction bonds. Proposition 58, *The California Balanced Budget Act*, requires adoption of a balanced state budget, establishes certain reserve requirements, and restricts future deficit borrowing. Voters rejected Proposition 56, which would have lowered the legislative vote needed to pass a budget – and to raise taxes – from two-thirds to 55%.

It is unlikely that the outcome of these ballot propositions will have a significant impact on the city's own budget situation. The deficit reduction bonds will be used by the state primarily to consolidate already-existing budget deficit debt – not to fund future deficit spending. The risk to the city from the state's ongoing budget deficit remains very real. According to independent analysis, the state still has a significant structural budget deficit. Until the state solves that problem once and for all, local government revenues, including those of the City of Santa Barbara and its Redevelopment Agency, remain very much at risk.

Medicinal marijuana I.D. cards

Santa Barbara City Council last month voted unanimously to encourage and support the county's efforts to implement a Medicinal Marijuana Identification Card Program, in accordance with Proposition 251 – as approved by voters in 1996 – the Compassionate Use Act of 1996. The Board of Supervisors on March 9th is scheduled to consider a Board Agenda Letter on the subject.

Development and Disposition Agreement set to expire

The city has decided to let the current Development and Disposition Agreement (DDA) and Ground Lease between Santa Barbara Gateway Associates, LLC (SBGC), and the City of Santa Barbara – dated March 9, 2000 – expire at its currently planned expiration date of April 24, 2004. The SBGC had recently requested an extension and modification to the DDA and Ground lease, to allow consideration of a Target store and other retail uses, instead of the currently approved use for research and development. This action does not preclude considering a Target store or any other use currently allowed under the terms of the existing agreement. The decision allows the city to open the process to competing interests.

Airport Department

Dallas service begins April 4!

American Eagle will begin non-stop regional jet service from Santa Barbara Airport (SBA) to Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) starting April 4th, with one daily departure at 6:35 a.m. DFW is the third largest hub in the U.S. offering hundreds of single-stops from SBA into Mexico, Latin America, Europe, and numerous domestic destinations. DFW is ranked ninth of the top 20 destinations most traveled to by SBA passengers.

Good start for 2004 passenger count

In January, 56,081 passengers arrived at and departed from SBA – a 5.5% increase over the same month last year. In contrast, the national passenger count average was down 2%. SBA in January had approximately 1,800 outbound seats available aboard 43 daily departures. The *America West Express* flights to Las Vegas had the highest average passenger loads at 77%, followed by the *United Express* flights to Denver at 73%.

Community Development Department

More beds at Casa Esperanza

City Council last month upheld the Planning Commission's decision to expand services at the Casa Esperanza Homeless Center – denying an appeal by an adjacent property owner. The center requested amendments to the existing Conditional Use Permit that would increase the year-round bed capacity from 30 to 100. Council chambers were filled to capacity with Homeless Center advocates, area property and business owners, and reporters. The property and business owners were concerned that the increase would contribute to ongoing problems of neighborhood loitering, plus alcohol, drug, and general nuisance activity. After a lengthy public comment period, City Council denied the appeal on condition that the must center work with the neighborhood to address problems, and report back to the council this November – before the winter center opens.

Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance

City Council in January authorized a public review program to update the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance (NPO). The first NPO Update Steering Subcommittee meeting was held last month, with planning staff presenting an overview of the current NPO Municipal Code and NPO Update Work Program.

The ultimate goal of the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance Update is to define how land use controls should be restructured to reflect the preferences and expectations of the community. To that end, a special Neighborhood Visual Survey Workshop series is proposed, using pictures to gather public input regarding single-family home preferences.

New housing element

City Council in February unanimously approved the new Housing Element of the General Plan. The Housing Element establishes goals, policies, and strategies for new housing programs and planning efforts in the city for the next five years. Goals include: housing opportunities; conservation and improvement of existing housing; neighborhood compatibility and improvement; new housing development; reduce governmental constraints; regional cooperation and jobs housing balance; and public education. Copies of the Housing Element are available from the City Planning Division or online: www.ci.santa-barbara.ca.us, under *Departments, Community Development, Housing Element Update*. This is a very large file, so the document may take considerable time to appear.

