



City Administrator's Report

August 2004

Dear Reader,

This monthly report from the City Administrator's Office 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.

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Key Meetings:

August 3, 10, 17, 24 City Council

Flags on State Street:

- August 1-10 ▪ City of Santa Barbara / Fiesta
- August 10-26 ▪ Domestic Violence Solutions
- August 26-31 ▪ United Way

Holidays:

- September 6 ▪ Labor Day Holiday observed – City Hall closed

Free Concerts at Chase Palm Park, 6 - 8:30 p.m.

- August 12 Captain Cardiac & The Coronaries – Oldies But Goodies
- August 19 The Les Rose Swing Jazz Ensemble - Swing
- August 26 Raymond Michael – A Tribute to Elvis

Community Events:

- August 4 – 8 ▪ Santa Barbara's Old Spanish Days Fiesta, www.oldspanishdays-fiesta.org, (805) 962-8101
- August 7 ▪ Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast, Alameda Park, 7 a.m. to noon
- Children's Fiesta Parade – State Street from Victoria to Ortega Streets, 10 a.m.

Neighborhood Improvement Program launched: A Neighborhood Task Force comprised of representatives from the offices of the City Administrator and City Attorney, the Community Development, Parks and Recreation, Police, and Fire departments, will be reporting each month on a variety of neighborhood improvement projects. For example, this year's multi-faceted cleanup of the 300 block of South Alisos Street and the Westside and railroad-adjacent areas involved planned and well-orchestrated collaboration by several city departments. Additionally, Community Development Block Grant funds have been secured for a variety of infrastructure improvements. Look for details every month.

Ordinance Committee meetings now being televised: On August 3, 2001, City TV – Channel 18 began televising the meetings of the City Council Ordinance Committee. The Ordinance Committee meets as needed; normally on Tuesday's beginning at 12:30 p.m. and concludes before the full City Council meets at 2 p.m. All Committee meetings are public, and listed in the official City Council Agenda.

"Inside Santa Barbara" on City-TV Channel 18 August edition airs August 7th through September 8th: Features include the Housing Authority Five-Year Plan, Around the Harbor, Skateboard Park, Recycling in City Parks, Don't Top off Your Gas Tank, and Douglas Family Preserve's Dog Off-Leash Rules. Weekly airtimes are Mondays at 8 p.m., Tuesdays at 5 p.m., Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m., Saturdays at 9 p.m., and Sundays at 10:30 p.m.

Airport Department

Passenger traffic is up 12.6% for the first six months, compared to the same period last year: In June, passenger traffic was up 11.3% over June 2003, while the national average increased 6.3%. Santa Barbara Airport's performance was based on passenger confidence, a stable economy, and the addition last year of non-stop service by Horizon Air to Seattle, and American Eagle to Dallas/Fort Worth.

Construction starts next summer on Tidal Circulation Demonstration Project: The project will restore tidal action to two basins in the slough, and assess any associated aviation bird-strike hazards. A \$298,000 California Coastal Conservancy grant funded the study and design. All of the required permits and approvals have been acquired. Another Conservancy grant for \$250,000 was recently received to cover a portion of the estimated \$700,000 construction costs. The construction schedule avoids disruption to sensitive areas during the rainy season, and the Belding Savannah Sparrow spring breeding season.

Airport Cost of Service Study begins this fall: Santa Barbara Airport's water and sewer systems are 60+ years old and need updating. A study by Kennedy/Jenks Consultants will include a review and recommendation for adjusting utility rates for water and sewer. This will ensure that all costs – operation, maintenance, and capital improvements – are incorporated into the rates, so that the airport receives full-cost recovery from airport tenants and patrons. Currently, tenant rents reimburse about 67% of the annual cost of water and sewer service.

Community Development Department

City wins top U.S. Conference of Mayor's Award: Our Downtown Worker Housing Program was this year's first-place winner for the U.S. Conference of Mayor's City Liveability Award. More than 200 cities submitted applications for many innovative projects – not just housing. Under the program, the city helps to finance high-density affordable housing projects in the downtown area, enabling residents to easily walk, bus, or bike to work, shopping, and services.

The program's first project was Casa De las Fuentes, at the corner of Carrillo and Castillo Streets. Four additional projects with 129 units are currently in predevelopment. City employees are eligible if they work downtown, own no more than one car, and earn no more than \$36,250 (for individuals), or \$62,160 (for couples). Applicants without cars jump to the head of the waiting list. Contact the Housing Authority at (805) 965-1071 for more information.

