

SERRA MESA OBSERVER

PUBLISHED BY THE SERRA MESA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

VOLUME 39 ISSUE 1 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025



Neighbory People
and Friendly Businesses
Living and Working Together

You are invited to participate in the next:

Serra Mesa Community Council General Meeting

Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

*Serra Mesa - Kearny Mesa Library Community Room
9005 Aero Drive*

www.serramesa.org



May Your Year Be As Bright As This Serra Mesa House

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Serra Mesa Observer
 is published bimonthly
 by the Serra Community Council

Articles, Ideas, & Upcoming Events
 are welcome.

Editor reserves right to edit articles.

For articles, e-mail Editor -
observer@serramesa.org

Deadline: March/April Edition,
February 25

For ads: [www.serramesa.org/sbcc/
 observer-newsletter/](http://www.serramesa.org/sbcc/observer-newsletter/)
 Council doesn’t endorse ads.

P.O. Box 23315
 San Diego, CA, 92193
<http://www.serramesa.org>
communitycouncil@serramesa.org

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

Location Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library

Jan 8 5pm	Friends of Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library Email serramesalibraryfriends@gmail.com
Jan 16 7pm	Serra Mesa Planning Group
Jan 25 10am-1pm	Friends of SM Library Children’s Book Sale
Jan 25 10:30	Lunar New Year Lion Dance
Jan 28 7pm	Serra Mesa Community Council, Focus: Trash Study , Serra Mesa History; Community
Feb 20 7pm	Serra Mesa Planning Group Community Room

Continuing Saga of Drainage at Corner of Aero/Sandrock

City Councilmember Raul Campillo’s office was contacted in late November when water was gushing down the gutter from the VA building. The follow-up response from their office:

“The property management had a pump technician onsite Thursday and Friday of last week and apparently they needed to drain the system to perform some diagnostics and repairs. That being said, the property management still has not authorized their engineering firm to initiate work on the low flow pump system, as my last update indicated they had planned to. We are reaching out to the site contact and giving them a deadline of the end of December to have initiated work and made substantial progress. If they fail to meet this deadline, we will escalate our enforcement.”

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Abandoned Vehicles & Police Non-Emergency	(619) 531-2000
Airport Noise - Montgomery Airfield	(858) 573-1436
Animal Control-Incorporated S.D.	(619) 299-7012
Bus & Trolley Schedules	(619) 233-3004
Canyon Cleanup	(619) 533-4411
Child Abuse Hotline	(858) 560-2191
City Clerk - Docket Information	(619) 533-4000
Crime - General Business	(619) 531-2000
Crime Stoppers	(619) 235-8477
Dead Animal Removal	(858) 694-7000
Emergency Information - Earthquake	(858) 565-3490
Fallen Trees-Urgent	(619) 527-7500
Fire Department - Non-emergency	(619) 533-4300
Flies & Vermin	(858) 694-2888
Graffiti	(619) 527-7500
Hazardous Chemicals & Waste	(858) 694-7000
Health Violations	(619) 338-2222
Litter - City Owned/Private Property	(858) 694-7000
Meals On Wheels	(619) 260-6110
Neighborhood Code Compliance (Barking Dogs, Code Violations, Noise, Safety)	(619) 236-5500
Police Department - Eastern Division	(858) 495-7900
Post Office	(800) 275-8777
Poison Control Center	(800) 222-1222
Rape /Domestic Violence Hotline	(858) 272-1767
RSVP (Retired Seniors Volunteer Patrol)	(858) 495-7990
SDG&E Emergencies	(800) 411-7343
Senior Citizen Services	(619) 236-6905
Serra Mesa Library	(858) 573-1396
Serra Mesa Recreation Center	(858) 573-1408
Sidewalk Repair	(619) 527-7500
Stolen Property/Bicycles - To Report	(619) 531-2000
Storm Drain Misuse	(619) 235-1000
Street Repair - Faded signs, pavement	(619) 527-7500
Traffic Signal Maintenance	(619) 527-8650
Water Emergencies - City & Private	(619) 515-3525
Weeds	(619) 533-4444
Zoning/Permits - Questions &Violations	(619) 446-5000

Serra Mesa Community Council Phone Number—858.565.2473

Officers

Joseph Konieczka, *President*
 Jon Cima, *Vice President*
 Andrea Eaton, *Treasurer/Community Events*
 Cindy McIntyre, *Secretary*

Board Members

Carl Demas, *Advisor*
 Alexia Longley, *Audio-Visual*
 Carmen Ojeda, *Community Involvement*
 Judi Mitchell, *SDSU Mission Valley*
 Sandra Stahl, *Chief Environmental Officer*
 Sam Yoeuth, *Friends of the Library*
 Jon Cima, *SMRC/SMPPAG*
 Cindy Moore, *Observer Editor & SMPG*

Appointed Positions

Geralyn White, *Neighborhood Awareness*
 Colin Dowling, *Webmaster*

Key Serra Mesa Volunteers

Catherine Stempel, *SMPG President*
 Monica Fuentes, *Friends of Ruffin Canyon*
 Kristine Webb, *Serra Mesa Food Pantry*
 Karl Doering, *SM Community Garden & Orchard*
 Preston Chipps, *Serra Mesa Village*

Serra Mesa Community Groups

Serra Mesa Community Council,
communitycouncil@serramesa.org
 Serra Mesa Planning Group, smpg@serramesa.org

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Board of Education Shana Hazan	(619) 725-8000
City Councilmember Raul Campillo	(619) 236-6677
Mayor Todd Gloria	(619) 236-6330
County Supervisor Joel Anderson	(619) 531-5522
County Supervisor Monica Montgomery Steppe	
<i>Birdland & Phyllis Pl Area</i>	(619) 531-5544
State Assembly Member Chris Ward	(619) 239-7801
State Senator Toni G. Atkins	(619) 645-3133
Governor Gavin Newsom	(619) 525-4641
U.S. Representative Sara Jacobs	(619) 280-5353
U.S. Senator Laphonza Butler	(202) 224-3841
U.S. Senator Alex Padilla	(619) 239-3884



President's Column

Happy New Year!

