

**A Community  
Newsletter**

from the

**Grossmont –  
Mt. Helix  
Improvement  
Association**



# viewpoints

October 2002

Volume 33, Issue 3



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## Do You Know About...?

*Another in a series of educational articles for our members*

### The Valle de Oro Community Planning Group

**A**n old adage may well apply here: Never have so many owed so much to so few! The majority of the communities in the GMIA membership area are in the “unincorporated” segment of San Diego County. As such the land use issues of our communities are under the formal purview of San Diego County’s Department of Planning & Land Use, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. This means that the decisions that these government entities make regarding such things as residential and commercial development can have a critical impact on our GMIA community. Understanding this, one might logically ask if there is anything that GMIA can do to impact the actions of these entities. The answer is yes, to some and varying degrees.

Years ago it was decided that there was a need to formally establish community level organizations that would act in an advisory capacity to the Department of Planning & Land Use, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. This resulted in the formation of Community Planning Groups. These Groups were charged with the responsibility of “local” review of proposed land use issues and submission of recommendations reflecting the best interests of the communities they serve. To assure this “grass roots” representation, the members of each of the planning groups were to be elected by the voters in their respective communities. This ultimately resulted in the

establishment of the Valle de Oro Community Planning Group (generally referred to as VDO), which now serves our GMIA membership area.

VDO performs a vital function in helping to assure that our community is not adversely impacted by such County trends as “smart growth” (aka increased density), unbridled commercial development, inadequate transportation infrastructure, and a host of other potentially damaging projects and issues. To this end, your GMIA Board works very closely with VDO to help make sure that the best interests of our community are seriously considered by the Department of Planning & Land Use, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

The GMIA board encourages you to be aware of the productive activities of the VDO and its importance to our GMIA community. In this regard, please note the recommendations that are included elsewhere in this newsletter regarding the upcoming elections for vacancies on the VDO. Remember that the choices you make in this election may well determine the future of our community.

Like many other volunteer organizations, the unpaid elected members of the VDO work hard on behalf of our local communities. If in the course of your daily activities you encounter the members of the VDO, we encourage you to get to know them and give them a well-deserved thanks for their hard and sometimes very difficult work protecting the quality of life we enjoy every day. ■

GROSSMONT - MT. HELIX



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**Viewpoints** is a community newsletter published by the Grossmont – Mt. Helix Improvement Association. Letters to the Editor should be sent to P. O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751.

*This newsletter reflects the efforts of your entire Board of Directors.*

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Printing: LetterKraft Printing  
Lemon Grove

Photography: Bob Cederdahl

## A Letter from the President

**G**reetings once again from your GMIA Board of Directors. We are providing another periodic issue of our GMIA newsletter, "Viewpoints," in an attempt to update and inform all GMIA members on issues and topics of interest regarding our GMIA community.

As noted in multiple articles in this issue, on November 5 voting will occur involving the election of candidates to important positions. Elections involving the selection of those to serve on local boards and entities are of vital concern to GMIA. So, we do indeed encourage each of our members to become educated on the candidates and issues, and then by all means take the time to vote on November 5. We encourage you to carefully read the article in this issue relating to the upcoming elections.

As for accomplishments, we can all take a measure of credit for the new free-

way ramp that just opened, to allow transit from SR94W to SR125N. GMIA worked hard to help get installation of this new ramp funded and accomplished on an accelerated schedule. Now, if we can get installation of the other missing ramp, SR125S to SR94E, accomplished on an accelerated schedule, we'll all be able to breathe a sigh of relief about the current commuter traffic congestion on our community roadways. We'll be working on that issue.

Finally, please be sure to mark your calendars for the two major GMIA events in 2003: the Annual Art & Garden Tour on Sunday May 4; and the GMIA Annual Dinner Meeting on Monday May 12. We hope to see most of you at both events. ■

## Crime in Our Community

**T**here have been recent occasions on which GMIA Board members have unfortunately acquired first hand knowledge regarding crime in our GMIA community. To that end, we thought briefly addressing this perceived issue in our newsletter might be beneficial to our members.

In view of the increased awareness that crime may be a current issue for our community, your GMIA Board has conducted a preliminary review of the situation. Informal communication with the County Sheriff's Department, the entity having overall law enforcement responsibility for our unincorporated community areas, indicates that there is a concern for increased crime in our GMIA community, particularly burglaries. As an indicator, a quick analysis of the overall statistics limited to the Grossmont-Mt. Helix areas just north and south of Fuerte Drive shows an increase in burglaries for the year 2002 through August as compared to the same 8 month period in 2001 – a 300% increase (15 for 2002 compared to 5 in 2001). Every single burglary incident is a concern, but an increase in the incident rate is very much a concern!

