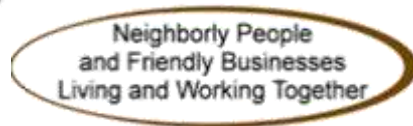


# SERRA MESA OBSERVER



PUBLISHED BY THE SERRA MESA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

VOLUME 39 ISSUE 3 MAY/JUNE 2025



You are invited to participate in the next:

## **Serra Mesa Community Council General Meeting**

***Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.***

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

[www.serramesa.org](http://www.serramesa.org)



*Read more about Java Garden's 5 Year Celebration on page 5.*



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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](mailto:observer@serramesa.org)

**Deadline:** July/August Edition,  
**June 28**

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

P.O. Box 23315  
San Diego, CA, 92193

<http://www.serramesa.org>  
[communitycouncil@serramesa.org](mailto:communitycouncil@serramesa.org)

Please Note: SMCC discontinued phone service due to cost and minimal usage.

**CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS****Location Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library**

May 6 6pm	Friends of Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library Email <a href="mailto:serramesalibraryfriends@gmail.com">serramesalibraryfriends@gmail.com</a> for the log in information for online meeting
May 15 7pm	Serra Mesa Planning Group Community Room
May 27 6:30pm	Serra Mesa Community Council Community Room
June 19 7pm	Serra Mesa Planning Group Community Room



*Friends of Ruffin Canyon Cleanup—Spreading Mulch on Path (see article on page 13)*

## **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**

### **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**

Chris Rosemond, *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](mailto:communitycouncil@serramesa.org)  
 Serra Mesa Planning Group, [smpg@serramesa.org](mailto: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 &amp; 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 Adam Schiff	(415) 393-0707
U.S. Senator Alex Padilla	(619) 239-3884





## President's Column

Dear Members of the Serra Mesa Community,

I hope everyone is enjoying their spring and the much-needed rain so far this year. We've got a great issue of the Observer this month. Lots of things happening in the community and we try to cover it all here in our newsletter.

There are two topics that you should be aware of that will be affecting us all in Serra Mesa shortly. The potential Trash Collection fees implementation and the city budget. For the past few months, our city leaders have been talking about affordable housing and lowering living costs for San Diegans. These new

potential Trash Collection fees could make our city more expensive for current and potential home buyers. These new fees could raise your property taxes by nearly \$600 per year now and over \$700 per year by 2027! We have many fixed income residents in our community and this amount of money could be a hardship. Folks looking to buy a house will also have to pay a higher mortgage of 36-47 dollars more per month. If you are renting a single-family home in Serra Mesa, I'm betting that your landlord is going to pass this trash fee increase onto you, the renter. It seems that things continue to be less affordable here in Serra Mesa and San Diego in general.

**Trash Collection (Measure B):** You should have received a letter in your mailbox from the city from Trash Collection services in San Diego. Our City Council approved this new fee. Our representative, Raul Campillo, voted "no" on the item. You, the taxpayer, will have a final chance to have their voices heard by returning these mailers if you'd like to oppose the fee. We've compiled all the information to make the information easy to understand on our website and in this newsletter. An in-person meeting on this topic will be held on June 9<sup>th</sup> at 2pm at the City Council meeting at Council Chamber, 202 C Street, 12th Floor, see you there.

**City Budget:** Starting Monday May 5<sup>th</sup> at the Budget Review Committee and then again on Monday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at the City Council meeting folks will be able to voice their opinions. For both of these there will be virtual and in person options to speak. I encourage everyone to attend either or both. The more input we give the better.

Our next **General Meeting is Tuesday, May 27, at 6:30pm** at the Serra Mesa\Kearny Mesa Library. I'm looking forward to seeing there! Please tell all of your friends and neighbors to about the newsletter, to sign up to receive notices at <https://www.serramesa.org/>, and come to our next meeting. We have some good guest speakers coming up. We can't do this without your support.

Thank you!

