



City Administrator's Report

December 2004

Dear Reader,

Season's Greetings! Our thoughts turn gratefully to the many individuals and organizations whose efforts make Santa Barbara such a special community. In the spirit of this festive holiday season, thank you and best wishes.

As we conclude another year, 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:

December 7, 14 City Council

Holidays:

- December 25 ▪ Christmas Holiday – City Hall closed on December 24
January 1 ▪ New Year's Day – City Hall closed on December 31

Community Events:

- December 1-15 ▪ Toys for Tots toy drive – Collection boxes in City Hall and city departments. Collection day is December 16.
- December 3 ▪ 52nd Annual Downtown Holiday Parade starts at 6:30 p.m., State Street, Sola to Cota Streets, (805) 962-2098, ext. 23
- December 5 ▪ 19th Annual Santa Barbara Parade of Lights, Santa Barbara Harbor, Santa Claus arrives at 3 p.m., parade starts at 5:30 p.m. and fireworks follow, (805) 897-1962
- December 11 ▪ Milpas Street Holiday Parade, (805) 962-2382
- December 18 ▪ Tuba Christmas, Storke Placita, mid-700 block of State Street, 12-1 p.m., (805) 962-2098, ext. 22

Flags on State Street:

- December 1-6 ▪ Unity Shoppe and Downtown Organization holiday flags and décor
- December 6-30 ▪ Downtown Organization holiday flags and décor

City Administrator

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Lower Eastside infrastructure project will improve sidewalks, curbs, and gutters: Funded by a HUD Community Development Block Grant, the project activities for November included:

- Photographing the project area for a public meeting display
- Notifying 80 owners/occupants of property adjacent to the project about a public meeting
- Conducting the first of three public meetings on November 17th
- Reviewing a request and recommendations from an owner to create more parking
- Capturing input from the public meeting and sending it to the design team
- Meeting with design supervisors to discuss the city staff's response to the requests from property owners
- Planning a meeting of the design team as the next step to begin the design phase

Illegal encampment sites eradicated: Parks Division cleaned up 286 pounds of trash and debris from illegal encampments at East Beach, and 418 pounds of garbage at Oak Park's Sycamore and German Friendship Picnic area last month.

Community Garden renovation project is on schedule: Placement of the redwood border at Rancheria Gardens has been completed. Redwood borders at Yanonali Gardens will be completed this month. The borders at Pilgrim Terrace are also scheduled for installation this month. Storage sheds are scheduled to be delivered and installed on December 8th. Information kiosks are being designed and preparations are being made to lay down weed fabric in all common areas and pathways.

Industrious residents and police officers tackle graffiti removal: Led by a team of Santa Barbara police officers, a group of enthusiastic folks ranging in age from 12 to adult painted out graffiti on and below the Micheltorena Street footbridge. In just a few hours, the group was able to paint out several ugly tags and gang scribble on the bridge and the concrete walls adjacent to the railroad tracks. The project brought a renewed sense of teamwork and community pride.

City's Internet site redesigned for easier information access: The City of Santa Barbara has launched a new and improved website (www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov) with more intuitive navigation, enhanced graphics, and improved communication tools. The main page shows four categories: Government, Residents, Business, and Visitors. Two new features include a calendar of city events and meetings and an e-subscriptions page. The calendar allows website visitors to easily search for events by type or by date. E-subscriptions allows visitors to create an account, sign up to receive information of interest via e-mail, and manage their own accounts to add or delete subscriptions as desired.

“Inside Santa Barbara” on City-TV Channel 18 – December edition airs Dec. 8th through Jan. 8th: Features include Water Conservation and Water Supply Update, City Slurry Seal Program, Arts Alive, Poet Laureate, and Christmas Unity. 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

Soaring passenger count: During October, 72,414 passengers arrived at and departed from Santa Barbara Airport (SBA) – an 8% increase over the same period last year. SBA's *United Express* flights to Denver experienced the highest average passenger loads at 86%, while the *American Eagle* Dallas/Fort Worth flights were the second highest at 80%. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 10.4% over 2003.

Airport Noise & Land Use Compatibility Plan Update to be complete early next year: The recommended plan proposes noise abatement and land use management measures for reducing noise impact on current and future area residents. A public hearing is scheduled for 7 p.m. on December 13th at the Airport Administration office. The final study is expected to go before Council in February for approval. Upon Council approval, the plan will be submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for review and approval of individual recommendations made in the Noise Compatibility Plan. FAA review is expected to take a minimum of 180 days.