Cottage Hospital housing could have major environmental effect, concludes study: In July, the Planning Commission held an environmental scoping hearing. Public comment was received on the Initial Study and proposed scope of analysis for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital Foundation Workforce Housing Project. The proposed project would remove the existing St. Francis Hospital complex including the main hospital, convent, central plant, and other ancillary structures (approximately 189,000 square feet). They would be replaced with 115 residential condominiums covering 5.94 acres of the 7.39 acre site. Within the remaining 1.45 acres, the existing elderly care facility – Villa Riviera – would remain, but the parcel containing it would be adjusted to a size of approximately 31,500 square feet. The remaining lands zoned R-2, two-family residential, would be re-configured into three lots of approximately 10,500 square feet each. The three existing residences on these R-2 parcels would be demolished in the process. Although these R-2 lots have the potential for two residences on each lot for a total of six residences, no development is proposed at this time.

An environmental Initial Study of project effects on the physical environment concludes that the project could potentially result in significant environmental effects. An EIR is required to further analyze environmental impact associated with the temporary construction-related effects of construction dust, vehicle emissions, noise, traffic, parking, grading, water quality, solid waste, and long-term traffic/parking/circulation impacts.

Fire Department

Wildland fire mutual aid assignments keep city firefighters busy: Last month, the Santa Barbara Fire Department assisted Southern California fire agencies in multiple wildland fires. Combined, 17 personnel were assigned to: the "Pine" fire in Los Angeles County/Los Padres National Forest, and the "Foothill" fire in Los Angeles County. Three fire engines and several personnel, in overhead assignments, were assigned to these fires.

This fire season has the potential of being one of the worst, due to heavy vegetation fuel and low humidity. Please use caution in all outdoor activities associated with fire (BBQs, etc.). Also be alert to any suspicious activity you might observe, and take down license numbers to pass on to authorities – should a fire occur.

Finance Department

Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) growth slower in June, compared to previous four months: The table below shows June TOT was up 3.3% from the prior fiscal year. Our fiscal year 2004 growth rate was 5.1%, which is about \$92,000 over our year-end estimates and budget.

	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%	\$696,742	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%	\$584,653	0.2%
Feb	\$628,764	9.4%	\$611,322	-2.8%	\$616,824	0.9%	\$703,493	14.1%
Mar	\$769,047	5.6%	\$783,829	1.9%	\$704,942	-10.1%	\$782,652	11.0%
April	\$810,450	0.8%	\$822,209	1.5%	\$793,352	-3.5%	\$875,760	10.4%
May	\$841,975	3.3%	\$856,251	1.7%	\$817,047	-4.6%	\$895,378	9.6%
June	\$1,012,439	8.2%	\$1,012,905	0.0%	\$942,897	-6.9%	\$973,955	3.3%
FY Total	\$10,170,747	8.3%	\$9,837,862	-3.3%	\$9,864,403	0.3%	\$10,365,683	5.3%
Budget	\$10,065,000		\$9,779,115		\$9,974,700		\$10,273,900	

Finance Department begins TOT audits in 30 days: Audits of hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts collecting the city's transient occupancy tax will be conducted by Jefferson Wells International, an audit firm with extensive experience in TOT audits for local governments. The audits ensure that lodging establishments are properly applying the city's 12% TOT, and collecting and remitting the correct amounts. In the first phase of the audit program, between five and 10 of the city's 65 lodging businesses will be audited. Over the next two to three years, we expect that most, if not all, lodging establishments will be audited. Finance staff has worked with the Santa Barbara Lodging Association to ensure lodging operators are aware of the upcoming audit program.

Library Department

Kid's summer reading program is underway: More than 45,000 books for young readers have been checked out by nearly 5,000 members of the Santa Barbara Public Library System summer reading club, "Track It Down At Your Library." In addition to enjoying great stories, readers are receiving prizes and coupons donated by local businesses generously supporting summer reading activities.

Clean-up and security efforts at Eastside Library: There has been a noticeable increase in the number of people "hanging out" around the Eastside Branch Library, often sleeping next to the building and leaving trash and waste on library grounds. Library staff is working with the Police, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works departments to address this issue. Police have increased patrols, shrubbery has been trimmed or removed, and security lights will be installed over two patio areas. Actions will continue to improve the look and public safety of the area.

Parks and Recreation Department

Activity Guide available on August 26th: The Fall & Winter Activity Guide will be published on the Parks and Recreation website (www.sbparcsandrecreation.com), and distributed in the *Santa Barbara News-Press*, *The Santa Barbara Independent*, and the *Valley Voice*. Registration for all activities begins on August 26th. New this year, to help individuals plan their fall and after-school activities, participants will be able to preview all classes and activities online, prior to guide publication.

School district matches city's \$60K for after-school programs: For many years, the city and the Santa Barbara School Districts (SBSD) have jointly funded after-school recreation programs for elementary and junior high students. Declining budgets over the past few years led both agencies to reduce funding, causing student participation to decline 60% last year. In response, the City Council restored \$60,000 for fiscal year 2005, and challenged the SBSD to match the city's contribution. Last month, the School District met the challenge, which restored \$120,000 in funding for elementary and junior high after-school recreation programs for the coming year.