A New Year is always a time to reflect on the past and look forward to the future. The Serra Mesa Community Council is looking forward to new faces, ideas, challenges and opportunities to make our collective voices heard. Please take this as an open invitation to join our community and become involved.

How many times have you heard the phrase “Have you been listening to anything I just said”? We have all been guilty of not listening at one time or another. I believe that what this past election cycle, both

nationally and locally has shown, is that the people have just made a statement that our national and local governments haven't been listening these past few years.

What I have heard as I've talked to countless family, friends, and community members is that the government hasn't been listening to the people. I believe we now have a chance to have our voices heard. We the people, in our community, have political differences but our core values are the same. We must remain united over our similarities and not be divided by our differences.

I'm hopeful, that in 2025 and beyond we will continue working together to make a truly better community here in Serra Mesa. I look forward to seeing you at our next general meeting January 28th! We have two openings on the board so if anyone is interested, please let me know. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to me at communitycouncil@serramesa.org any time with issues and concerns.

I hope everyone has a Happy New Year with good health, happiness and success in 2025!

Joe Konieczka, President, Serra Mesa Community Council

[Website](#) | [Observer Newsletter](#) | [Serra Mesa on X](#) | [Serra Mesa on Youtube](#)

Serra Mesa Planning Group News

Meetings: The Serra Mesa Planning Group (SMPG) is officially recognized by the City and makes recommendations on land use issues to the City. SMPG meets the third Thursday of the month, 7 pm, at the Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library, 9005 Aero Drive, and via online meetings. To receive notices about meetings, which would include a link for the online meeting, sign up at <http://www.serramesa.org/>. Next meetings (tentative): January 16 and February 20. To contact us, email smpg@serramesa.org.

Tentative January or February Agenda Items

Ronda & Mission Village Drive Traffic Calming

3440 Sandrock Road —SMPG formed subcommittee to review and comment on the agenda item scheduled for Land Use Housing Committee and City Council meetings in Fall 2024. SMPG will send an email when the item is scheduled. More information at <https://www.serramesa.org/smpg/smpg-documents/>, scroll to bottom, and refer to update article in this Observer edition.

Ruffin Canyon Trail Update—Refer to article in this Observer edition.

Ruffin Canyon Trail Project Update

*Agenda Item for Staff Update at Serra Mesa Planning Group January or February Meeting
& Mission Valley Planning Group February Meeting (tentative)*

Project Description: The project involves a new approximately half mile trail to connect the existing Ruffin Canyon Trail to Mission Valley via a safe route mostly out of the cobble filled creekbed, with the new trail mostly running along the toe of the eastern slope of the canyon. There is an existing public access easement through the Escala property at the southern end of the canyon to connect to a pedestrian tunnel under Friars Road, leading into Fenton Marketplace. The project has been sitting 3/4 complete and closed to the public for two years. Construction of the trail is limited by a couple factors. It's easier for construction (perhaps cost effective) to occur in the winter, when the soil is moister and construction probably can't occur during the bird nesting season, from Feb 15 to August 15, so there's the Feb 15 deadline each year.

Background:

- 2008-2009 - the Friends of Ruffin Canyon and Friends of Normal Heights Canyons assist the SD River Conservancy (SDRC- state agency, separate from River Park Foundation) and a consultant in the preparation of a feasibility report on connecting NH and SM to the river via safe trail routes.
- 2010-2013 - SDRC moves forward on a planning process for the Ruffin Canyon Trail connection, including circulating a CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration for public review. SDRC does not move forward due to concerns from Escala at the time and staffing limitations.
- 2014 - SMPG Subcommittee develops recommendations for use of the Developer Impact Fees (DIF) from the (now called) Olympus Corsair development at Aero and Sandrock. One of the recommendations was to devote \$100,000 of the DIF funding to city permitting costs for the Ruffin Trail connection. The SM PG and SM Rec Council both adopt this recommendation to the city.
- 2015 - After several coordination meetings with prior District 7 staff and other city staff, funding recommendation was applied to the permitting costs by having this use of the funding classified as **park equivalency**.
- 2020 - After a few years of delays, continued advocacy, meetings, etc., the permitting is finalized by the DPR team. Unfortunately, the city was not proactive during the 2015-2022 years, in completing the legal process associated with a needed moving of the Escala easement at the southern end of the canyon to conform with the permitted alignment.
- Winter 2022-2023 - 3/4 of the trail construction is completed within the city property. From February 2023 until now, the question was raised about what is going on with the contracting for the final construction.
- October 2023 - City Real Estate Management finalizes the easement change process on the Escala property.
- December 2023 - in response to another of many inquiries on the finalization of the construction contract for completion, as we get to the time when construction must start, the city indicates we have to wait on additional grant funding for the last of the construction and the project will be delayed another year (first notification that a grant was even needed).