Fire Department

Wildland Fire Plan

The Planning Commission approved the draft Environmental Impact Report for the Wildland Fire Plan last month. The plan identifies and recommends specific fuel modification efforts to mitigate the impacts of wildfire. In May, the plan goes to City Council for approval to begin implementation.

Tools for life

Fire equipment supplier L.N. Curtis was awarded a contract to provide \$60,000 in extrication tools – including the “Jaws of Life” – expected to arrive in about a month. The department received the funds in October through a grant from the Office of Traffic Safety.

Library Department

100th birthday for Dr. Seuss

A yearlong tribute to Theodore Geisel – best known as Dr. Seuss – kicked off with a March 2nd “Read Across America Day.” All month, the public library will host Dr. Seuss story times and birthday parties to celebrate the 100th birthday of the creator of such characters as the Cat in the Hat, Sam-I-Am (who loves green eggs and ham), and the Grinch who stole Christmas.

Poetry competition

Now through April 2nd, teens are encouraged to submit entries to “Poetry Unplugged: the Santa Barbara Young Poet Contest.” Sponsored by the library and *The Santa Barbara Independent*, the teen poetry contest will culminate with an evening of readings by the winners and others on April 22nd at the Central Library Faulkner Gallery.

Finance Department

Department budgets

Reviews of each city department's proposed fiscal year 2005 budget by the City Administrator continue through the week of March 8th. Individual meetings with each department include review of both the department's proposed revenue and expenditure budgets for next fiscal year, as well as the proposed work plan as reflected in the city's P³ (Paradise Performance Program) performance objectives and measures. Department staff attending the meetings includes management and all P³ program owners.

Once department review meetings are complete, the City's Budget Policy Committee will meet in mid-March to finalize the proposed fiscal year 2005 operating and capital budget. The Budget Policy Committee includes staff from the City Administrator's Office, the Finance Department, along with the Community Development director, the Fire chief, and the Parks and Recreation director. When the budget is finalized, the Finance Department will begin production of the recommended fiscal year 2005 budget document. The budget will be filed with the City Council and released to the public in mid-April. That will begin a two-month review of the recommended budget by the council, the city's various boards and commissions, and the public, culminating in budget adoption in mid-June.

Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT)

The table shows January TOT is expected to be basically flat from the prior year – up only about 0.2% -- bringing our fiscal year-to-date to + 2.4%. This is a bit disappointing in that we had seen stronger growth in recent months. However, the previous January (2003) was up more than 14%, so the current January is being compared to a very strong month. Despite the small percentage growth, January 2004 is slightly above our FY 2001 high. Revenues will need to increase substantially for the remainder of the year to meet our 4.2% budgeted growth rate.

	FY 2001	Change from Prior Year	FY 2002	Change from Prior Year	FY 2003	Change from Prior Year	FY 2004	Change from Prior Year
July	\$1,204,593	11.3%	\$1,171,041	-2.8%	\$1,183,951	1.1%	\$1,198,952	1.3%
Aug	\$1,246,973	7.9%	\$1,276,212	2.3%	\$1,328,278	4.1%	\$1,349,990	1.6%
Sept	\$952,314	14.1%	\$808,657	-15.1%	\$849,174	5.0%	\$887,095	4.5%
Oct	\$839,946	3.7%	\$790,919	-5.8%	\$830,054	4.9%	\$863,919	4.1%
Nov	\$691,398	13.2%	\$653,829	-5.4%	\$684,776	4.7%	\$696,231	1.7%
Dec	\$594,145	16.2%	\$539,598	-9.2%	\$529,694	-1.8%	\$553,094	4.4%
Jan	\$578,703	9.4%	\$511,090	-11.7%	\$583,413	14.2%	\$584,800	0.2%
Yr Total	\$6,108,072	10.4%	\$5,751,346	-5.8%	\$5,989,340	4.1%	\$6,134,081	2.4%

Parks and Recreation Department

Discount cards catching on

As of February 20th, 1,293 Resident Discount Cards have been issued since the October launch. Good for 18 months from the date of issue, the cards save residents up to 20% on designated activities, programs, and facility rentals offered through the Parks and Recreation Dept. Most of the cards are expected to be issued in April, when the *Activity Guide for Spring & Summer 2004* is published and registration begins for summer programs, camps, and classes.