Website info aids residents with trees and pest management: The public can now download the forms needed to request removal of street or setback trees, review the city's tree planting, maintenance, and removal regulations, or find out how to properly prune their trees – all at www.sbparksandrecreation.com. Information on historic and landmark trees will be added soon. The Integrated Pest Management page summarizes the recent strategies adopted in January, lists the pesticide-free parks and no-spray zones, and delineates the notification procedures.

Squirrel over-population adds to erosion concerns for Shoreline Park bluffs: In the past two years, the squirrel population at Shoreline Park has increased tenfold, and the animals' natural burrowing behavior can contribute to park bluff erosion. This would add to the bluffs' ongoing, average loss of about one inch per year. There are also health concerns that communicable diseases could be transmitted to humans through ground squirrel parasites and direct contact

Parks and Recreation Department staff estimates 300 to 500 squirrels on site, far exceeding the California State Health Department threshold set at two to three squirrels per acre, or about 30 squirrels for Shoreline Park.

The Parks and Recreation Department has developed and begun a squirrel population reduction program – reviewed and approved by the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Committee. The IPM Committee includes representatives from both the Pesticide Awareness & Alternative Coalition and the Environmental Defense Center. To cut back on the number of squirrels at Shoreline Park, the city has begun using pesticide- alternative, food-grade pellets containing corn oil concentrate shown to be effective in killing unwanted ground squirrels. The pellets have been placed in secure bait stations, 100 feet apart on the bluff side of the park fence, out of public contact. Also, signs in English and Spanish reading "Please Do Not Feed the Squirrels" were recently posted at the park.

There have always been ground squirrels at Shoreline Park. But in the past, their numbers were controlled with rodenticide, a standard treatment recommended by the Agricultural Commissioner's Office. Shoreline Park became a pesticide-free park two years ago, and the use of the rodenticide diphacinone was discontinued. The pesticide moratorium, combined with our dry winters, abundant turf at the park, and people feeding the squirrels have all contributed to the squirrel population increase.

While other options may be explored, the city's use of a pesticide alternative to reduce the squirrel population at Shoreline Park will continue.

Food Network barbecues with city lifeguards: As part of the Food Network's "Barbecuing With Heroes" segment, show host and barbecue guru Bobby Flay learned some tri-tip grilling tips from Parks and Recreation Department's Aquatics Supervisor Rich Hanna at East Beach last month. The film crew arrived in the afternoon to interview Hanna about aquatics and lifeguard programs, and to film city lifeguards going through drills and maneuvers. While preparing to film a staged ocean rescue, the filmmakers were surprised to witness an actual rescue at the same time, which ended on a positive note.

Bohnett family donates \$27,500 to PARC Foundation: The Bohnett family held a reunion at Bohnett Park last month, where they presented Mayor Blum with a donation for the Parks and Recreation Community (PARC) Foundation. The money is to be used towards funding the completion of the Pocket Park component of Bohnett, and artwork by Michael McMillan who will be producing a number of cast bronze pieces for the park. The Bohnett Family money will also help fund an art project co-sponsored by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art to be installed in the park upon completion of construction. The park was named in the 1980s after the family patriarch, Floyd O. Bohnett, a City Council member who became Mayor in 1958. He and his wife Vi were instrumental in many philanthropic community projects from the 1930s to the 1970s.

Police Department

Officers honored with Special Olympics Special Service Award: In recognition and appreciation for their active support of the Santa Barbara Special Olympics, Santa Barbara PD was presented with a Distinguished Service Award trophy during a V.I.P. reception at California State University at Long Beach. According to Ada Connor, director of the Santa Barbara Special Olympics program who nominated the department for the category of Outstanding Agency, "The Santa Barbara Police Department has been a driving force for Santa Barbara Special Olympics. They go far above and beyond the call of duty."

Unsafe driving kills motorcyclist: A man reported by witnesses as riding his motorcycle south on Highway 154 at a high rate of speed, was killed when he crashed into the rear of a three-axle, utility-crane truck parked on the right shoulder. Witnesses said the motorcyclist passed a car by driving left of the center lane when his helmet suddenly came off, flew through the air and hit a car. The motorcyclist veered across the southbound traffic lane, striking the parked truck. There were no visible skids or indication the motorcyclist took evasive action prior to impact. The motorcyclist was pronounced dead at the scene. Traffic reconstruction experts opined that the motorcyclist would have died in the incident, with or without wearing his helmet. A chaplain who frequently assists with emotional police events provided counseling for the witnesses. The rider has been identified as a 49-year old Goleta resident.