Ruffin Canyon Trail Update continued from previous page

- Early to mid-2024 - more questions on why we can't get the construction contracting finalized to make sure there are no delays this winter. We are told of the need to wait until the new fiscal year.
- August 2024 – Serra Mesa and Escala representatives meet with DPR staff and City Councilmember Raul Campillo's representative. DPR notes they will be getting the contract finalized in October and everything is on track for completion this winter.
- 11/13/24 - In response to an email seeking confirmation that the construction contract is finalized, DPR notes they were told a completely different contracting process *might* be required this time, which could lead to another year of delay. City Councilmember Raul Campillo's representative has been trying to get more information for the last month, but nothing yet.

Interested residents are encouraged to contact Councilman Campillo's office (RaulCampillo@sandiego.gov) for an update, which can help ensure this remains a District 7 team priority to advocate for more transparency on the current delay, and completion of this funded park equivalency project this winter.

TRAVEL THROUGH TIME IN SERRA MESA HISTORY

At the next Serra Mesa Community Council Meeting, take a step back with a glimpse of our area over a half century ago. View historical photos that may be of interest, particularly aerial shots as far back as 1957. Join



us in welcoming Jeffrey Swain, whose family called Serra Mesa their home since that time, and experienced watching it grow.

Jeff's illustrious career includes being a professional Tour Guide for many years. He has regaled visitors around and outside the United States with his far reaching, and at times, far fetched tales of interest.

In the 70s, while working at the campus Media Center, Jeff could be heard as "The Voice" and announcer for the San Diego Community College District. Kudos to his broadcasting endeavors, which included orientations welcoming incoming students from around the globe.

Join us for what looks to be an interesting evening at our January SMCC meeting. The **meeting will be held at the Serra-Mesa Kearney**

Mesa Branch Library on Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 6:30 pm.

Jeff will also discuss the philosophy behind his 92123 Facebook Page, and the trials and tribulations of administering such a project.

New Release from City of San Diego

City of San Diego to Begin Educating Drivers on State 'Daylighting' Law

**ENFORCEMENT TO BEGIN JAN. 1, 2025; LAW AIMS TO PROTECT PEDESTRIANS BY LIMITING PARKING
NEAR INTERSECTIONS**

SAN DIEGO – In order to improve safety on our roads, the City of San Diego is educating San Diegans about a new state law that aims to protect people crossing the street. The so-called “daylighting” law prohibits vehicle parking within 20 feet of any marked or unmarked crosswalk to improve the range of vision of approaching drivers, so they are more likely to see pedestrians, skateboarders and others in the intersection.

The California state legislature passed this law (AB413) in September 2023, and it will be enforceable beginning Jan. 1, 2025. It is important to note that this law allows drivers to be ticketed for violating this rule, even if there is no signage or red curb in the area explaining where parking is prohibited.

For the first 60 days after Jan. 1, 2025, San Diego Police will issue warning notices to vehicles parked in violation of the new law, and ticketing will commence after the warning period concludes.

“This is an important step toward improving safety on our City streets,” said Transportation Department Director Bethany Bezak. “Working together, we can prevent needless crashes and save lives, simply by changing how and where we park our vehicles. This new law will bring us closer to our Vision Zero goals, and a future where everyone in San Diego may safely walk and ride.”

[Vision Zero](#), a concept adopted by many cities worldwide, aims to eliminate traffic-related fatalities and severe injuries for all road users.

Studies have shown that if drivers have greater visibility at crosswalks, crashes involving pedestrians can be more easily avoided. The law prohibits stopping or parking a vehicle within 20 feet of any marked or unmarked crosswalk or 15 feet of any crosswalk where a curb extension is present. This applies across the state and every applicable intersection in the City of San Diego, whether in an urban or suburban area, residential and commercial neighborhoods alike.

“San Diego’s neighborhoods will greatly benefit from the Daylighting to Save Lives Bill, as it removes obstacles around crosswalks, making it easier for everyone to walk to local shops, schools and parks,” said Jeremy Bloom, acting CEO of Circulate San Diego. “This law aligns with our city’s goals for connected, walkable communities.”

Currently, jurisdictions can only issue a warning for a violation and are prohibited from issuing citations, unless the violation occurs in an area marked with red paint or a sign.

However, on Jan. 1, 2025, jurisdictions will be authorized to begin issuing citations for stopping or parking a vehicle within 20 feet of any intersection where a person may cross the road – whether or not there is a marked crosswalk and regardless of whether the curb is painted red to indicate the no-parking area.

Work has already begun at intersections in the City with high pedestrian and vehicular traffic, in the form of red curb paint and signage prohibiting parking. However, as a practical matter, not all City curbs will be able to be marked.

The new restrictions also impacted 164 parking spaces with meters. Parking meters have already been removed from 97 spaces, mostly downtown. Another 67 meters were moved slightly so they would not fall inside the 20-foot restricted zone near intersections.

Nationwide, 43 states already have daylighting laws, and most prohibit parking within 20 feet of an intersection.