Douglas Family Preserve and dogs off-leash

On February 25, 2004, the Park and Recreation Commission recommended adoption of the Douglas Family Preserve Management Plan. The plan addresses such issues as resource protection, vegetation management, restoration, interpretive signage, closing times, caretaker facility, restroom, and trails maintenance. Plan recommendations include not constructing a caretaker residence or restroom, and monitoring the Douglas Family Preserve to assess if their need arises in the future. The Commission also recommended a dogs-off-leash policy for the Douglas Family Preserve, Hale Park, and the beach area from Mesa Lane Steps west to Arroyo Burro Creek. City Council will consider these recommendations at their March 30th meeting at 6 p.m. (tentative).

Paragliding and hang gliding landing sites

Changing the landing site for paragliders from the Bird Refuge outfall to an area further west – on East Beach across from the DoubleTree Resort was recommended by the Park Commission. This recommendation follows a year's observation of landings at the original location approved in January 2003. The new location offers a larger area to land, and more pilot flexibility for controlling landings when wind and tide conditions are less favorable. City Council will be considering an ordinance change on March 16th to relocate the approved landing area.

Black History Month speak-out

The Santa Barbara Youth Council held a "Youth Speak-Out" last month on the subject of tolerance in honor of Black History Month. Approximately 40 teens listened to a brief introduction by UCSB Professor Don Daves-Rougeaux, addressing lives of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. His introduction was followed by a frank discussion on how teens have faced racism and intolerance in Santa Barbara. The session ended with the teens asking to continue the discussion at future speak-outs.

Arbor Day proclamation

For the 24th consecutive year, Santa Barbara will be designated "Tree City USA" by the California Department of Forestry – at a March 7th Arbor Day tree planting ceremony at Adams School. Arbor Day is recognized at five local grade schools.

Police Department

Graffiti vandal caught

A premise check of parking lot 11 by Sgt. Gaona resulted in a 19-year old being charged with vandalism. Stopping to investigate individuals loitering by a vehicle, the officer saw a person squatting behind a pillar. The teen had been using green paint to put graffiti on the parking lot ground. Several paint markers, multiple spray tips, and a few paint cans were recovered. The teen also had a disposable camera that he admitted "may" have photos of other graffiti.

Extended range impact weapon

A 46-year-old Santa Barbara resident was booked at Santa Barbara County Jail for domestic battery, vandalism, and preventing a witness from calling police. Earlier, Officers Hons, Castro, Sawicki, and McBride responded to an in-progress domestic violence call on Pitos Street last month. Officer Hons shot the man once in each thigh with a bean-bag shotgun, after the suspect began reaching under his waistband, simulating that he was drawing a weapon. Officers subdued the uncooperative man who, investigation revealed had battered his 50-year-old girlfriend and vandalized her apartment. The man admitted that he was trying to make the officers believe he was drawing a weapon on them. He was treated and released at Cottage Hospital for bruises to his legs from the bean-bag weapon.

Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE)

More than 460 students graduated during the Fall Semester 2003 DARE ceremony, held at the Arlington Theater in January. Santa Barbara Police Chief Sanchez, City Administrator Armstrong, and City Councilmember Barnwell attended, handing out awards to essay winners. January also kicked off the Spring Semester 2004 DARE program for about 350 students from Harding, Monroe, Adams, Notre Dame, Roosevelt – and for the first time – Santa Barbara Community Academy. Marymount School declined to participate this year due to a new 6th grade curriculum, but hopes to continue with DARE next year by moving the program to their 5th grade class. Several other schools including Hope and Monte Vista offer the program to their 5th graders.

Public Works Department

New water well

Phase 1 of the San Roque Water Well Construction Project is just about complete, with turf restoration occurring this month. Phase 2 includes design and construction of above-ground facilities and new landscaping. The well is an important part of maintaining the city's groundwater supply during droughts and other supply shortages. Construction of a second, new water well at Santa Barbara High School is scheduled for this summer.

Micheltorena Bridge

The Caltrans Micheltorena Bridge Replacement project is nearing completion. Improvements include wider sidewalks and pedestrian lighting. Project completion in March and a ribbon-cutting ceremony in April are anticipated.