**Joe Konieczka**

**President**

**Serra Mesa Community Council**

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



*Java Garden's Team*

## Java Garden Celebrates 5th Anniversary

*2699 Mission Village Dr, 858-276-7045, javagardensd@gmail.com*

Java Garden celebrated its 5th anniversary with family, friends, and Serra Mesa neighbors on Saturday, April 19. They served complimentary small bites—hot off the panini press—ciabattas and quesadillas; and house-made cheesecake and tiramisu. They offered samples of single origin coffees; and recognized Earth Day with discounted reusable earth friendly logo tumblers filled with drip coffee. The turnout was incredible.

Owned by Alena and David Leyton, their history in coffee business spans over a decade. They began their coffee roasting venture by opening a roastery called David's Roasting in January of 2014 in Pt. Loma. Using an approach to roasting different than other commercial roasters, they focused on microbatch roasting using smaller machines to achieve high quality roasted beans. After 5 years selling coffee beans online, to offices, restaurants and coffee shops, (and even at the short-lived Serra Mesa Farmers Market), they—mainly Alena—decided to open a community coffee bar in Serra Mesa, where they live.

Alena found a small, but bright corner unit in a retail building on Mission Village Drive and Shawn Ave, at the top of the hill from what is now known as Snapdragon Stadium. After 6 months of renovation, their permit was approved right when Covid shut down the world. Java Garden opened despite the odds and braced through the pandemic as an "essential business." During the first year, David continued to roast coffee while Alena worked solo at the cafe. As things settled and the customer base grew, they were able to hire extra hands in the 2nd year; and now have a team of 4. David and Alena continue to roast coffee, alternating when David is working at his main occupation as a live audio engineer.

Java Garden has become a coffee haven in the tiny corner of Mission Village, providing a welcoming space where neighbors gather, and baristas know the names AND drinks of the regulars. Java Garden has partnered with only neighborhood bakers who have cottage food industry permits for their baked goods, with the current baker, Live, Love, Laugh, being literally just around the corner from David and Alena's home. Java Garden's menu (besides coffee, tea, and baked goods) includes breakfast croissant sandwiches, bagels, ciabatta paninis, quesadillas, and fruit smoothies and frozen lemonade. Though the menu may be small, the quality is high and baristas are eager to customize your drinks.

The ambiance is comfortable and bright from the many live plants and the beautiful large mural canvas painted by their lifelong friend and artist, Tanya Hinkel. The tree-shaded deck towards the back of the shop provides a pleasant break from the hustle and bustle of the day.



*Photos (left to right): Sunny Dojo, Congresswoman Sara Jacobs, Councilmember Campillo*



*continued on next page*



### *Java Garden Celebrates 5th Anniversary continued from previous page*

Java Garden was recognized by Congresswoman, Sara Jacobs in October 2024 for outstanding service in the community. It truly serves as a place to connect, to exchange ideas and stories, even hosting private events such as a neighborhood watch group, birthday celebrations, a caffeine crawl, meditation, book club and union meetings.

With the success of Java Garden, Alena has been asked when she plans to open a 2nd location. Her response is that it is not likely as her efforts would be diluted by scaling up. Java Garden is labor of love and it feeds her soul and has been made possible by the support and loyalty of customers and neighbors in Serra Mesa.

## **Luis Juarez, Serra Mesa Resident, Wins First Place**

*Press Release Provided by San Diego Watercolor Society*



Luis Juarez, an artist and resident of San Diego, California, has won the first-place award in the exceptionally competitive April 2025 San Diego Watercolor Society (SDWS) Member's exhibition "Beauty and Beyond", an in-gallery show of the SDWS at 2825 Dewey Road in Liberty Station, San Diego, CA. Juarez's painting titled "San Diego Skyline" was selected by prominent local artist Sean Barrett for this honor, out of over 280 entries. Barrett said of the painting, "What first drew me

to this painting was the composition and the color. The classic watercolor technique really stands out, and from a distance, the structure and composition immediately capture your attention. The complementary colors of blue, orange, and yellow work together beautifully, creating such a harmonious effect. The brushwork shows great control, and it all comes together in a well-balanced and captivating piece."