City of San Diego to Begin Educating Drivers on State 'Daylighting' Law continued from previous page

It is up to drivers in San Diego and throughout California to be aware of and comply with this law. Please spread the word -- together we can save lives.

For more information, please view the City's new [daylighting webpage](#).

Revised from City of San Diego Press Release

San Diegans Invited to Join the Conversation During Second Phase of Trash Study Outreach

City of San Diego Kicks Off Community Meetings With Insights Gained So Far

As the City of San Diego enters the second phase of community listening sessions for enhanced trash collection services and potential new fees, San Diegans are once again invited to participate in the process. During Phase 2 of the Trash Study outreach for residential customers serviced by the City's Environmental Services Department (ESD), the City will host meetings in each Council District, starting Nov. 12, to share what has been learned so far and to gather additional feedback. (Meeting scheduled for January 28, 6:30 pm, at Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library.)

The City's robust Trash Study community engagement kicked off in August 2024 with a series of open house meetings designed to gather diverse perspectives and build an understanding of preferences. Community members living in residential properties currently serviced by ESD were invited to learn about the history of waste management in San Diego, find out how services are presently funded, and to share their thoughts and views about the services they currently receive.

In Phase 1, the City heard from more than 6,000 residents through events, surveys and monthly meetings with leaders from several community-based organizations. The City also completed much of the financial work that will inform recommendations to the City Council.

"We are very pleased with both the quantity and quality of what we've learned so far," said Andrea Deleon, Deputy Director, Environmental Services Department, Waste Reduction Division. "We heard from thousands of people about the current services they receive and what enhanced services they would be interested in. Several themes came up again and again as priorities, including bulky item pickup, increased recycling collection and replacement of broken bins at no additional charge. This kind of insight is invaluable as we move forward with this first-ever, historic opportunity to engage with San Diegans about waste management."

Another key takeaway from Phase 1 engagement is the desire for ongoing education and outreach for how to properly dispose of trash, recyclables and organic waste. These insights will be considered as the City moves toward Phase 3 (another round of meetings and the completion of an extensive Cost-of-Service Study) in spring 2025, leading up to the City Council considering a proposed fee schedule in June 2025.

Phase 2 meetings will consist of a brief overview to include priorities expressed by residents and a comparison of trash and recycling services and charges in nearby cities. An open house will follow, during which

San Diegans Invited to Join the Conversation During Second Phase of Trash Study Outreach continued from previous page

participants can review the data, ask questions and provide feedback. Spanish speakers will be on site to provide translation at each meeting. Requests for other language [translation services](#) can be made in advance.

A virtual meeting, in English and Spanish, was held on Dec. 6. In addition, community members are invited to take a second questionnaire that builds on an earlier version to help the City better understand their views about trash, recycling and organic waste collection services. Residents who prefer more formal presentations of study information can attend meetings of Community Planning Groups and Town Councils where the Trash Study is on the agenda. The City also continues to host tables at farmers markets and other community events. A complete schedule is available at [cleangreensd.org](#).

The City's Trash Study comes as a result of [the passage of Measure B in 2022](#), amending the "People's Ordinance" to allow the City to charge a cost-recovery fee for trash and recycling collection services. Such a fee would apply to approximately 285,000 residential properties currently serviced by the City. This includes single-family homes and residential complexes of four or fewer units that meet City requirements for City-provided trash and recycling collection. Currently, these properties do not directly pay for trash and recycling collection, while residents in apartment complexes and those with homeowner associations, for example, do pay private waste collection companies for these services.

For more information about the Trash Study, visit [cleangreensd.org](#).

AZTECS ROCK HUNGER RESULTS

The "Big Reveal" presentation was held on December 9, 2024 in the Associated Students Union Courtyard Center at San Diego State. Vincent Lin, Vice President of Financial Affairs for the AS, hosted the event offering thanks to the hard working participants, and to reveal the outcome of the project.

SDSU President, Adela de la Torre and Casey Castillo, CEO of the Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank also spoke and expressed their sincere appreciation for all the good that was done by so many who participated.

Judi Mitchell, Serra Mesa Community Council Board Member and Liaison to the new SDSU Mission Valley Campus was invited and attended. Our Serra Mesa Council was given honorable mention (twice!) for its efforts in the marketing campaign. Special thanks also to David Hussain, local Serra Mesa Realtor and Businessman active in our community, for lending a big helping hand there as well.

Aztecs Rock Hunger is the SDSU initiative to collect donations for those facing food and nutrition insecurities in San Diego. \$825,000 has been collected over the past nine years. This year, it was hoped that the community could help them collect \$1 million in lifetime donations. The Big Reveal announced we were successful with a new total reaching over \$1 million, \$19 thousand! Thanks so much to all who helped "Feed the Need".



Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Branch Library

(858) 573-1396 [facebook.com/SerraMesaLibrary/](https://www.facebook.com/SerraMesaLibrary/)

Email Questions to SMstaff@sandiego.gov

Library Hours

Monday and Tuesday: 11:30 am - 8:00 pm

Wednesday through Saturday: 9:30 am - 6:00 pm

Sunday: 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Holiday Closures—All San Diego Public Library Locations will be closed in observance of:

Martin Luther King Jr Day, Monday, Jan 20

Presidents' Day, January 20

Online library services available 24/7

- **eBooks, eAudiobooks and Digital Magazines:** take a look at our eLibrary resource, we've got some new resources for the kids and adults <https://sandiego.gov/eLibrary>
- **Movies:** Free access to movies with your library card <https://sandiegopl.kanopy.com/>

Winter Reading Challenge 2025

Join the Winter Reading Challenge from January 1st - January 31st. San Diego residents of all ages are encouraged to take the challenge by reading 5 books or for 5 hours, or doing 5 “Be a Reading Machine” activities to receive a special prize. For more information or to sign up, visit <https://www.sandiego.gov/WinterReading>

Do Your Homework @ the Library Homework Help - Mondays - Thursdays 3:00pm - 6:00pm (except January 20 and February 17)

Students in Kindergarten through 8th grade can come in for free homework assistance! Bring in your homework to get assistance from one of our Homework Coaches!

Pajama Storytime with Ms. Carrie – Mondays at 6:30pm (except January 20 and February 17)

Put on your favorite PJs and join Ms. Carrie in the Community Room Monday evenings at 6:30pm for a pajama storytime. Pajamas are encouraged, but not required. No sign up required.

Virtual Tuesday Morning Storytime with Ms. Carrie – Tuesdays at 10:00am

Join Ms. Carrie, on Zoom, Tuesday mornings at 10:00am for virtual stories, songs, and fun that foster early literacy skills. Register at the SDPL Virtual Branch at www.SanDiego.LibraryMarket.com When you register for one storytime, you will receive an email with the Meeting Room and Passcode good for storytimes for future Virtual Tuesday Morning Storytimes, so you do not need to register for each session.

Chair Yoga – Tuesdays at 11:45am

Work on your flexibility, strength building, and quiet your mind with functional movement practice Thursdays at 11:45am. Participate at your own ability. Suitable for adults of all ages. Wear flexible clothing and bring any preferred yoga equipment. Chairs provided.

Lego Club – 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 4:30pm

Come build with us and become a Master Builder! Join us each month to enjoy an hour of free building and then see your Lego creations displayed in the library.

Serra Mesa -Kearny Mesa Library continued previous page

Morning Book Club - 2nd Thursday at 10:00am

Love to read and talk about books? Join the Morning Book Club! January 9 will discuss *Perestroika in Paris* by Jane Smiley, and February 13 will discuss *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer.

Baby Toddler Time – Thursdays at 10:00am

This loosely structured, baby-led time for play, bubbles, stories, and more. Designed for little ones 0-2 yrs.

Knitting and Crochet Circle – Saturdays at 10:00am

Join the knitting and crochet circle. Improve your skills in these traditional art forms. Bring your project for social crafting!

Piano Concerts with Dave Chamberlin – Sunday, January 26 and February 23 at 3:00pm

Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library is excited to host a piano concert series in collaboration with pianist, David Chamberlin.

January 18, 12:00pm San Diego FixIt Clinic

Do you have a household item in need of repair? Don't trash it! Come fix it for FREE at one of our upcoming Fixit Clinics, where we will provide the space, tools, and expert coaches to help you troubleshoot and repair your well-loved item.

January 25, 10:00am-1:00pm Friends of the Library Childrens Book Sale

Fill a bag of Children's Books for \$5 book sale! All proceeds go to the Friends of the Serra Mesa Library to support the Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library.

January 25, 10:30am Lunar New Year Lion Dance

Celebrate the Lunar New Year with a traditional Lion Dance performed by GDPT Chanh Kien. A must-see event with amazing stunts.

January 31, 1:00pm-3:00pm AARP Tax Assistance Appointment Day

Make an appointment for yourself and one other family member. Tax assistance will be available Fridays 10:00am-3:00pm from February 7 thru April 11th by appointment only. For more information or to locate an alternate site call 888-AARP-NOW (888-227-7669).

AARP Tax Preparation Assistance – Fridays February 7 through April 11, 10:00am – 3:00pm

The AARP will be providing free tax help **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY** for taxpayers with low to moderate income on Fridays, February 7 - April 11. Appointments can only be made **IN PERSON**. Fridays, sign up with AARP tax preparers at the library to schedule an appointment.

Friends of the Library Donations

The Friends of the Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library are currently accepting book donations during the library's open hours.

Friends of the Library Volunteers Needed

Looking to get more involved with your community? Love books and your library? Reach out to Friends of Serra Mesa Library to hear more about how you can help! Email us at serramesalibraryfriends@gmail.com or DM on Instagram @serramesalibraryfriends.

Mobile Hotspots & Chromebooks

Mobile Hotspots and Chromebooks are now available for check out at the Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library. The mobile hotspots are easy to use and allow users to connect their laptop, tablet and other Wi-Fi enabled devices to the internet. Find out more information at <https://www.sandiego.gov/public-library/san-diego-access-4-all>



Serra Mesa Recreation Center

9020 Village Glen Dr. (858) 573-1408

Schedule

11am - 7pm Monday, Wednesday, Friday

11:30am - 7pm Tuesday

12pm - 7:30pm Thursday

9am - 3pm Saturday

Closed Sunday

Holiday Closure

MLK Jr. Day, January 20

Presidents Day, February 17

Registration for winter program begins November 16. Online at www.sdreconnect.com. If help is needed, click the FAQs button for information.

