

## A Community Newsletter

from the  
**Grossmont –  
Mt. Helix  
Improvement  
Association**



# viewpoints

December 2003

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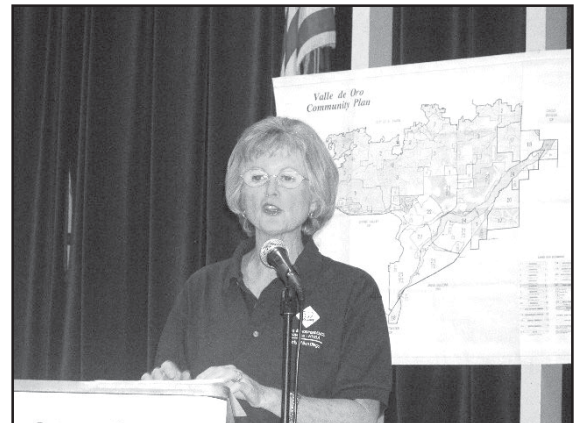


## GMIA's First Community Forum

**T**hank you all who attended! The GMIA Community Forum was held on Oct 18, 2003 at Fuerte Elementary School was a great success, measured both by its informational value and the participation of approximately 130 community members. Based upon this success of the Forum, your GMIA Board of Directors plans to have future forums such as this. Those who did not attend it certainly missed an opportunity to pick up a lot of information on issues and subjects critical to the welfare and lifestyle of our GMIA community.

Speakers representing the major public offices impacting our GMIA area included County Supervisor Dianne Jacob, Pedro Orso-Delgado, District Director of CALTRANS, Gary Gallegos, Executive Director of SANDAG, Lt. Tony Salazar of the San Diego Sheriff's Department, Jack Phillips, Chairman of the Valle de Oro Planning Group, and Erin Drown, the Sheriff's Neighborhood Watch coordinator. A variety of important issues were discussed.

The County Board of Supervisors approved a revision in Policy I63 earlier this year. This amendment changed the processing for requests for General Plan Amendments, under the prior policy, requests for Plan Amendments were taken through public hearing at the planning group level and the Planning Group could appeal decisions made by the County of San Diego to allow a General Plan Amendment. The current policy provides that the Director of the County Department of Land Use makes the initial determination of whether or not a proposed amendment can go forward. The public and the Planning Groups no longer have any right to appeal this initial decision by the County.



*Above, County Supervisor Dianne Jacob.  
Below, members of the GMIA community.*



This has raised a great deal of concern from the public, GMIA, and a number of Planning Groups around the county, including the Valle de Oro Planning Group. Supervisor Jacob said that because of the number of complaints they have received, the process is being closely monitored. It is important to note that only the policy regarding making the threshold decision of whether or not a General Plan Amendment can go forward has changed.

Projects requesting a General Plan Amendment must still go through the entire approval process,

## GROSSMONT - MT. HELIX



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

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## A Letter from the President



*Kristine  
Alessio*

The holidays are upon us and GMIA is continuing efforts to preserve the quality and character of our community. We are very lucky to have our area remain unscathed during the terrible fires that besieged our county in October.

I would like to welcome our newest Board member, Tim Carpenter. Tim is a Mt. Helix resident who has been very active in the community group Mhands. If you are interested in taking a leadership role with GMIA, please do not hesitate to do so. It is the efforts of interested and active community members that keep GMIA a strong force in our region.

There are several issues that face our community and GMIA has been working diligently to address them. Your GMIA Board is working against the high density development of the project known as the "Chicken Ranch" project. GMIA is joined in this endeavor by an extremely committed citizen's group, C3. We are hopeful that when the dust settles, the development of this parcel will be consistent with the rural character of the area. We will continue to update you on the progress of this project through this newsletter.