Retiring police dog honored: Age and debilitating pain in his left hip forced "Canine Officer" Apache into retirement last month, with a ceremony honoring his service and highly successful career. Apache assisted on hundreds of calls, including: building and area searches, crowd control, suspect detentions, and evidence detection. He located drugs and contraband in dozens of cases resulting in many arrests. Notable arrests as recent as last December include locating a grand theft suspect in dense foliage after a lengthy foot pursuit.

Following a donation from a private citizen, Apache was purchased and trained in the highly regarded Schutzhund protection dog discipline in Germany. He also qualified as a narcotics detection dog. Apache remains as a pet under the care of his handler, Officer Steve Robles. The two first paired up in November 1998. The Police Department now has a single canine named Wiley. Plans are underway to seek a "Rookie Canine" to replace the veteran Apache.

Alert neighbors summons authorities after drug processing procedure backfire:

Residents living near 1219 Cacique Street heard a loud boom, followed by a fire on the walkway and shrubbery next to the house. City firefighters extinguished the blaze, and subsequent investigation by fire and police officials turned up evidence of illegal use. A 23-year-old resident was arrested for possession and cultivation of marijuana, and violation of his probation terms. A second roommate is wanted by narcotic detectives.

Officers discovered a substantial marijuana 'grow' dominating the majority of the home's living space. Forty plants had reached a maturity of four feet in height, and more than one hundred smaller plants were growing in a sophisticated hydroponics cultivation system. An elaborate processing system using copper pipe, commercial quality ducting, and heat sources was utilized to convert ordinary marijuana into concentrated hashish. The processing system used pure butane gas confined in a closed container to purify the less desirable portions of the marijuana crop into a potent hashish. Dozens of new and used butane containers were found on the premises. The fire investigation determined that careless use of highly flammable butane in a closed container was the only reasonable explanation for the fire.

Found body in Arroyo Burro creek bed identified as man reported missing in May:

The body of a 51-year-old man discovered in July has been identified by a positive fingerprint match, made by the Police Department crime lab. His next of kin in Oregon have been notified. The man lived at an apartment complex on Hope Avenue, within two blocks of where his body was found, and had been reported missing by a neighbor who had not seen him for four days. There was no indication of foul play. Serious medical problems may have contributed to the man's death.

Public Works Department

Street sweeping expansion update: Streets Division staff made a trial street sweeping run on the upper eastside late Wednesday morning and picked up approximately 3,600 pounds of debris. This test demonstrates a need to sweep the area, which is scheduled to begin in October.

Every effort will be made to keep signage to a minimum. In October and November we will conduct the start of the program without the "no parking" signs. We will evaluate the results at the end of November. We will continue to operate without signs if we can maintain the ability to conduct effective street sweeping. Our goal after several months is to sweep 90% of the curbs. A letter will be sent to area residents to inform them about this trial period.

Carrillo Street Brick Sidewalks: The new brick sidewalks on Carrillo Street, one block on each side of State Street, were successfully completed as planned prior to the start of Fiesta. This \$440,000 Redevelopment Agency project extends the State Street brick sidewalk theme around the corner from State Street along Carrillo Street to the downtown business district. In spite of running into long forgotten underground storage tanks and other materials in front of Golds Gym, the contractor, Granite Construction, was able to complete the work on time. It was a close call considering the work was finished on Tuesday. Once the Old "Carrillo Hotel" construction is completed, the final new brick sidewalk work at Golds Gym will be coordinated with the Hotel sidewalk.

Granada Garage bid opening extended: After discussion with all three pre-qualified contractors, staff has postpone the bid opening date for the Granada Garage to August 11th at 3:00 p.m. in the Purchasing Office. Two of the bidders felt they could submit a more competitive bid if the time was extended.

The extension will not affect the August 24, 2004 Council Award of contract or the start of the construction.

Record power usage in California prompts calls for voluntary conservation: To help avert blackouts and brownouts, Santa Barbara residents are being asked to conserve energy – especially between the hours of 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. The Public Works Department encourages department managers to review the city's plan for energy conservation, and to facilitate discussions with their staff on conserving energy.

Waterfront Department

State grant would fund patrol boat engines: The California Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW) announced in July that it had encumbered \$60,000 of grant money for purchase two new engines, and stern drives for Patrol Boat #2, (a 32' twin-engine Radon built in 1984) one of the Waterfront Department's four Harbor Patrol vessels. The funds are part of a program to assist boating safety and enforcement operations statewide. The vessel's original diesel engines have reached the end of their useful lives. The boat is used nearly 170 hours per week, making the engine replacement a high priority for the grant request. Pending City Council approval to accept the grant, staff will seek bids for the engine packages.