Basketball League: December 2024-March 2025; Designed to develop and enhance player's fundamental skills on passing, dribbling and shooting in a friendly and team-oriented environment. Teams divided into age divisions. All players will play a minimum of 16 minutes per game. Qualified teams get a chance to participate in City-Wide tournament hosted by S.P.O.R.T.S. Committee. League is for all skill levels. Games at Kearny Mesa Recreation Center. Schedule TBD.

Pee Wee, Age 5-8, Practice Monday & Wednesday, 4-6pm, Code 118956

10U, Age 8-10, Practice Tuesday & Thursday, 4-6pm, Code 118950

12U, Age 10-12, Practice Tuesday & Thursday, 4-6pm, Code 118951

14U, Age 12-14, Practice Monday & Wednesday, 6-7pm, Code 118952

Arts & Crafts: Ages 7-13, New and seasonal arts and craft projects. Develop skills working with paints, color markers, art pencils, glue, beads, construction paper, scissors, craft materials, and much more. All supplies included.

January, Thursdays, 3:30-5pm, Code 118961

February, Thursdays, 3:30-5pm, Code 118962

Community Sports Information:

AYSO Soccer:, Region 780 : Registrar, <https://www.ayso780.org>, AYS0780Registrar@gmail.com

Serra Mesa Seniors Softball: sandiegosoftball.com

Serra Mesa Little League: www.serramesalittleleague.org, info@serramesalittleleague.org

Article which mentions the Friends of Serra Mesa Library is reprinted and reformatted from KPBS Morning Edition at <https://www.kpbs.org/news/arts-culture/2024/12/10/local-prison-book-program-brings-connection-and-humanity-despite-censorship>

Local prison book program brings connection and humanity despite censorship

By Julia Dixon Evans / Arts Reporter/Podcast Host

Photos by Julie Dixon Evans

Contributors: Anthony Wallace / Arts Podcast Producer, Charlotte Radulovich / Video Journalist

Published December 10, 2024 at 6:25 PM PST

Cherish Burtson remembers when books were her only escape. She was incarcerated at the Federal Correctional Institute in Dublin, Calif.

"And I went through so many books; I think that's the only thing that allowed me to actually get through it," Burtson said.

Now, Burtson volunteers with Books Through Bars San Diego, a mutual aid collective that sends books to prisons. The group holds regular packing events at Groundwork Books at UC San Diego. Volunteers open



Cherish Burtson volunteers with Books Through Bars San Diego. Previously incarcerated, she said that books and letters were her only escape.

letters from incarcerated people, select books and write letters back.

This year, the group received about 150 letters per month. They shipped 1,200 books to incarcerated people in 200 facilities across 40 states.

"When you're in there, you're just at a complete standstill and you really feel like the outside world forgets about you. And it's those little things — letters and books — that make you feel like you actually still are a part of the world," Burtson said.

Books Through Bars operates with minimal overhead. It is volunteer-run and relies on word-of-mouth and prison resource lists to spread the word. Groundwork Books donates storage and event space for packing events. Books are donated by the community and bookstores, with donations sites scattered throughout the region.

Another volunteer with Books Through Bars, Terry Vargas, said the busiest book donation sites include Libélula Books, the **Friends of Serra Mesa Library** and Groundwork Books.



Books Through Bars San Diego receives an average of 150 letters each month, from prisons and correctional facilities across the country.

Local prison book program bring connection and humanity despite of censorship from previous page

The group's primary expense is shipping. It costs roughly \$5 to send each package of books, which added up to \$6,295 in shipping costs in 2024. To raise money, the group recently published and sold zines of art sent by incarcerated people along with their book requests.

Organizers say about 70% of their packages make it through security.

Prisons routinely censor books. According to a 2023 study by PEN America, correctional facilities in all 50 states contribute to the nation's largest book ban. Many states, including California, keep a centralized banned book list. In other states, the list is vague and less predictable. Books containing sexuality, nudity, violence or content that may be a "threat to security," certain DIY instructions, or stories about life in prison are often censored, according to PEN America research.

Researchers found that, in addition to banned book lists and categories, censorship also exists from on-the-spot judgment from facility mailrooms, and "content-neutral" censorship — a catch-all for other reasons an incarcerated person may not be allowed to receive a book. This may include used books, hardcovers, improper mailing practices or failure to comply with facility mailroom procedures.



Books Through Bars San Diego volunteer Terry Vargas says the organization shipped 1,200 books this year, nearly a metric ton. That's \$6,295 in shipping costs.



Crates of packed books are shown ready to ship to prisons across the country during a Books Through Bars San Diego book packing

The rules for book shipments vary widely and are hard to track. "Facilities are becoming stricter and stricter with the requirements — some facilities have adopted requirements where they only accept white envelopes — and these are just like arbitrary rules, just add barriers for us to be able to send these packages," Vargas said. But for Books Through Bars, it's worth the effort.

The packing events are powerful for the volunteers, too. "I think that impact goes two ways," Burston said. "Just being able to actually read people's words and know that we are making some kind of difference, no matter how small," she said. "So actually showing up for people who are incarcerated and building that

connection with them — which reading their actual words forces you to do — that was really powerful for me."

A letter from an incarcerated person is shown on Dec. 7, 2024. It reads "I am writing to request books. I really appreciate the work your organization is doing for prisoners. It really helps me not lose my cool. Saves my life, really."

Letters from incarcerated people often express gratitude, Vargas said. At a recent packing event, she opened a letter from Zachary in Indiana, written on a torn half-sheet of binder paper. "He says, 'I'm writing to request books. I really appreciate the work your organization is doing for prisoners. It really helps me not lose my cool. It saves my life, really,'" Vargas read.