Luis is an award winning artist who has been painting watercolor art since 2008, specializing in painting Plein Air in San Diego. Juarez says, "I paint what I see. However, I always feel free to move a building or a mountain to enhance the painting. The final result for a successful composition is more important than the reality of what I see." He has been a member of the San Diego Watercolor Society since 2014, and is a frequent winner of awards in the monthly shows of the SDWS and at other exhibitions. More of Luis's work can be found at <https://luisjuarezfineart.com/>.

The SDWS Gallery Exhibit will run through Saturday April 26, 2025 at the SDWS gallery at 2528 Dewey Road in Liberty Station. Paintings can be viewed and purchased from the gallery as well as on the SDWS website at <https://www.sdws.org/galleryart.php?cat=7069>.

The San Diego Watercolor Society, a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1965, is dedicated to expanding the appreciation of and involvement in watermedia painting through education, exhibition and promotion. More information can be found at <http://www.sdws.org>.



## 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, 7pm, 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: May 15 and June 19. To contact us, email [smpg@serramesa.org](mailto:smpg@serramesa.org). Agendas and minutes are at <https://www.serramesa.org/smpg/smpg-documents/>.

**Elections:** SMPG's bylaws allow fifteen Board members. Anyone who is at least 18 years old, affiliated with the community as a property owner, resident of Serra Mesa, or a local Serra Mesa businessperson. The City provides training. See <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/resources>.

Current SMPG board members are Jeff Berkwits, Debra Burns, Kira Finkenberg, Rick Gonzales, Wayne Harris, Joe Ippolito, Sharon Kramer, Carey Longley, Cindy Moore, Chris Rosemond (Chair). There are 5 openings.

### Updates

**Alley Adjacent to Macawa Ave:** SMPG passed motion to support naming alley Itay.

**Birdland Housing Project Proposal:** Report made on San Diego Unified School District's proposal to build affordable multi-family housing for educators and staff at their Cardinal Lane property in the Birdland area. For more information refer to article in this edition. Jeff Berkwits will monitor the district's proposal.

**Congresswoman Sara Jacobs:** Attended March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. She thanked the group for being involved, made comments, and answered questions. Topics covered were the continuing resolution, tariffs, freezes, impact on democracy, importance of public pressure, USAID, funding for research, build network and broaden coalition, veteran housing, military housing and childcare, Fentanyl, and the border.

**Developer Attendance at Planning Group Meeting:** SMPG passed motion to draft letter to request City Council to require developers to present to planning groups. Also, the letter was sent to city officials.

**Election Results:** Jeff Berkwits, Deb Burns, Stephanie Gioia-Beckman, Kira Finkenberg, Rick Gonzales were elected to a 2-year term. Stephanie Gioia-Beckman is no longer with Rady's; her membership is rescinded.

**3241 Mission Village Dr:** Motion passed to support the tentative map waiver for sale for 3241 Mission Village Dr project CityMark's project. The proposal is to make 25 townhomes for sale units; 35 apartments, rentals. Plan to complete project in 2026. Developer required to obtain tentative map waiver for entire property. More information on project at <https://citymarkdevelopment.box.com/s/1p564mqdb76pbwtusuq2o2p15kmpe4fr>.

**Future Agenda Items:** To be determined.

## Notice of Public Hearing: Proposed Solid Waste Management Fee

On April 14 the City Council passed a motion to advance the City's default fee of \$47.59/month for a follow-up vote on June 9, 2 pm.

City Councilmember Raul Campillo, Serra Mesa's representative, voted against the motion. He stated "I believe that when the City advertises a dollar amount on the ballot to the voters, the City should honor that. San Diegans depended upon the City's voter guide for 2022's Measure B, which estimated the new fee would fall somewhere between \$23 and \$29 a month. Two years later, the City's analysis shows that the trash fee will be much higher, so I just could not move forward knowing the voters passed the measure relying on an estimate that turned out to be much lower."

Single family homeowners were mailed a six-page Notice of Public Hearing. The notice can be found at <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2025-04/measure-b-prop-218-mailer.pdf> and at <https://www.serramesa.org/hot-topics/>.