I am very pleased to report that we have many new and renewing members. Your commitment to GMIA allows us to achieve our mission of protecting and preserving the character of our neighborhood. I wish to thank our Board of Directors for placing their confidence in me to lead GMIA. I will be continuing the GMIA President's tradition of being open to and involved with our members. Should an issue arise that you believe merits GMIA's involvement, please feel free to call me at 619-469-9547, email me at [kckcsasa@cox.net](mailto:kckcsasa@cox.net) or send your concerns in writing to GMIA.

Finally, a special thank you goes out to our former President, Al Platt, who dedicated a tremendous amount of time and resources to GMIA in his tenure as President. GMIA is a stronger and more active organization due to the efforts of Al. If you see him out and about in the community, please give him and handshake and a big "Thank You!"

## Morning Traffic on 94West at I25

As most everyone knows who reads this newsletter, vehicle traffic is a major concern for our GMIA community, particularly the amount of vehicle traffic that is diverting onto our community roadways as a result of a current inadequate freeway infrastructure in our area. In particular, the two still missing permanent connector ramps at the 94/125 interchange (94 west to 125 north, and 125 south to 94 east) have significantly increased the commuter traffic using our community roadways, such as Fuerte Drive, for their commute route during morning and evening rush hours.

When the temporary ramp became operational last year to finally allow 94 westbound traffic ramp-type access to the 125 northbound freeway, most of us thought we would see a significant reduction in the commuter traffic using our secondary community roadways. The perception is that that didn't happen to any degree hoped for. One of the perceived problems was that those commuters who wanted to use this new connector ramp during the morning rush



hour traffic period often found themselves waiting in the regular 94 westbound commuter traffic queue caused by the traffic metering light system at the 94/125 interchange.

Based on random observations and comments from community members, the perception was that this traffic backup condition was somewhat discouraging morning commuter traffic to stay on 94 westbound to use 125 north to get to Interstate 8, and motivated them to continue to use our secondary community roadways for their commute route.

As a result of this perception, GMIA coordinated the formation of an ad hoc

committee to look into the situation and seek solutions to relieve the back up of 94 westbound traffic resulting from operation of the traffic metering light at the 94/125 interchange during the morning rush hour period. The committee, composed of several GMIA directors, community members, and representatives from CALTRANS and the CHP, met several times and CALTRANS performed extensive research and analysis into this perceived traffic issue. The following findings were presented and agreed to at the last meeting of the ad hoc committee on July 17.

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### FINDINGS

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#### Significant Current Use of New 94W/I25N Connector

Current traffic flow measurements indicate that a significant number of vehicles are already using the new 94W/I25N connector ramp during peak traffic hours: about 35% of the 94 westbound vehicles in the vicinity of the new ramp are exiting onto the ramp during the peak period (about 1,080 out of 3,140 vehicles per hour).

#### Relocation of 94 Westbound Traffic Light Metering System Not Feasible

CALTRANS still does not consider it feasible to relocate the 94 westbound traffic metering light system to decrease the time delay at the metering light, for the objective of further motivating drivers to use 94W and the new 94W/I25N connector. The primary constraint against such location is the concern that it would create conflicts with the HOV lane and reduces merge distance.

#### Decrease In Delay Time For 94 Westbound Traffic at I25 Merge.

CALTRANS has already decreased the cycle time between green lights on the 94 westbound traffic metering system, to allow the maximum number of vehicles to pass through the light metering system at peak traffic hours: 2,100 vehicles/hour. This has resulted in reducing the average vehicle delay at the metering light to 5-6 minutes, a reduction of several minutes.

#### Using 94W Proven to Take the Shortest Time to Get to the 94/I25 Merge

Current travel time test runs by CALTRANS indicate that using 94W takes the least amount of time, including the delay at the 94W traffic metering light, for a vehicle to get to the 94W/I25N merge point during peak traffic hours. That path is as short (time-wise) as taking the old route along Campo and getting on the old 125N ramp at Spring Street. It also takes longer for a driver to go from the vicinity of Avocado and 94W to transit on community roads to get to the vicinity of 125N and I8, compared to using 94W and the new 94W/I25N connector.