Development Project Resource Guide

To obtain more information about a project, refer to these San Diego City and County resources*.

Zoning and Parcel Information Portal (find zoning designation for parcel) - <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=75f6a5d68aee481f8ff48240bcaa1239>

Mapping and Geographic Information (many resources) - <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/work/mapsua/map>.

SanGIS Interactive **Parcel Map** - <https://sdgis.sandag.org/>. Find out addresses and parcel information.

Municipal Code, Chapter 13 & 14 (describes zones and uses) – <https://www.sandiego.gov/city-clerk/officialdocs/municipal-code>

Citizen Portal - <https://aca-prod.accela.com/SANDIEGO/Default.aspx>

Lookup Property Information (enter address) - <https://aca-prod.accela.com/SANDIEGO/APO/APOLookup.aspx?TabName=APO>

DSD Permits: **Create an Application** - <https://aca-prod.accela.com/SANDIEGO/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fSANDIEGO%2fCap%2fCapApplyDisclaimer.aspx%3fmodule%3dDSD%26TabName%3dDSD>

DSD Permits: **Search Applications** (enter address) - <https://aca-prod.accela.com/SANDIEGO/Cap/CapHome.aspx?module=DSD&TabName=DSD>

Enforcement: Private **Property Investigation** Request (submit complaint) - <https://aca-prod.accela.com/SANDIEGO/Cap/CapEdit.aspx?Module=CE&stepNumber=2&pageNumber=1&isFeeEstimator=&TabName=CE>

Enforcement: Search for an **Existing Investigation** - <https://aca-prod.accela.com/SANDIEGO/Cap/CapHome.aspx?module=CE&TabName=CE>

Cannabis: Search Applications - <https://aca-prod.accela.com/SANDIEGO/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fSANDIEGO%2fCap%2fCapHome.aspx%3fmodule%3dCannabis%26TabName%3dCannabis>

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) - <https://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/news-programs/programs/companion-junior-units>

Sustainable Development Area (SDA) <https://webmaps.sandiego.gov/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0295d35b03a14d929d3459fe0b9b50cf&search=92116&extent=-13039150.8811%2C3862903.0948%2C-13035938.1373%2C3864964.5059%2C102100>. Part of Birdland and areas near Aero Dr are included in an SDA which is used to permit Bonus ADUs and Complete Communities projects.

SDA Description (Municipal Code, Chpt 11, Art 3, Div 1): "...the area within a defined walking distance along a pedestrian path of travel from a major transit stop that is existing or planned, if the planned major transit stop is included in a transportation improvement program or applicable regional transportation plan, as follows:

Development Project Resource Guide continued from previous page

(a) Within Mobility Zones 1 and 3, as defined in Section 143.1103, the defined walking distance is 1.0 mile.

(b) Within Mobility Zone 4, as defined in Section 143.1103, the defined walking distance is .75 mile.

(c) For parcels located in Mobility Zone 4, in an area identified as a High or Highest Resource California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (CTCAC) Opportunity Area, the defined walking distance is 1.0 mile.”

Complete Communities Housing Solutions - <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/work/housing/toolkit/housing-solutions>

Property Ownership – County’s website at <https://sandiegoparcels.com/>. Enter APN or address or move to desired parcel and click on it.

**Disclaimer: It’s possible the content on a website may not reflect the most recent development.*

Example – Find Information on Project at southeast Ruffin & Mission Village Corner


CityMark confirms they’re the owner of the property. Lot information at <https://sdgis.sandag.org/>. Clicked on APN Labels, Parcel Polygon and Existing Land Use > **Click on the desired lot**. Parcel information displays.


Zoning: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=75f6a5d68aee481f8ff48240bcaa1239>



Permits at - <https://aca-prod.accela.com/SANDIEGO/Cap/CapHome.aspx?module=DSD&TabName=DSD>, enter 3222 Mission Village Dr. Click on **Building Construction permit**, PRJ-1076402. At bottom of page, click **Application Information** for details.



Serra Mesa Food Pantry has a drive-thru distribution every Wednesday from 10am-1pm at 2650 Melbourne Drive.



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 Buy. Sell. Invest. Retire

Projects & Other Information

(Current December 2024)

Serra Mesa Projects

Franklin Ridge Road Connection – Schedule for implementation of mitigations and road connection pending. The developer submitted a design plan for 5 travel lanes and 2 bike lanes for the Murray Ridge bridge (the configuration that's described in the approved October 2017 plan). This differs from Caltrans' draft plan which describes the redesign of the Murray Ridge bridge as 4 travel lanes (11' wide) and 2 Class IV Bikeways (9' separated for each bikeway). Also, other city-approved mitigations include 5 travel lanes and 2 bike lanes for Phyllis Pl from the Franklin Ridge connection to the bridge, and 4 travel lanes and 2 bike lanes for the connection.

AT&T Wireless Communication Facility, 2696 Melbourne Dr – 40' high tall faux eucalyptus tree; 12 antennas, 9 remote radio units; 300-foot ground level equipment enclosure, faux rock; located near labyrinth.

Mission Village Drive Properties owned by CityMark Development (purchased from Gleich Trust); zoned as a commercial zone that allows residential; qualifies for affordable density bonus; amenities minimal; rental rates not determined; Process 1 (staff approves project).