If you have concerns about this fee, refer to page 6 and

- **Fill Out Form** - Name, Address, Signature
- **Mail it (need stamp)** or hand deliver to  
Office of the City Clerk  
202 C Street – MS 2T  
San Diego, CA 92101

**Protests** must be **received** by the City Clerk on **June 9, 2pm**.

### Trash Fee Background Information

*This information found at <https://www.serramesa.org/hot-topics/>.*

#### **Measure B authorizing trash fee passed by less than 1% of votes**

Ballot Title: "Shall the San Diego Municipal Code be amended so that all City residents receive comparable trash, recycling, and other solid waste management services, by allowing the City to recover its cost of providing these services to eligible residential properties, which could allow the City to provide additional services, such as weekly recycling, bulky item pickup, and curbside container replacement and delivery, at no extra charge?" [https://ballotpedia.org/San\\_Diego,\\_California,\\_Measure\\_B,\\_Waste\\_Management\\_Measure\\_\(November\\_2022\)](https://ballotpedia.org/San_Diego,_California,_Measure_B,_Waste_Management_Measure_(November_2022))

#### **Ballot indicated cost recovery fee \$23-\$29; proposal more than 2X**

Background: "According to the Fiscal Impact Statement, a best estimate of what this fee would be, assuming the City only recovers costs for services it currently provides and potential costs to bill and collect fee revenue, ranges from \$23 to \$29 per month per customer."\*

**\$4.5 million for consultant**: Cost-of-Service Study included online survey and information open houses (<https://cleangreensd.org>)

**Proposal**: Trash Container - \$47.59 for 95-gallon, \$42.88 for 65-gallon, \$36.72 for 35-gallon container; by 2027, increase to \$59.42 for 95-gallon container, \$53.46 for 65-gallon, \$45.66 for 35-gallon. All options contain 95-gal recycling and or-

*continued on next page*



*Trash Fee Background Information continued from previous page*

organics containers. Also, included in the fee are new containers, additional workers hired, new vehicles purchased, move the container operation to a new location, and new customer portal website. Fee included in property taxes.

**No opt out option**

**Measure B language prevents consideration of contracting services**

**California Proposition 218 – Right to Vote on Taxes Act:** “Requires all local governments, including charter cities, to get majority voter approval for new or increased general taxes...In any case, fees charged to property owners may not exceed the cost of providing the service.” Simple majority prevents implementation.

**City Council Meeting, April 14:** Set \$47.59 as the default fee, the procedure for protesting against the proposed fee, and June 9 to consider proposed fees to be collected as part of property tax beginning in July 2025.

**City Council Meeting, June 9, 2pm:** City Council will hold a public hearing at Council Chamber, 202 C Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor, to approve a trash collection fee.

**Resources:**

Lots of articles and comments on numerous media outlets, social networks, and news stations, including CBS, Facebook, Fox, inewssource, KPBS, NBC, Nextdoor, OB Rag, San Diego Union Tribune, Voice of San Diego.

SDUT, April 9, 2025, article at San Diego cuts trash pickup price after residents balk. Here’s what it could now cost. – San Diego Union-Tribune.

City of San Diego: <https://www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/trash-service-updates/proposed-solid-waste-management-fee>

IBA (Independent Budget Analyst) Review and Analysis - [25-10 IBA Review of the Waste Collection Cost of Service Study COMPLETE RPT..pdf](#)

Consultant: Frequently Asked Questions - <https://cleangreensd.org/resources/>

## Where Did The Bees Go?



On the well-maintained trail between the Serra Mesa Recreation Center and the Serra Mesa/ Kearny Mesa library there was a bee hive in a fallen log. In early April the log was opened and the bees removed. Does anyone know what happened to the bees?



The honeycombs can clearly be seen, but the bees are gone. There is no trace of dead bees around, but the top of the log is missing. The hive was a nice way to observe natural bee behavior in the community. It was clearly marked to be aware of the bees and don’t disturb.