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### 94W Traffic Beyond 94/125 Merge

Current adjustments to the 94 westbound traffic light metering system and/or current traffic volumes have not seemed to impact the 94 westbound traffic flow beyond the 94/125 merge.

### New 94W/125S Connector

A significant (but unmeasured) amount of 94 westbound traffic is exiting onto the new 125S ramp. Traffic data should be available in early 2004.

### Traffic Advisory Sign To Use 94W

CALTRANS will proceed with a new sign to be erected on 94W just before Avocado, advising that drivers should use 94W to access 125N and I8W. It may take several months to get a permanent sign approved and installed, but an interim temporary sign will be installed (this sign has now been installed).

### Feasibility For Traffic Light Metering Systems on 94W On-Ramps

The feasibility of installing traffic metering light systems on all 94W on-ramps between Avocado and Bancroft was analyzed by CALTRANS. The conclusion

is that metering on-ramp traffic would probably help decrease by 1-2 minutes the average vehicle delay time currently experienced by 94 westbound traffic at the 125 merge. However, this would be an expensive and long term project, costing \$4-5 Million and taking about 5 years to get approved, funded, designed, and constructed. CALTRANS has no current plan to pursue this idea, although it is listed as a potential future project.

### Feasibility Of Special Exit Lane To Use 94W/125N Connector

CALTRANS believes that designing and implementing a special lane for 94 westbound traffic intending to use the 94W/125N transition ramp would be impractical if not impossible, due to the impact of the Bancroft on-ramp traffic.

### Conclusion

As of this stage, it appears that we have reached the best condition possible regarding promoting and facilitating use of the new 94 west to 125 north connector ramp, and we will not pursue any other solutions at this stage. Pending funding and construction of the missing permanent 94/125 ramps, we encourage all

GMIA members to talk to their friends and neighbors to encourage them to use the new 94/125 connector ramp to get from the vicinity of 94 and Avocado to the vicinity of 125 and 8 (and areas north), instead of transiting through our community roadways. ■

## Update on "Chicken Ranch"

The development known as "the Chicken Ranch" has now been submitted as a General Plan Amendment, an Application for Rezone and a Tentative Map (GPA 03-006/R-03-013/TM 5343). Your GMIA Board of Directors continues to oppose this Project as submitted. The Valle De Oro Planning Group voted to deny these applications on November 18, 2003.

It is the belief of your GMIA Board that the Mt. Helix area is very rural in character, especially where this project is proposed. Properties which have been subdivided in the vicinity of the Proposed Project have produced large lot estate residences with horses, small groves of citrus and avocados, and in many cases still access to these homes is via unimproved dirt roads. The proposed project calls for lots that vary in size with some as small as 1/3 of an acre. GMIA also has further concerns regarding the impact of the Proposed Project bringing sewer connections to this area. We believe that by allowing the sewer lines to be brought into this portion of Mt. Helix that the door will be opened for additional lot splits and smaller subdivisions that will completely ruin its rural atmosphere. Additionally, GMIA shares the concerns of other community groups, Mhands and C3, regarding the Project's only access being Fuerte Drive, directly adjacent to Fuerte Elementary School. If you would like more information on the Chicken Ranch development or would like to be advised as to future hearings regarding the same, please contact members of the Valle De Oro Planning Group. If you need assistance in contacting them, please call Kristine Alessio, President, GMIA. ■