2696 Mission Village Drive (former gas station near corner of Shawn Avenue): Build 3 story, 18-unit apartment building with 1-2 bedrooms; rental units; 2 affordable housing units built off-site; 24 parking spaces. Construction started. Plans at <https://citymark.com/portfolio/dezi/>.

3222 Mission Village Drive (former Tom Russell Chevron Station): Build 3 story, 21-unit apartment building with 1-2 bedrooms on .96 acre; rental units; 2 affordable housing units built off-site; 21 parking spaces. Exit on Mission Village Drive. Construction started.

3241 Mission Village Drive (former medical building complex): Two sections – 4 story building, 35-unit apartment building facing Mission Village Dr and 3 story, 25-unit townhouses with 3 bedrooms and 2 car garages; exit on Ruffin Rd; 92 parking spaces; still determining if townhouses will be rental units. Construction started. Plans at <https://citymarkdevelopment.box.com/s/1p564mqdb76pbwtusuq2o2p15kmpe4fr>

Former Guild Mortgage Building, 9160 Gramercy Dr – Vacant.

Former Mission Village Shopping Center, across from Taft Middle School, 9280 Gramercy Dr. Approval in 2004 for 160 rental units and 15,000 s.f. retail (8,000 s.f. along Ruffin Rd and 7,000 s.f. at Ruffin/Gramercy corner). In 2005 approval for condominiums, required to make the community room available to community at no cost, and condominium owners have an assigned parking space deeded to them. In 2007 never expiring Site Development Permit, Approval #57551, created for 9178 Gramercy Drive. Grading permit issued in 2006. San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board issued a notification of no further action on 1/20/2022. July 2022 - Clean-up equipment removed from site. Site for sale.

Work details for the site of a One Hour Dry Cleaners located in the former shopping center are posted on the gate at 9280 Gramercy Dr. Information:

The applicable permit is PRJ-1108858 which was issued on 05/14/2024. The permit allows for excavation and offsite disposal of approximately 1,200 cubic yards of chlorinated solvent impacted soils from the site subsurface.

Old Serra Mesa Library at 3440 Sandrock Rd – Community HousingWorks (CHW) negotiating lease to build 60 units (56 one bedroom and 4 two-bedrooms) on the .34 acre site, 22 parking spaces, 5 stories high, 100% units will have rents affordable for low- to middle-income families, 30 units reserved for veterans. Amenities include laundry room, multipurpose room with kitchen, computer lab, community garden, tot-lot, and management leasing office. The item is expected to be heard by City Council in December.

Kearny Mesa Projects/Issues

Aero Project, 8225 Aero Drive – Former Kelco building, Sares Regis Group Residential is building 434 apartments (1, 2, & 3 bedroom units), 7 stories high, to be completed in 2024. Amenities include pool, spa, dog run, game courtyard, golf putting green, outdoor culinary kitchen, co-work space, conference room, clubhouse, fitness center, and bike repair room. More information can be found at the City's website, <https://opendsd.sandiego.gov/web/approvals/>, Project 692190 - DIGITAL-The Aero G &PI.

Drainage Issue at Corner of Aero/ Sandrock – From City staff via City Councilmember Raul Campillo's office: "The VA point of contact is currently working with the Water Board to obtain a dewatering permit. Additionally, they have contracted with an engineer to identify solutions to address the water flow coming from their property. Our Inspector also requested that they maintain their gutter daily to ensure that the temporary diversion that was installed to direct water flow away from the intersection continues to function."

Airport Plaza Building, 8555 Aero Dr – Construction of 7-story above grade and 1-story below grade for 302 multifamily dwelling units and associated accessory uses. Project will include affordable units and requests an affordable housing bonus. (PMT-3158932).

City-Wide

ADU/JADU (Accessory Dwelling Units) – ADUs provide living area either detached or attached. Regulations – Encroachment into side and rear yards, no parking required; maximum size 1,200 s.f., rental term minimum 31 days, major fees waived, owner doesn't have to live in premises. Number of ADUs permitted on single family property is one but the Bonus ADU Program allows for additional ADUs. Details at <https://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/news-programs/programs/companion-junior-units>. Could affect 748 acres in Serra Mesa.

Name These Serra Mesa Businesses

Business #1 & 2



Business #3 & 4



Business #5



Business #6



Brain Teaser

This brain teaser contains a clue which is a one-word phrase, 1 single, and 4 double words (no space between words). The one-word phrase describes a commonality for all the photos. The words can be joined vertically, horizontally, diagonally, forwards, or backwards.

R	L	I	T	E	S	M	S
E	S	T	T	L	A	R	T
C	O	A	A	N	A	N	E
T	I	X	U	R	S	P	P
O	K	R	A	W	U	I	E
K	O	O	Y	B	A	H	P
A	N	W	H	C	P	A	T
S	D	I	C	O	M	N	Y

Answers to the Name These Serra Mesa Businesses and the Brain Teaser are at <https://www.serramesa.org/smcc/observer-newsletter>.

Serra Mesa Observer

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Dated Material

Serra Mesa Food Pantry

Has a Drive-Thru distribution every Wednesdays 10:00-1:00 p.m.

Located at Mission Village Christian Fellowship

2650 Melbourne Drive 92123

858-278-2647