To that end, your GMIA Board has formed a committee to further research the situation and compile a more complete report, the results of which will be communicated in our next newsletter. In the meantime, members are encouraged to heed the counsel of the Sheriff's Department regarding safeguarding against burglary. Primarily, residential properties should always be locked when all occupants are gone, and always at night. There are numerous reports of burglaries occurring as "crimes of opportunity," whereby the perpetrators gain access to a residence through an unlocked window or door. This includes garage doors, which when left unlocked or in the open position, particularly at night, have resulted in burglaries without forced entry.

Any member having concern for the crime issue, or who would like to volunteer to serve on the GMIA committee addressing this issue, is invited to contact our committee chairperson:

Brian Arnold  
9393 Grossmont Blvd., La Mesa 91941  
Telephone (619) 469-8027  
Email: brjmail@cox.net ■

## GMIA Recommendations for Nov. 5 Election

**G**MIA is basically an association of single family owner-occupied homeowners, with the common objective and mission to ensure preservation of the quality of life experienced by residential members of our community. While not organized for political purposes, GMIA does recognize that elected officials are responsible for decisions and actions that can and do impact the quality of life in our community.

As most members know, your GMIA Board of Directors has a long standing policy of formulating recommendations regarding candidates for all non-partisan elected offices that directly affect our GMIA community. Your GMIA Board considers this an important function. Thus, your GMIA Board endeavors to review the platforms and qualifications of all candidates in order



to identify those who are deemed the most qualified and motivated to best serve the interests of our community if elected. This results in a slate of recommended candidates. These recommendations are then sent to our GMIA

membership, as well as other residents of the entire voting areas to which the elected offices apply.

By the time you read this newsletter you will have received a separate flyer that advises of the GMIA candidate recommendations. For reinforcement, we are repeating those recommendations in this issue of the GMIA newsletter. We strongly encourage you to consider the following recommendations for candidates in the upcoming November 5 elections!

One final thought: Since election outcomes do affect our communities and way of life, we urge all GMIA members to vote in the November 5 election. We also urge you to make a special effort to encourage other family members and friends to cast their vote as well as consider the voting recommendations advised in this article.

### County Supervisor

The County Supervisor for our area serves a four-year term. Since there was an election for our Supervisor two years ago, in which Dianne Jacob was re-elected, there is no election this year.

### County Sheriff

Incumbent Sheriff Bill Kolender is running unopposed, so there is no recommendation required for this office.

### San Miguel Fire District Board

There are three vacancies on this seven-member Board, and there are four candidates competing for the three vacancies. We regret that none of the four candidates returned a complete GMIA questionnaire, so the GMIA Election Committee was unable to formulate any recommendations for the three vacant positions.

### Valle de Oro (VDO) Community Planning Group

The VDO Planning Group is a very important elected body that has been, and should continue to be, very helpful to GMIA in its efforts to preserve the rural residential nature of our community and keep in check the current trend for increased development and over-development of our residential communities. In that vein your GMIA committee looked very carefully at the qualifications of all candidates for this important elected body, particularly the performance and voting record of all incumbents who are up for reelection. First-time candidates seeking to be elected to the VDO Planning Group were also evaluated in terms of related experience, response to the GMIA candidate questionnaire, as well as their perceived relationships to influencing groups such as the real estate, building and construction industries.

There are seven vacancies to be filled on this 15-member Planning Group. For this election there are 14 candidates competing to fill the seven vacancies. The GMIA Board is recommending the following candidates to fill the seven Planning Group vacancies, six of whom are incumbents and have already proven their commitment to support GMIA community objectives.

(In order appearing on ballot)

**John Hewicker** (incumbent)

**Jack Phillips** (incumbent)

**Doris Campbell** (incumbent)

**Mary Sweeney**

**Donald Fitchett** (incumbent)

**Anita Reith** (incumbent)

**Bert Larson** (incumbent) ■

## Traffic in Our Community

*Stop signs, stop lights, speed limits, freeway ramps – the horse and buggy days are gone!*



**Y**our Valle de Oro Community Planning Group (VDO) has been very busy the past few months working for our neighborhoods and community. They report the following highlights related to traffic developments that should be of interest to our GMIA members.

### Speed Limit on Grandview/Edgewood Drive

The County is working on a 35 MPH speed limit with radar enforcement on Grandview/Edgewood Drive. For the low amount of traffic on this road, a surprisingly high number of collisions have occurred – with other cars, fences, and fire hydrants. Hopefully, speed limit signs will soon be posted.