## Comparative Traffic Flow Data

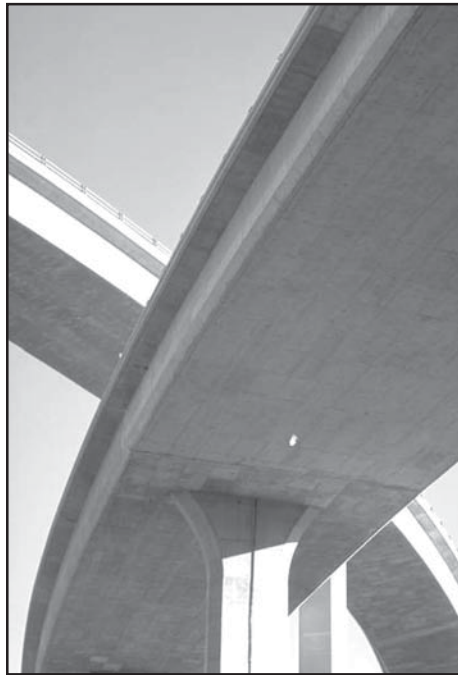
The following analysis was made of old and new traffic volume data, resulting in the following findings (figures represent number of vehicles per day). The figures below tend to demonstrate that there has been increased use of 94W segments east of the 94/125 merge area in the past few years. Additionally, these data indicate that there has been virtually no change in the traffic volume on Fuerte Drive in the last few years.

Roadway/Segment SR94	1997	2002
94W just east of Avocado Blvd.	34,500	49,500
94W just west of Avocado Blvd.	45,000	53,000
94W just west of Sweetwater Springs Blvd.	56,000	62,000
94W before 94/125 merge	71,000	71,000
94W just before 805 merge	167,000	182,000
Secondary/Community Roadways	1997	2001
Avocado Blvd. in vicinity of RSD Village	28,000	30,000
Fuerte Blvd. just west of Avocado	12,000	12,000
Fuerte Blvd. at Lemon Ave.	18,000	18,000
Fuerte Blvd. at Grossmont Blvd.	14,000	14,000

## Funding for Missing 94/125 Connector Ramps

As each reader readily recognizes, there is a severe budget constraint in effect for the State of California. Many, many budget reductions or deletions from the previous year's budget were made to finalize the current approved State Budget. Funding for many critical transportation projects were among the items deleted or reduced in the final State Budget.

One single transportation project is very critical to the welfare and quality of life in our GMIA community: the missing permanent 94/125 connector ramps. These two missing connector ramps (94 west to 125 north, and 125 south to 94 east) have been the cause of serious impact on our community by the resultant increase in commuter traffic using our community roadways to transit between the Rancho San Diego area and the vicinity of the 125/8 interchange area. As reported in previous issues of this newsletter, after many years of any attempt to fund this critical project, \$60 million of the required \$90-120 million required to design and construct the 94/125 missing ramps project was designated last year via the discretionary Transportation Congestion Relief Program (TCRP). CALTRANS immediately started work on the Environmental Phase of the project, using a nominal \$1.5 million fund allocation to finally get the project underway. CALTRANS had been working the Environmental Phase for several months, when the State financial crisis materialized earlier this summer, and all future State funding for transportation projects was placed on hold pending generation and approval of the new State Budget for this year.



The new State Budget has been approved and is being implemented. Fortunately, the TCRP was not eliminated from the current budget, but rather suspended for any current utilization. However, no funding for TCRP projects was provided in the recently approved State Budget, except for those projects in the final completion stage.

Therefore, there is no current funding in the State Budget to support our critical 94/125 ramp project. In anticipation of this situation, earlier this summer GMIA had already coordinated the formation of an ad hoc committee to address funding issues for the critical 94/125 ramp project. This committee is composed of several key officials and/or their staffs who have volunteered to help us with this issue, including County Supervisor Dianne

Jacob, CALTRANS Regional Director Pedro Delgado, SANDAG Executive Director Gary Gallegos, representatives from the offices of State Assemblyman Jay La Suer and State Senator Dennis Hollingsworth, plus two GMIA Directors. The committee has already met twice to develop strategy to seek resolutions and strategies for restoration and allocation of the required funding for to enable the ultimate design and construction of the missing 94/125 permanent connector ramps.

As of now, it appears that we can find enough limited funds from related project work to allow CALTRANS to continue work on the Environmental Phase of the 94/125 ramp project to allow completion of that phase and thus not delay the overall project, pending identification and allocation of the necessary funds to complete the entire project. The committee is working on several strategies to ensure reinstatement of the required 94/125 ramp project funding in the TCRP at the earliest possible time possible in future State Budgets, as well as seeking alternate State and Federal sources of funding for use on this project.