Community Development Department

Planning Commission update:

- On December 2nd, the Commission held a public hearing to take comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report on Cottage Hospital reconstruction. The comment period ends on December 15, 2004. Also on December 2nd, the Commission held a public hearing on the Draft Negative Declaration for a proposed nine-unit Planned Residential Development at 1156 N. Ontare Road.
- On December 9th, the Planning Commission will consider a time extension for the Ritz Carlton Club project, and also a new Master Plan for the El Encanto Hotel.
- On December 16th, the Planning Commission will have a discussion of city sewer and water supplies as part of the ongoing General Plan Update Trends and Issues review. The Commission also will consider a Coastal Development Permit for the Caltrans Highway 101 Operational Improvements. This meeting will be Grant House's swan song after serving 8 years on the Commission.

Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital proposes seismic upgrades: State legislation requires all acute care medical facilities in California to either retrofit or upgrade their existing facilities to comply with more stringent earthquake safety standards. In response, a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared that evaluates the environmental effects of the project. The Draft EIR is currently undergoing public review. The public comment period began on November 1st and ends on December 15th. A hearing to receive public comment was scheduled before the Planning Commission on Dec. 2nd.

NPO news: The Single-Family Design Guidelines Update/Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance Steering Committee continues to review various topics for updating the Single-Family Residential Guidelines. Recent topics have included a review of the zoning modification process; options to increase neighbor noticing such as on-site notice posting, to what extent techniques to maintain good neighbor relations should be required; and whether or not a graphics-oriented, form-based planning technique is applicable to single-family addition regulations. The Steering Committee will revisit Floor-to-Lot Area Ratio regulation options on December 10th, and discuss Hillside Design District issues in January. Draft updated Single Family Design Guidelines are expected to be published in Spring '05. The committee's meeting schedule can be found at: <http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/Resident/Home/Planning/NPO.htm>.

Finance Department

Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT): The table below shows October TOT was up 5.9% from October of the prior year, and our growth fiscal year-to-date is 4.8%. We are ahead of budget so far this year because the budget assumed a 3.1% growth rate.

City of Santa Barbara TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAXES

	FY 2002	Change from Prior Year	FY 2003	Change from Prior Year	FY 2004	Change from Prior Year	FY 2005	Change from Prior Year
July	\$ 1,171,041	-2.8%	\$ 1,183,951	1.1%	\$ 1,198,952	1.3%	\$ 1,301,652	8.6%
Aug	1,276,212	2.3%	1,328,278	4.1%	1,349,990	1.6%	1,357,717	0.6%
Sept	808,657	-15.1%	849,174	5.0%	887,095	4.5%	931,244	5.0%
Oct	790,919	-5.8%	830,054	4.9%	863,919	4.1%	915,168	5.9%
FY Total	\$ 4,046,830	-3.3%	\$ 4,191,457	0.3%	\$ 4,299,956	5.1%	\$ 4,505,781	4.8%
Budget	\$ 9,779,115		\$ 9,974,700		\$ 10,273,900		\$ 10,684,900	

Note: This report includes only the 10% unrestricted TOT revenues. Beginning in January 2001, an additional 2% is credited to Creek Restoration and Water Quality Improvement (Measure B).

Fire Department

CERT class graduated last month: This 36-hour course in Community Emergency Response Training is a combined class with the Police Department's Citizen Academy. Conducted in Spanish, the course teaches safety and emergency techniques to citizens so they can be self-sufficient in the event of a major disaster.

Library Department

Adult Literacy Program receives anonymous donation: The Library Department Adult Literacy Program was recently awarded a \$25,000 grant to be used for part-time clerical assistance, and to purchase tutor-learner reading materials. The donor is a frequent supporter of education and literacy.

Parks and Recreation Department

620 Laguna Street gets a facelift: On November 19th, two dozen enthusiastic Parks and Recreation Department staffers provided a landscape facelift for the Ortega and Laguna Street offices. According to Designer and City Landscape Architect Billy Goodnick, “The landscaping around the department’s headquarters had fallen on hard times. This didn’t look like the home of the same folks who care for Alice Keck Park Memorial Gardens or the Mission Rose Gardens. It was time for a change.” The installation was completed by regular park staff joined by clerical and administrative staff who got their hands dirty and stretched a few muscles that don’t normally get used in the course of a regular day.