### Traffic Related to the New Kaiser Facility

With the opening of a Kaiser Medical Facility at Avocado and Fury due in April 2003, the VDO has been pushing for a traffic signal light at Challenge and Avocado. As part of the current planning for traffic related to the new Kaiser Medical Facility, the County is requiring a traffic signal light at Louisa and Avocado Blvd.

The VDO is insisting that only a signal there will disrupt the Lousia/Calavo neighborhoods. A traffic signal light at Challenge will help alleviate that problem, help prevent more accidents at the Challenge/Avocado intersection, and help slow down traffic on Avocado Blvd.

### All-Way-Stop On Camino Paz

An All-Way Stop on Camino Paz at the Brookside Circle/Citradora intersection has been proposed to the County Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC). Decision on this proposal is pending.

### Close-off of Calavo at Avocado

The temporary partial closure of Calavo Drive at Avocado Ave. (just north of Fuerte Drive) has now become permanent.

### Radar Enforcement on Chase

Chase Avenue between the City of El Cajon and Jamacha Road will now have radar enforcement. This happened in view of that section of roadway becoming a regular raceway.

### Jamacha Road Study

VDO has initiated a study of Jamacha Road between Rancho San Diego and El Cajon due to the recent accidents occurring on that roadway. This thoroughfare, a State highway used by many residents as well as through traffic, is becoming increasingly dangerous and some traffic “calming” needs to be done.

### A Much Needed Stop Sign in an Adjacent Area

Another out-of-our-GMIA-area bit of information: An All-Way Stop Control will be posted at the intersection of Vista Grande Road and Canta Lomas. This is a result of a request from neighbors and VDO a year ago. It took a fatal collision to get the County to agree to the request.

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## SR-94/SR-125 Transition Ramps

*(One down and one to go!)*

The following status report on the SR94/SR125 transition ramps is provided by your GMIA Traffic Committee.

### The Good News Part

By the time you receive this newsletter, when driving in the vicinity of the 94/125 Interchange you will notice that one of the two missing Transition Ramps for this freeway intersection is now open for traffic! The long overdue 94W to 125N Interim Transition Ramp Project has been completed (all but some final landscaping) and the new ramp was opened for



traffic on Tuesday October 8 – a big Hurrah for that milestone! The opening of that ramp (even though it is considered “interim”), should cause a noticeable decrease in the amount of commuter traffic using our community secondary roadways, particularly during the morning rush hour.

There may be a formal ceremony in the near future to commemorate the opening of this critical freeway infrastructure modification, so watch the news media for such an event. As of the writing of this newsletter, plans for such an event are still being formulated at the State level. GMIA was one of the strong proponents for accelerated action to get at least this interim ramp constructed and open for traffic, and GMIA representation will be an integral part of any celebration.

**The Not-So-Good-News Part**

There is really nothing new to report on the other critical missing transition ramp

at the 94/125 interchange, the 125S to 94E Transition Ramp. The project for that long overdue transition ramp is still in the very early stages, and is still part of a major CALTRANS Project, known officially as the “State Route 94/125 Interchange Improvements Ultimate Project,” referred to in short as the “Ultimate Project.” That major project involves several freeway construction components, including widening of 125 between Spring Street and Lemon Avenue, the installation of the permanent 125S to 94E Transition Ramp, and the installation of a “Permanent” 94W to 125N Transition Ramp (to replace the just-opened “Interim Ramp”).

The Ultimate Project was formally initiated in 2001, and is still in the early planning stage. It requires a full-blown Environmental Impact Report/Statement which is not estimated to be completed until about 2006, and then the Design, Right of Way Acquisition, and Construction Phases are not estimated to be

completed until at least 2010/2011. The only good news about the project plans for this long overdue and sorely needed freeway infrastructure improvement is that, despite the recognized Statewide budget crunch, current funding is in place and available to allow proceeding with the Environmental Impact Report/Statement Phase. GMIA will continue to track this situation and has hopeful expectations that somehow appropriate negotiations and political considerations will allow for a more expedited construction of the 125S to 94E Transition Ramp component of the Ultimate Project, independent of the other major components.

If we are not successful in that objective, the ruts in our community roadways from overuse by commuter traffic will be very deep by the time the current Ultimate Project is completed in the 2010/2011 timeframe! ■

## Calendar of Events

**2002**

**Sunday, December 22, 7 p.m.**  
Annual “Caroling on Mt. Helix”  
Mt. Helix Park

No shuttle. Candlelight walk up starts at 6:45 p.m.  
Cookies and hot beverages served all evening.  
Sponsor: Mt. Helix Park Foundation.