Since all of your GMIA Directors live in the GMIA community, we regret this unfortunate financial development as much or more as do all our GMIA members. However, please be assured that the ad hoc committee will continue to address this issue until it is resolved, and we will keep it as a top GMIA priority. We will also keep all members informed of all developments on this critical situation via subsequent issues of this newsletter, as well as during the upcoming GMIA Community Forum scheduled for October 18. ■



## Please Stop at the New Stop Signs!

Hopefully, most readers have taken notice of the new all-way stop system installed at the intersection of Resmar Road and Grandview Avenue. Due to increased traffic on most of our community secondary roadways, we will probably be seeing a few more of these traffic control systems installed. ■

## Traffic Impact from the New Kaiser Facility

The new, attractive Kaiser Medical Center has been opened for a few months now. If you have not yet driven by this new facility, we would encourage you to do so. In the planning and construction of this new facility, there was concern that the traffic associated with the operation of this added commercial facility in our community might adversely impact the already heavy vehicle traffic on some of our community roads, particularly Louisa Drive. In formulating the traffic control plans for this new facility, the County abandoned any attempt to install a traffic light at Avocado and Louisa, where the main entry/exit on



Avocado for the Kaiser facility parking lot is located. To date, it appears that any significant impact on our community streets caused by this new commercial facility has not materialized. Your GMIA Board will continue to monitor this situation. Related to this overall issue is

the concept of installing a new traffic light system at Avocado and Challenge. At this stage, it appears that there is no program or plan to install a new traffic light system at that location, but that situation will also continue to be monitored. ■

## Brief Answers to Pesky Little Questions

This is a new section designed to provide answers to what your Board perceives to be questions on non-critical issues, but nonetheless bothersome to some of our members.

### ***Can We Change the Name of the Postal Zones in Our Community?***

Newer residents in our GMIA community probably aren't bothered much by this type concern. But for some of the longer term residents, the name of the postal zone assigned to their area is still troublesome. Here are the brief facts on this situation:

- ◆ The U. S. Postal Service has sole responsibility for initial definition of postal code zones and the naming thereof. To that effect, it is a done deal in the case of our GMIA community. The decision to include the southwest part of the Mt. Helix/Grossmont area in the Spring Valley postal zone was based on the Postal Service's analysis of the appropriate size of that and adjacent postal code areas such as La Mesa. Thus, the Spring Valley postal zone encompasses some areas north of SR94, including parts of Casa de Oro. The Postal Service does not entertain proposed changes to existing postal code defined areas or the names already designated therefore.

- ◆ The once existing "Mt. Helix" mailing address is a dead issue. There once was an actual Mt. Helix branch Post Office, just down the street from the Brigantine Restaurant and the new Prudential Real Estate building, but it was closed several years ago. There is no postal code zone

named "Mt. Helix", and there is no current process that could make that a possibility.

### ***Can We Replace Deteriorated Neighborhood Watch Signs?***

As you travel through our local communities, you often observe what appear to be worn out and rusty Neighborhood Watch signs. These are metal signs placed on posts, at many locations in our community. Who buys and maintains such signs is often a question postulated by various members. Here are the key facts about this situation:

- ◆ The San Diego County Sheriff's Department sponsors and promotes the "Neighborhood Watch Program," designed to get community members concerned about helping prevent crime in their neighborhood, joining in with other neighbors to do something about crime, helping form an organized Neighborhood Watch Group for their neighborhood, and then participating in preventing and fighting crime in their neighborhood.

- ◆ Part of the organized efforts of a specific Neighborhood Watch Group is to purchase and post (with Sheriff's Department coordination and approval) signs in their Neighborhood Watch Group area. These are the signs that you see posted throughout our community. Purchase, maintenance and replacement of these signs is the responsibility of the specific Neighborhood Watch Group to which the signs pertain. The Sheriff's Department does not have funds or manpower to purchase, install, and

maintain, or replace these signs. However, your GMIA Board of Directors is looking into the possibility of obtaining the necessary signs and replacing those in need of replacement

- ◆ GMIA recognizes that Neighborhood Watch Groups are a very effective means of helping to prevent and control crime in our community. This program was discussed in detail at the recent GMIA Community Forum, including an on-site Sheriff's representative who provided more information and answered questions for interested attendees. GMIA will continue to foster interest and participation in Neighborhood Watch Groups within our GMIA community.