If you know what happened to the bees, please email Friends of Ruffin Canyon at [friendsofruffincanyon@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofruffincanyon@gmail.com)

## Building Project at 3440 Sandrock Rd (former library site)



The San Diego City Council on March 10, 2025, voted unanimously for the development agreement, lease, and loan for 3440 Sandrock Road. The Serra Mesa Planning Group and Serra Mesa Community Council submitted their comments, [HERE](#), to councilmembers prior to the meeting. The meeting archive video is [HERE](#), item begins at 2:17:15.

Councilmember Raul Campillo indicated that he could find no legal basis or policy basis to deny the project; he would follow-up on any ques-

tions that are brought up by the community in the future; and thanked the community for being watchdogs on multiple issues.

Next step is for the developer to submit their application for federal tax credits, which are needed for the project to proceed. For full history of the project, go to <https://www.serramesa.org/hot-topics/>.

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## Property Across from Taft Middle School

9280 Gramercy Drive, located across the street from Taft Middle School, is the former Mission Village Shopping Center site. When asked about the status of this site Miles Noel, City Councilmember Raul Campillo's representative, received the following response from staff:

*The only current permit application is PRJ-1133100 for Soils Testing. It is pending invoice payment and has not gone into review.*

*There is a Preliminary Review PRJ-1131973, which a questions regarding potential development of the site. It is not a permit nor a project.*

*Staff review prior discretionary permits to see if they were vested and are still applicable as part of their review. It is also part of the applicant's due diligence.*

Scope of work for PRJ-1131973 states "The proposed project provides 199 for-sale dwelling units, eight of which shall be set aside as Shopkeeper Units." Information at <https://aca-prod.accela.com/SANDIEGO/Cap/CapHome.aspx?module=DSD&TabName=DSD>, enter address.

The site received approval in 2004 and 2005 for three story buildings, 160 residential condominium units, shared parking between residential and retail with at least one assigned deeded parking space, 15,000s.f. of retail (8,000s.f. along Ruffin Road and 7,000s.f. at the former gas station site at the corner of Ruffin and Gramercy), and a meeting room year-round made available to the community at no cost. As of late April 2025, it's unclear if this approved project is vested.

Campillo's office has been asked to keep the community informed on any future development. For more background information, go to <https://www.serramesa.org/smpg/major-projects/>, scroll to end of page.

## Proposed Housing Project in Birdland



On April 10, 2025, the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) conducted a listening session with approximately 60 residents and couple of developers on the Workforce Housing Initiative to build affordable multi-family housing for educators and staff at their Cardinal Lane site in Birdland.

SDUSD would own the property and provide a 99-year lease to the developer. The Instructional Media Center will remain at their

site. The property to be developed is the triangular parcel, 1.93 acres, depicted on the map.

The district has issued a Request for Proposal to developers, due date August 26. The exact number of units depends on the developer's proposal. A developer will be selected based on criteria presented in the RFP and the school board will make the final decision at a public hearing.

To obtain information on future meetings, add your email at [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSde-L3UgdaQbnM3q1f2d2Cg6uX2gO\\_bywoaHoYpzcqvzn8vvg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSde-L3UgdaQbnM3q1f2d2Cg6uX2gO_bywoaHoYpzcqvzn8vvg/viewform).

The greatest concern expressed by residents was with safety; Cardinal is the only access into and out of this area of Birdland. Other questions/concerns/suggestions expressed include:

### Traffic/Transportation/Vehicle

- Another access
- Emergency route
- 2 parking spaces
- Collaboration with Caltrans
- Add traffic signal on Cardinal
- Pedestrian bridge
- Make Cardinal Lane 4 lanes
- Genesee bottleneck
- Coordinate traffic pattern with hospital complex & school
- Bus stop too far; provide shuttle bus
- Add Mesa College exit to Hwy 163
- Cardinal wrap

### Impacts

- Construction impacts

- Utilities adequate to handle additional units?
- Carbon monoxide from being next to a freeway
- Impact on Fletcher Elementary School

### Amenities

- Green space
- Dog park
- Community garden
- Partner with Door of Hope for community garden
- Wellness Center
- Swimming pool
- Playground
- Native plants
- Upgrade to Fletcher playground