Some of the more unusual plants used include the Felt Plant (a large leafed fuzzy succulent with gray leaves and brown underside), and Mexican Lobelia with coral colored flowers and yellow throats. The plants will be filled out in about a year, but everyone is welcome to view them now.

Kid’s World open after annual refurbishment: The famous Kid’s World at Alameda Park was closed from late October through November 24th for its annual refurbishment. A favorite of thousands of children who visit the playground built by over 4,000 community volunteers, Kid’s World is no less popular today than when it was opened in 1994. The annual closure allows the Parks Division to make repairs, reseal the wood structure, and paint the surfaces. The playground attracted many families over the four-day Thanksgiving weekend.

Santa Barbara Parks map available soon: A new, four-color, 24 x 18-inch city park and facility map will be available free at all Parks and Recreation locations by mid-December. This user-friendly map uses a city street grid to show the location of the city’s 55 parks and sports facilities, recreation centers, community gardens, schools, creeks, and major city landmarks. The back lists each site’s address, hours, parking, acreage, and a brief description. Colorful icons illustrate each park’s main features such as reservable site, wedding site, playground, alcohol policy, picnic availability, pesticide-free status, etc. The map took many months to develop and was designed by independent contractor Dianne Gomersall with direction from Parks and Recreation staff. Funding to print the map was provided by the Parks and Recreation Community Foundation.

Franceschi Park workday successful: On November 13th, 20 volunteers from the Pearl Chase Society, Riviera Association, and the community showed up at Franceschi Park to help prepare a new planting demonstration bed. Crews removed unwanted plants and weeds, clearing the way for the new plantings. Additionally, the entire area was covered with mulch generated by the city's Forestry Division. The workday was supervised by volunteer Landscape Contractor Sharon Sumrall, who brought members of her professional landscape crew to take care of the more difficult tasks. A big "thank you" goes out to Sharon, who is also a member of the Franceschi Park Advisory Committee. The area will be the site of the first new landscaping at the park in decades and will serve to generate interest in the new master plan.

A.C. Postel Rose Garden volunteers recognized last month: The Parks Division held its annual A.C. Postel Memorial Rose Garden Volunteer Recognition gathering at the Rose Garden. Half of the more than 50 volunteers attended the pizza-feed and appreciation event. The longest-serving volunteer boasted six consecutive years of service. Returning volunteers received a new pair of work gloves. The event also celebrated an entire pesticide-free year thanks to the city's new Integrated Pest Management program. The annual rose garden pruning event sponsored by the Rose Society is scheduled for January 15, 2005.

Community watershed improvement forums initiate first phase of action plans: The Creeks Division conducted community forums for the Sycamore, Arroyo Burro, and Mission watersheds on October 26th, November 10th, and November 11th, respectively. More than 150 people attended all three forums. Presentations, small-group discussions, and comment cards focused on key issues and priorities including reducing creek bank erosion and storm water runoff, increasing native landscaping, providing community education programs, and access to creeks in publicly-owned park areas. Among the numerous participant suggestions was the idea of developing incentives for property and business owners to assist in water quality and habitat improvement efforts. The PowerPoint slides and comment cards are posted on the Creeks Division web page. Results of the forum will be posted in early December. For additional information on the watershed action plans, contact Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager Jill Zachary at (805) 897-2508.

Police Department

Drunken driver wrecks 12 cars on Richland Drive: Police Dispatchers received 30 near-simultaneous calls from area residents on November 1st, reporting clanging carnage. An officer arrived to find a trail of 12, newly wrecked cars lining both sides of the street. He followed the damage and citizen directions to a 1996 Dodge truck stalled at the cul-de-sac. The dazed driver, bloody from a forehead laceration, resisted the officer's directive to exit the vehicle. Fire Department and Paramedics teams secured him for transport to Cottage Hospital for evaluation. The 12 side-swiped cars had their side mirrors snapped off, side windows broken out, and substantial body damage. The driver was arrested for drunken driving, 12 counts of hit and run, and resisting arrest.