### ***Who Cleans Up Trash on Our Roadways?***

Several members have contacted GMIA about trash on public streets and requested assistance from the appropriate agency in cleaning it up. Most recently, the intersection of Interstate 8 and Fuerte Drive was an area of concern. Unfortunately, although some of the land involved is maintained by CALTRANS, State budget concerns do not allow for trash removal on a regular basis. GMIA suggests that members with concerns may want to do their own beautification project on this and other areas. Individuals or businesses can "Adopt a Highway" or even an intersection through CALTRANS. Alternatively, there is nothing to prohibit concerned residents from going out on their own with bags and picking up the trash. ■



## Planning and Land Use

### *Enhancing the Appearance of the Casa de Oro Area*

From time to time your GMIA Board receives comments from members and other community members regarding the perceived less than attractive appearance of the overall Casa de Oro area. Most often these comments question if anything can be done to alleviate this situation and what approach is GMIA taking to help resolve this issue. Please be advised that your Board is very sensitive to this perceived issue, and fully supports programs and objectives designed to enhance the appearance of the overall Casa de Oro area.



appropriate), and fully enforce code enforcement for all zoning violations throughout our community and the Casa de Oro area in particular. A GMIA committee recently conducted a complete survey of the Casa de Oro commercial area, resulting in eighteen sites observed with code violations being photographed, and documented.

The results of this latest physical survey were submitted as a special report to the County Code Enforcement office requesting immediate action to step up to their responsibility for ensuring proper and timely code

There are several programs and actions in progress with the objective of aiding in the "sprucing up" of one or more sections of Casa de Oro:

#### **North Bonita Street**

The North Bonita Street Improvement project is going to begin in October 2003. Thanks to \$450,000 in approved funding for the project, concrete sidewalks, curbs, and cutters on the west side of North Bonita will go in. The street will be widened, and crushed granite sidewalks will be put in on the east side of the street. The improvements begin at San Juan Street and end at Sierra Madre. The project is scheduled to take until April 2004. The VDO Planning Group, with full support of your GMIA Board, is pursuing the approval and implementation of similar type improvement and upgrade programs for the Casa de Oro area in future years.

#### **Code Enforcement**

One of the conditions that further distracts from the general appearance of the Casa de Oro area is the condition wherein multiple violations of zoning ordinances can be observed most any time, but seldom seem to be enforced for correction. This is particularly obvious throughout the commercial sections of that community, but includes violations in residential areas such as the converted former fire station. Your GMIA Board has often pursued proper code enforcement to resolve this thorny issue, but that solution has proven to be most often elusive in our past experience. To that end, the GMIA Board has initiated a new focus on this issue and is now aggressively pursuing an action plan with the objective to finally get the County to check on, ensure proper correction of (including fines as

enforcement in our community. Both Supervisor Jacob and Tim Drum, Code Enforcement Officer, responded immediately to GMIA's concerns. As soon as County personnel is available (there is a delay as to urgent code enforcement issues because of the Cedar fire), a walk through by County Code Enforcement will begin in the Casa De Oro area starting with Campo Road. GMIA also plans to schedule a face to face meeting with Code Enforcement officials to discuss this situation further.

Once again, we remind all members that it is GMIA policy that community members have the primary responsibility for observing and reporting all perceived code violations to the County (see list of telephone contacts elsewhere in this newsletter). If the County fails to enforce

## LAND USE, continued from previous page

Board would appreciate an advisement to that effect. We feel that all of us working together can make a difference in maintaining an enhanced appearance of our community, including that of the Casa de Oro area.