### Other

- Lower density
- Mixed use; add retail, especially market
- Consider building on excess property at Ross Elementary School
- Protect privacy of homes on Mockingbird
- Match scale/architecture of community
- Maximum occupancy/unit?
- Provide money incentives for home ownership for district employees instead of rental housing
- Build with community focus in mind
- Community be decision-maker



# Air Pollution and Proposed Birdland Housing

by Cindy Moore

At the April 10 San Diego Unified School District Listening Session (see article in this edition) for Workforce Housing in Birdland air pollution was mentioned as a concern. Coincidentally, my book club had just met, and the author of the selected book is a well-known, former USAID executive, who has talked about air pollution becoming a leading cause of death worldwide. Although my educational background is in public health it didn't occur to me that the impacts of air pollution should be seriously considered for this project.

Consequently, I conducted some research. The research results are disturbing:

- **Death:** Air pollution is the second leading risk factor for death, “some of the greatest health impacts of air pollution are seen on children”. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/air-pollution-accounted-81-million-deaths-globally-2021-becoming-second-leading-risk>.
- **Health Issues:** “For example, the air pollution caused by higher levels of GHG emissions near freeways has shown signs of long-term detrimental effects on children (respiratory issues, cognitive development, ear/nose/throat infections), pregnant women (high blood pressure, gestational diabetes), fetuses (low birth weight), newborns (low birth weight, impaired cognitive development), and seniors (bronchitis, asthma).

In addition to damaging the respiratory system, recent studies have shown GHGs to negatively impact emotional and behavioral development in children of all ages. Living in close proximity to freeways can lead to cognitive problems in infants that persist as their brains develop, and studies from the University of Southern California show that these tiny toxic particles can also cause damage to the areas of the brain responsible for emotion and decision making. This can cause youth who live around freeways to have a higher risk of teenage delinquency and behavioral problems.” The Past, Present, and Future of Freeways— Housing Action Coalition

- **EPA FAQs:** Lots of good information: Near Roadway Air Pollution and Health: Frequently Asked Questions (EPA-420-F-14-014, August 2014)
- **2024 Report on Air Pollution Impacts:** Article about report, New report highlights impact of roadway air pollution on indoor air quality
- **Technical Explanation of Pollutants:** [cv-air-pollution-CA-web.pdf](#)
- **California Air Resources Board Siting Recommendation:** “Avoid siting new sensitive land uses within 500 feet of a freeway, urban roads with 100,000 vehicles/day, or rural roads with 50,000 vehicles/day.” Sensitive land use includes residential units. ARB's Air Quality and Landuse Handbook
- **Closeness to Freeway: 2441 Cardinal Lane is less than 300ft from the freeway** (extrapolated from Google maps).

The above information was shared with our school board representative, Shana Hazan, and the following questions were asked.

- What is needed for the school board to reconsider this site because of the possible air pollution impacts on tenants (school employees and their families)? Perhaps the school board isn't aware of the health risks associated with this location?
- If the school district pursues this site for housing, will an EIR be conducted to evaluate the air pollution impacts? Will mitigation measures be required to minimize impacts? [EIR refers to an environmental study.]
- If the housing is built, will future residents be fully informed of the risks?
- Will the school district be at risk of legal action if there are long-term effects from the air pollution? Legal action could negatively impact the benefits of the project.

*continued on next page*

*Air Pollution and Proposed Birdland Housing continued previous page*

Shana Hazan promptly forwarded my email to staff and, staff answered immediately:

“San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) will fully comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)... California has set a mandate that by 2035, all new passenger cars, trucks, and SUVs sold in the state must be zero-emission vehicles. SDUSD is working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by building clean solar energy systems that offset the school district’s electricity consumption. SDUSD affordable workforce housing projects will enable teachers and staff to live in or near the communities they serve reducing commuting times, distances, and vehicle transportation related greenhouse gas emissions.”

A follow-up email has requested an answer to the school board question, asked what conditions would necessitate an EIR to be conducted for the Cardinal Lane site, and suggested that perhaps it makes more sense to wait until after 2035 to develop the Cardinal Lane property rather than expose tenants to harmful air pollutants for many years.