Rain benefits water supply

The season's biggest storm rolled through Santa Barbara on February 26th, dropping five inches of rain at Gibraltar Reservoir – which raised Gibraltar's level by five feet. Downtown received 2.72 inches. As of March 1st, Gibraltar Reservoir continues to rise and is only four feet from spilling and 85% full.

Waterfront Department

Dredge funding in jeopardy

A budget proposal released by President Bush in February, if adopted, would eliminate fiscal year 2005 dredge funding for Santa Barbara and Morro Bay Harbors. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' office notified the Waterfront Department office that both Morro Bay and Santa Barbara were not given an allocation of dredging funds for the upcoming fiscal year. Letters were sent to congressional representatives to begin the appropriations lobby effort at both the House and Senate Committee levels. Currently, Mayor Marty Blum is in Washington D.C. meeting with House and Senate Representatives to discuss the dredge funding issue. The Department is optimistic dredge funds will be included in the final budget. The city's allocation is \$1.9 million.

Sea Center remodel on schedule

Jim Cushman Contracting has completed the pile driving and support work on the shoreward finger of Stearns Wharf. Cushman is in the process of building the foundation and installing the stringers around the perimeter of the building. The work is preparation for pouring a 16-inch concrete foundation. The anticipated pour of 500 cubic yards of concrete will occur at the end of March.

Shifting sand

B.E.A.C.O.N. (Beach Erosion Authority for Clean Oceans and Nourishment), a California Joint Powers Agency, completed West Beach dredge operations last month. A total of 18,589 cubic yards of sand was dredged, removed, and relocated to Goleta Beach for beach re-nourishment. B.E.A.C.O.N. finished ahead of schedule and exceeded their project dredge target by 24%, or 3,589 cubic yards of sand. Their efforts leave behind a broader West Beach calm-water area, a benefit for small-boat sailors.

Annual pile driving contract

Jim Cushman Contracting completed all pile work at Stearns Wharf last month, which included 36 piles, 100 feet of cap, and 14 stringers. Cushman is scheduled to begin work on the Navy Pier in the harbor by the second week in March, replacing a 26-foot pile cap and 20 deck bards on the east end of that pier. Work has gone very smoothly with the mild winter weather.

Long-term lease renewals

The Oceanaire Electronics lease will run through March 2007, with the option to extend for two additional three-year terms. The company specializes in the sale and service of marine electronics. Aliotti Fish Company's lease agreement is for a term of two years, with the option to extend for an additional two-year term. The primary catch of this commercial fishing business is squid.

Whale Festival on March 27th & 28th

Celebrating its tenth year, the Santa Barbara Whale Festival is sponsored by The Beachside Business Association in partnership with the Stearns Wharf Business Association. Proceeds benefit the Santa Barbara Marine Mammal Center and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. The Waterfront Department continues its support by hosting several associated events on Stearns Wharf including the "Duck Races" fund-raiser, Santa Barbara City College Deep Sea Divers' demonstration, Harbor Patrol display, inflatable fun-jumper for kids, and a helicopter rescue demonstration by the United States Coast Guard. For event information, contact Whale Festival Coordinator Renee Smith at renee@rsvpevents.net, call (805) 969-5244, or visit www.sbwhalefestival.com

Cruise ship visits on March 7th

The 296-passenger, ultra-luxury vessel "Silver Wind" frequently sails in the Mediterranean and Caribbean regions. This trip, "Silver Wind" makes its way from San Diego to San Francisco, then down to Monterrey. The sleek white vessel is scheduled to make a port of call to Santa Barbara on Sunday, March 7th, arriving at 6 a.m. and departing at 6 p.m. The Santa Barbara Visitor's Bureau will provide a small, welcome table at its arrival site. About 100 passengers will board planned bus tours of Santa Barbara and Montecito. The remaining 170+ passengers will explore Santa Barbara's Art Walk and downtown on foot, via MTD Shuttle, or by pre-arranged meetings with local friends and family.

An environmental agreement between the City of Santa Barbara and Silverseas Cruise Line prohibits the Silver Wind from dumping or incinerating within 12 miles of the City of Santa Barbara.

For more information about the cruise ship visit, please contact Brian Slagle at (805) 897-1962.