### Estrella Park Project

Currently there is no developed park for use by residents within the Casa de Oro area. The large parcel (about 7 acres) of vacant land located between Estrella Drive and the playground area of Santa Sophia Church, is in actuality a County park, identified as Estrella Park. Since acquisition of this park land in the 70's there has been no attempt by the County to improve this park and make it suitable for public use. Thus, it still remains as a barren piece of land in our residential community. Some of you may recall that a few years ago a special committee was formed to see if that County park could be developed for use as an active sports type park with playing fields, etc. That concept was never implemented due to community opposition to the active sports park concept. However, as previously reported in this newsletter, there is new interest and community support to beautify and improve the undeveloped Estrella Park to enhance its appearance and make it available for public use.

This objective is being spearheaded by the relatively new Estrella Park Steering Committee, chaired by Joan Tweed and composed by of community representatives and other interested parties including GMIA. Under this project, Estrella Park will be improved for use as a "passive park" and not an active sports complex type facility. However, it will become a more beautiful asset for our community and will be available for use by all community residents. The efforts of this committee are focused on accomplishment of the Estrella Park Beautification and Improvement Project under the following Mission Statement:

"The mission of the Estrella Park Beautification and Improvement Project is to revitalize, improve, and beautify the existing park space known as Estrella Park, so that its appearance fits with the overall quality of the Grossmont/Mt. Helix area and it is usable and enjoyable by all residents in the vicinity."

Your GMIA Board is fully supportive of this effort to improve Estrella Park and thus enhance the overall appearance of the Casa de Oro area and our community in general. Your general support for this project is sincerely appreciated. Please call Joan Tweed if you would like to share any ideas or concepts for the Estrella Park Beautification and Improvement Project: 660-9926.



### 94 Landscaping Project

This project has been described before in previous issues of the GMIA newsletter, so we won't repeat all the details in this issue. Just be aware that such a project is underway and it should significantly enhance the appearance and beautify a section of a freeway that borders our GMIA community and the Casa de Oro area. This project, being promoted by our County Supervisor Dianne Jacob, proposes to landscape and beautify the section of the 94 freeway that runs along the south side of Casa de Oro. Specifically, the freeway/street intersections of Kenwood Drive, Sweetwater Springs Blvd, and Avocado Blvd. will be professionally landscaped under this project along with the median areas in between. There is now, and will be more, opportunity for individual, organizational, and community input and work on this beautification project. If you would like to volunteer to help on this project, please call Ginny March who is acting Chairperson of the ad hoc 94 Landscape Project Committee: 469-8465. ■

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>



# Happenings...In and Around Our Community

## *Update on Mt. Helix Park*

A few questions to some of our Directors indicate that some of our GMIA (and other) community members are not aware of the status of several issues and developments regarding Mt. Helix Park. Therefore, we will briefly highlight a few things about Mt. Helix Park in this issue.

### **Legal Issues**

***Musicals on Mt. Helix:*** The lawsuit filed by a small number of residents in the Mt. Helix Community in an attempt to stop the CCT summer musicals at Mt. Helix Amphitheater was settled over a year ago with complete finality, including prohibition of the plaintiffs to file any subsequent legal claim. The settlement did not in any way alter the ability of Mt. Helix Park to be used for CCT shows, or the ability of the Mt. Helix Park Foundation (current Trustee of the Park) to continue to allow use of the Park for public enjoyment of arts, drama, and music in consonance with the objective of the Yawkey Trust that dedicated the Park for public use and enjoyment back in 1929.

***Preservation of the Cross:*** The lawsuit filed by an avowed atheist, and backed by the ACLU, was settled back in 1999, and there is no longer any active or perceived threat to remove the Cross from Mt. Helix. This situation is different than that being experienced in the case of Mt. Soledad, since Mt. Soledad Park is owned and operated by a governmental entity, the City of San Diego. Conversely, Mt. Helix Park consists of non-governmental land that was placed in the private Yawkey Trust back in 1929 and dedicated for public use and enjoyment. With replacement of San Diego County as the original Trustee by the Mt. Helix Park Foundation as the Successor Trustee, there is no longer any connection of the Park with a governmental agency, and thus the perceived conflict of “church and state” is a non-issue.