It’s admirable that the school board wants to provide workforce housing for education staff and families, but this specific site, due to its proximity to a freeway, should be considered only if there are no other options. The school district does have other sites, for example, Ross Elementary was mentioned during the listening session.

## **Friends of Ruffin Canyon Creek to Bay Clean-up on April 26**

The Friends of Ruffin Canyon joined I Love a Clean San Diego for our semi annual canyon clean up at the Serra Mesa Recreation Center. The crew, around 25 adults and children, helped clean trash, removed invasive non-natives and spread mulch on the trail from the recreation center to the library.



## Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Branch Library

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

Email Questions to [SMstaff@sandiego.gov](mailto:SMstaff@sandiego.gov)



### Library Hours

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

Wednesday through Saturday: 9:30 am - 6pm

Sunday: 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm

**Holiday Closures**—All San Diego Public Library Locations will be closed in observance of: Memorial Day, May 26, and Juneteenth Freedom Day, June 19.

### 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/>
- **Online Book Clubs:** <https://sandiego.gov/bookclubs>
- **Program Videos:** <https://sandiego.gov/public-library/program-videos>

### Summer Reading Program 2025!! June 1 to August 31

Join the Summer Reading Program and Level Up at Your Library! It's free to sign up for ALL AGES at [www.sandiego.gov/summerreading](http://www.sandiego.gov/summerreading). Keep track of the books you read this summer with your online reading log and earn prizes for reading! Every Tuesday, June 17 through August 5 at 4:00pm, join us for a special Summer Reading Event featuring clowns, magicians, animals, and more!

### Pajama Storytime with Ms. Carrie – Mondays at 6:30pm (except May 27)

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.

### 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 – May 13 and May 17 at 4:30pm (On summer hiatus June-August)

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.

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

Love to read and talk about books? Join the Morning Book Club! March 13 will discuss *This Tender Land* by Kent Krueger, and April 10 will discuss *The Little Liar* by Mitch Albom.

### Baby Toddler Time – Thursdays at 10:00am (except June 19)

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

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*Serra Mesa -Kearny Mesa Library continued previous page*

### **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!

### **May 4, 2:00pm Exploring Our Roots—Genealogy Workshop**

Are you ready to explore your family tree? The San Diego Public Library offers access to Ancestry.com at all our locations. This class will provide you with the basics to start your search, how to find details about your ancestors, and tips for recording the facts you find.

### **May 6, 1:00pm Hands Only CPR Instructions**

Attendees will learn everything that they need to know about recognition and best response practices for cardiac arrest. An AED demonstration and hands-on experience will be offered. All ages welcome. Best for ages 10 years and older. Attendees must register for the event at [heartbeatadmin@sandiego.gov](mailto:heartbeatadmin@sandiego.gov).

### **May 6, 6:00pm Friends of the Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library Meeting**

Community members are welcome to join, become a member, and discuss ways to support the library. This meeting will be held virtually on Zoom. Please email [serramesalibraryfriends@gmail.com](mailto:serramesalibraryfriends@gmail.com) for the log in information.

### **May 14, 4:00pm San Diego River Days Storytime**

In honor of San Diego River Days, Ranger Tiffany and Librarian Ms. Carrie will read stories and give facts about animals that live along the San Diego River.

### **June 17, 4:00pm Summer Reading Program: A Book and a Ballerina Storytime**

Join City Ballet of San Diego for "A Book and a Ballerina!" Enjoy listening to a read-aloud, hearing from a professional ballerina, and learning some basic dance steps. This hour-long program is an introduction to the world of classical ballet for kids in grades Pre-K through 5th.

### **June 24, 4:00pm Summer Reading Program: Kids to Canyon Nature Walk and Talk**

Join Park Ranger Tiffany for a nature walk in the canyon right outside the library! Together we'll explore and learn about some of the native plants and animals that call this area home! Bring a hat, sunscreen, and a water bottle for an easy trail walk.