**2003**

**Sunday, April 20, 6:30 a.m.**  
Easter Sunrise Service  
Mt. Helix Park

Shuttle starts at 5:30 a.m.  
Pastries and beverages served starting 6 a.m.  
Sponsor: Foothills United Methodist Church

**Sunday, May 4, Noon to 4 p.m.**  
GMIA Annual Art & Garden Tour

Four gardens (to be announced).  
Sponsor: GMIA

**Monday, May 12, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.**  
GMIA Annual Dinner Meeting  
La Mesa Community Center

Sponsor: GMIA

**PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW FOR THESE IMPORTANT EVENTS!**

# Planning & Land Use

In addition to traffic issues, your Valle de Oro Community Planning Group (VDO) has been very busy the past few months working for our neighborhoods and community on many planning and land use issues. They report the following highlights related to planning and land use developments that should be of interest to our GMIA members.

## A Starbucks is Coming

A “Starbucks” is coming to Casa de Oro! It will be in the shopping center just east of the “Blockbuster” store. The plans have been approved, so it should be opening soon.

## Concern For Flooding Problems

VDO has been forced to appeal a 3-lot subdivision proposal at the corner of Tropicano and Bancroft Drive, insisting that the proposal will increase the



flooding problems the downstream neighbors have experienced.

## Cell Tower Issues

VDO is still working to convince the County that cell phone towers are not compatible with our residential neighborhoods and should be restricted to commercial and industrial sites.

## Revitalization On North Bonita Street

The revitalization of portions of North Bonita Street in Casa de Oro is

proceeding. The funds have been secured and initial surveying has begun for the new sidewalks and driveway cuts to ensure safe passage for our school children and pedestrians shopping in Casa de Oro.

## General Plan 2020 Update

VDO is working diligently, like they have for the past four years, to ensure that the desirable characteristics of our Mt. Helix community will remain intact. A simple update proposed by the Board of Supervisors has turned into a gigantic, extremely complicated revamping of the entire unincorporated County.

It is really a struggle to keep development interests from changing our land uses just for the sake of increased profits. ■

# Helpful Telephone Numbers

	County of San Diego	City of La Mesa	City of El Cajon
<b>ROADS</b> Resurfacing, closures, potholes, etc.	Department of Public Works <b>1-877-684-8000</b> or <a href="http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us">www.co.san-diego.ca.us</a> Dept. of Public Works section online road service request	<b>619-667-1450</b>	<b>619-441-1658</b>
<b>LAND USE</b> Zoning violations and other illegal land use	Code Enforcement <b>619-441-4264</b>	Code Enforcement <b>619-667-1177</b>	Code Enforcement <b>619-441-1716</b>
<b>LAW ENFORCEMENT</b>	<b>911 if Emergency</b> or Sheriff Dept. (Lemon Grove) <b>619-337-2000</b>	<b>911 if Emergency</b> or La Mesa Police Department <b>619-667-1400</b>	<b>911 if Emergency</b> or El Cajon Police <b>619-579-3311</b>
<b>ANIMAL SITUATIONS</b> Animal Control	<b>619-236-2341</b>	<b>619-667-1436</b>	<b>619-441-1580</b>
<b>HAZARDOUS MATERIAL DISPOSAL</b>	<b>877-713-2784</b> for guidance & information <b>619-596-5100</b> to make an appt. for disposal	<b>619-287-5696</b> to make an appt. for disposal	<b>619-596-5100</b> to make an appt. for disposal
<b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b> For categories not listed above	<b>858-694-3900</b>	<b>619-436-6611</b>	<b>619-441-1776</b>

## Donors to GMIA

Once again your Board of Directors wishes to express sincere thanks for the many members who provided a donation in addition to their annual dues payment.

These added donations prove most valuable and welcome to ensure that GMIA has sufficient funds to properly inform and advise our members. And in the case of election recommendations, to advise the entire local voting population

regarding candidates for those local offices that have a critical impact on our GMIA community.

The following list recognizes those members who have made an additional donation during the calendar year 2002, data as of September 30, 2002. We sincerely apologize for any errors or omissions. If you will so advise, any noted errors or omissions will be published in the next issue of this newsletter. ■

John & Marilyn Adams	Mr. & Mrs. Paul & Paula Fitch	Mincks
Scott Aishton	Stephen & Lora Folwell	Mr. & Mrs. Jim Moran
Harry & Jean Albers	John & Diana Fox	Dottie Nelson
Ralph Allen	Capt. W. R. Fraser, USN Ret.	Molly R. Nocon
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Red & Lila Benoit	Bob & Amy Hargrove	Richard & Arlene Riley
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*From Our Families to Yours...*

*Wishing you the  
Very Best of Holiday Seasons*

The GMIA Board of Directors