Cold case DNA solves rape case: Two days after the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, a male intruder broke in through the window of an Eastside Santa Barbara residence and confronted a 45-year-old woman in her bed. Holding a sharp object to her throat, he committed forcible rape. While repeatedly stabbing the weapon into the bedding beside the woman's head, he said: "Are you American? Americans have to pay for what is going on!" The case remained unsolved despite hundreds of hours of investigative effort. Last month, the California Department of Justice called to report a suspect match made through DNA comparison. The Cold-Case Homicide Unit investigated and determined the suspect previously worked within one block of the victim's residence. The suspect is currently incarcerated for an unrelated offense. Upon imprisonment, a DNA sample was fed into the DNA data-bank. The victim was immensely relieved to learn the suspect is securely behind bars. The suspect is charged with forcible rape, residential burglary, and two counts of forced oral copulation. He soon will return to Santa Barbara to stand trial. The Cold Case Homicide Unit is a priority for Police Chief Cam Sanchez.

SBCC security guard arrested for rape: A 22-year old Santa Barbara City College security guard is behind bars on charges of forcible rape and residential burglary incidents dating back to December 2003 and as recently as last month. The investigation included an evaluation of victims' statements, evidence, and conducting a live line-up at County Jail – where the victims identified the suspect. Additional charges of attempted rape, two counts of false imprisonment, making threats, and sexual battery have been filed, and the suspect's bail has been increased to one million dollars.

SBPD LIVE! On City-TV Channel 18 solves fraud case: Dedicated viewers of *SBPD LIVE!* have come through once again. Santa Barbara Police Department officers arrested a local man for forgery and fraud. Missing was a brand new Honda Motorcycle purchased with stolen money. The vehicle description was broadcast on *SBPD LIVE!* The very next day, a viewer reported the motorcycle parked to the rear of the YMCA.

Public Works Department

Week-long hazardous waste training for Public Works staff at Vandenberg Air Force Base: The Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response course known as HazWOPER is certified by the Occupational Safety and Health Association. Topics covered included hazardous materials legislation and regulations, properties of hazardous materials, identification of hazardous material and wastes, health and safety plans, and appropriate responses to hazardous waste spills. The training last month concluded with a simulated hazardous waste dump site in which trainees were required to develop a plan, safely enter the site with maximum vapor and liquid protection suits (a self-contained breathing apparatus and "Level A" hazardous waste suits), assess the situation, isolate incompatible chemicals, decontaminate teams as they exited the site, and begin the long process of ongoing site evaluation plus safe removal and disposal of the material.

El Estero Treatment Plant projects: A contract for rehabilitating the anaerobic digesters, installing an additional influent pump, and constructing a thickened sludge pump wastewater station was awarded to Lash Construction last month. This work will help to keep the El Estero Wastewater Treatment plant functioning well.

Fuel cell installation has been completed, and is now in the testing phase. The dedication ceremony is scheduled for January 26th.

Installation of a new, energy-saving blower is almost complete, with the contractor currently doing testing. The new blower is expected to reduce energy demand at the treatment plant by up to 250 KW per day.

Granada Garage: In response to concerns expressed by merchants, Public Works has undertaken a series of temporary changes on Victoria Street to ameliorate impacts of the Granada Garage construction. To better control the flow of traffic, two speed humps were added on the 00 east block of Victoria Street. The humps are designed to slightly slow traffic and to warn motorists of potential conflicts, mainly with vehicles backing out of the perpendicular parking stalls. To provide better access to businesses, changes were made to several parking zones; including adding three 15-minute parking zones, two disabled-parking stalls, one passenger-loading zone, and signing a loading zone to restrict delivery vehicles from idling while using the loading zone. The Transportation Department will continue to monitor this new parking arrangement on Victoria Street and make adjustments as necessary to facilitate access and the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

Granada Garage area merchants holding "Business as Usual Sale" this month: On November 12th and 14th, many local stores displayed sidewalk sale items while others offered discounts. Walking through the neighborhood and browsing for incredible values was the theme for the weekend sale. Participating merchants included the 1100 block of State Street, East and West Anapamu Streets, and Victoria Street. The next Granada Garage Neighbors "Business as Usual Sale" will be a Holiday Sale on December 10th and 11th. Look for the balloons at participating storefronts, and receive fabulous bargains. Pictures with Santa will be available on December 10th from 1- 4 p.m. in front of the Granada Theatre. Special holiday entertainment will be provided by the Mama's Voices gospel choir on Dec. 10th, and by the Santa Barbara Holiday Carolers on Dec. 11th. Both groups will be strolling the neighborhood. For up-to-date information and to listen to the radio commercial, visit www.granadagarage.com.