### **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](mailto:serramesalibraryfriends@gmail.com) or DM on Instagram @serramesalibraryfriends.

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**Public Hearings**, in person or virtually, for City of San Diego **Budget**: Budget Review Committee on May 5, 6pm; City Council, May 19, 6pm. For details: click on meeting at <https://www.sandiego.gov/city-clerk/officialdocs/meetings-calendar>.



## 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:** Memorial Day, May 26

**Gym Schedule:** <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/serramesaopenplay.pdf>

**Registration** for spring program began February 15. Online at [www.sdreconnect.com](http://www.sdreconnect.com). If help is needed, click the FAQs button for information.

**Volleyball League:** League is for all skill levels. Registration includes 6 regular season games, practices, playoffs, awards, and a banquet. Volunteer coaches are welcome!

12U Age: 10-12 Practice Schedule: Mondays & Wednesdays 4:00-5:30pm Code: 120897

14U Age: 12-14 Practice Schedule: Mondays & Wednesdays 5:30-7:00pm Code: 120898

**Pee Wee Soccer Clinic:** Allows kids to have fun playing soccer with their friends, in an organized fashion, with safety as a main element of consideration. The fundamental skills on team work, footwork, juggling, passing, trapping and shooting in a friendly and team oriented environment. Cleats are not required. Shin Guards are recommended.

Pee Wee, Age 5-7 Thursdays, 3:30-5:00pm, Code 120952

April 3-May 29

**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.

May Thursdays, 3:30-5pm, Code 120901

### Community Sports Information:

AYSO Soccer:, Region 780 : Registrar, <https://www.ayso780.org>, [AYSO780Registrar@gmail.com](mailto:AYSO780Registrar@gmail.com)

Serra Mesa Seniors Softball: [sandiegosoftware.com](http://sandiegosoftware.com)

Serra Mesa Little League: [www.serramesalittleleague.org](http://www.serramesalittleleague.org), [info@serramesalittleleague.org](mailto:info@serramesalittleleague.org)

\*Program copied/adapted from Serra Mesa Recreation Center Program Guide. Summer schedule not available at press time.

## 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:

*continued on next page*



*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.



David Hussain

BROKER ASSOCIATE

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real

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@ListedByDavid  
Buy. Sell. Invest. Retire

## Projects & Other Information

*(Current April 2025)*

### 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) - See Serra Mesa Planning Group article: 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.** (See article in this Observer edition): 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 is-

*continued on next page*

*Projects & Other Information continued from previous page*

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** (See article in this Observer edition) – Community Housing-Works (CHW) received in March 2025 City Council’s approval for development agreement and 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. Next step in for the developer to submit their application for federal tax credits, which are needed for the project to proceed. For full history of the project, go to <https://www.serramesa.org/hot-topics/>.

### **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.

**Drainage Issue at Corner of Aero/ Sandrock** – A solution was implemented to prevent water draining from the VA building. If the issue resurfaces, contact City Councilmember Raul Campillo’s office. Currently, water pooling at the corner seems to be the result of either landscaping watering or when it rains (infrastructure issue).

**Ion Aero, 8555 Aero Drive** – Construction of 7-story above grade and 1-story below grade for 302 multi-family dwelling units and associated accessory uses. Parking spaces : vehicle, 331; motorcycle, 32; bicycle, 136. 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



Business #2



Business #3



Business #4



**Business #5**



**Business #6**



## Brain Teaser

This brain teaser contains a clue which is a two-word phrase, 4 two-word names (no space between words), and 2 one-word names. The two-word phrase describes a commonality for all the photos. The words can be joined vertically, horizontally, diagonally, forwards, or backwards.

Brain Teaser answers are at <https://www.serramesa.org/smcc/observer-newsletter/>.

S	C	C	M	F	E
T	A	V	O	U	L
D	S	R	K	N	V
I	M	A	E	E	N
U	M	V	E	T	I
E	L	E	N	N	E
-	V	E	C	N	*
7	L	E	E	S	L
-	E	O	T	H	L
7	S	E	R	S	E



Editor: *Cindy Moore*  
Post Office Box 23315  
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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**