Sign crew saves the city \$81,000: The sign and paint crew in the streets section of the Transportation Division installed 870 sign posts with signs, plus 80 signs on existing posts, using in-house and hourly labor. The new signs were added to the expanded residential and commercial street sweeping areas.

Milpas Beautification Project improvements reaffirmed by City Council: The Milpas Beautification Project includes pedestrian-friendly enhancements between Quinientos and Canon Perdido Streets. The improvements include but are not limited to the addition of pedestrian lighting, upgrading bus stops, painting sign poles and utility boxes, curb bulb-outs on Milpas at Canon Perdido, and new trash cans. Construction for the improvements is slated for late summer 2005.

Expanding and upgrading groundwater supply capability: The city has recently completed drilling two new groundwater wells. The new well at San Roque Park replaces a 50-year-old well that has deteriorated. The well at Santa Barbara High School adds new pumping capacity in a location that will minimize seawater intrusion into the groundwater basin. The goal of the two projects is to maintain groundwater production capacity as a back-up supply during droughts and other water shortages. Additional test pumping will be conducted to confirm water

quality data as the basis for design of treatment equipment, after which the design will proceed for the construction of above ground piping, treatment equipment, drain lines, fencing, and landscaping.

Concurrently, a major rehabilitation is being planned at the Ortega Groundwater Treatment Plant, located on Ortega Street across from the Public Works/Community Development building. The plant treats water from four downtown wells located at City Hall, Vera Cruz Park, the City Corporation yard, and Ortega Park. Several months ago, City Council approved the second phase of a large project to upgrade the treatment capability of the Ortega Plant to meet increasingly stringent drinking water standards. After this pilot scale test phase is completed, analysis and design of the optimum treatment methods will be carried out (Phase III), and subsequently constructed (Phase IV).

Environmentally-friendly, desk-side recycling and trash containers replace waste baskets at all city workstations: Over the next month, city custodial staff will be replacing all desk-side trash cans with double-duty receptacles. Since 85% of what a typical workstation generates as waste is recyclable, these seven-gallon recycling containers – which accept all commingled recyclables – will be “piggy-backed” with a one-gallon sized hanging waste basket for non-recyclable trash. The switch will happen automatically at all city facilities serviced by custodial staff, while areas such as the airport, harbor, wastewater treatment plants, and fire stations will be visited by city recycling staff personally.

Custodial staff will continue to pick up desk-side trash while employees will still be responsible for emptying their recycling containers into the larger, 32-gallon blue recycling carts located in common areas. A new color photo label indicating recyclable items will be appear on the new recycling containers. For more information, visit www.SBrecycles.org, or contact recycling staff directly at (805) 897-2624.

Waterfront Department

Breakwater parapet wall and pedestrian sidewalk repair project: This FY 2005 Waterfront Capital Improvement Program project adds protection and longevity to Harbor structures. Last year, Schock Construction successfully completed the grouting project phase along the breakwater. This past September, Cushman Contracting began repairs to the breakwater parapet wall and pedestrian sidewalk. Site repair work takes place from the western end of the breakwater adjacent to Marina 1-B finger to Marina 1-G finger. Improvement repairs to the 25-year-old concrete cap include using state-of-the-art epoxy-coated steel together with high-strength concrete to maintain the required structural integrity. Thus far, nineteen concrete sidewalk panels of 24-foot lengths have been completed. Cushman will finish forming and pouring the remaining parapet wall sections by December 10th. Remaining project tasks include installing handrails, raising flag poles, and general work-site cleanup. The Waterfront Department expects to re-open the breakwater for pedestrian use by the end of this month. The next set of 24-foot concrete sections will be replaced in FY 2008.

Dredging is underway at Santa Barbara harbor main navigational channel: AIS Construction Company of Ventura is performing the dredge work and is scheduled to finish the first phase by mid-December. An estimated 150,000 cubic square feet of sand will be removed during the first phase. The second phase begins in February and ends April 2005.