***Other legal issues:*** There is still one small legal claim involving an easement across the lower parking lot, with the initial Court Ruling under Appeal by the Foundation. The Foundation expects to prevail in this legal action resulting in the elimination of claimed easement across the private Yawkey Trust property which would cause loss of some of the intended area for parking by attendees to events at Mt. Helix Park.

### **Other Developments**

**Parking along Mt. Helix Drive inside the Park:** In case some of you have not noticed, or for those of you who have noticed, the County has installed an anti-parking post and chain barrier inside the Park along the section of Mt. Helix Drive that runs along the

southwest side of the Park. This was done in consonance with a law enforcement recommendation, and has proven to be a significant deterrent to the parking of vehicles alongside the roadway in that area. That parking area has long been designated a no- parking area, but had become quite a “hangout” and attracted many illegally parked vehicles of miscreants bent on illegal and bad behavior. The anti-parking barrier along with placement of the fire lane red striping designation allowed law enforcement to strictly enforce the no parking constraint and issue parking violation citations that carry very stiff fines. We hope that this parking violation condition has been finally resolved. Community members and visitors are still able to take in the magnificent view from the southwest section of Mt. Helix Drive by parking in the small parking lot adjacent to the south entrance to the amphitheater, and then walk alongside the rock wall to take in the view.

***Lower Parking Lot:*** In case you are not aware, the large vacant lot at the corner of Vivera Drive and Mt. Helix Drive is part of the Mt. Helix Park Property. In setting up Mt. Helix Park at the top of the mountain for public use, the Yawkey’s had the foresight to purchase an additional 3+ acre parcel on the lower part of the mountain, to serve as a parking area for vehicles of attendees to events at the Park. Those of you who have attended events at Mt. Helix Park, such as Easter Sunrise Services and CCT musicals, have undoubtedly parked your vehicle in that lot. Unfortunately, during their tenure as Trustee of Mt. Helix Park, the County did not control use of or parking on that private Trust property. The Mt. Helix Park Foundation now has a project to beautify, preserve, and restrict use of the lower Mt. Helix Park parking lot for its intended use, i.e., parking for events at Mt. Helix Park. To that end, a new fence around the largest parcel of the lower parking lot should be observable by the time you read this newsletter. This fence will serve to delineate the Park Property boundaries, and the associated locked gate system will restrict use of the parking lot to vehicles of attendees for events at the Park. Additionally, the County will no longer dump road material on the property, and trash trucks will no longer be able to use it as a shortcut to pick up residential trash. Ultimately, the Foundation will also place a fence around most of the parking lot segment on the north side of Vivera Drive and accomplish a landscape and beautification project for the entire parking lot. These combined actions should enhance the overall appearance of the parking lot area and make it more in context with the appearance of the surrounding premium residential community. ■

*Best Wishes for Health & Prosperity in the New Year  
from your GMIA Board*

## FORUM, continued from page 1

with appearances before the Planning Groups, Planning and Environmental Review Board (PERB), Planning Commission and full Board of Supervisors to obtain final approval.

In our GMIA area, the test case of the revised I63 is the Chicken Ranch proposal. Supervisor Jacobs stressed that it will be a long process, likely two years. Developers have not yet submitted their plan amendment, but only been granted permission to proceed with a submission for a General Plan change, and that public input needs to be focused when the appropriate stage of the process is reached.

Lt. Salazar said that residential crime has gradually increased over the last three years, since a low point in 1999-2000. The Sheriff's Department is fighting this in several ways, including extra patrols in marked and unmarked cars, regular, warranted searches of Probationer's homes, and Community flyers as needed. Residential crime is often a crime of opportunity. We can lessen the opportunity by locking doors, landscaping to allow clear views of our house from the street, providing outdoor lighting at night, limiting the size of pet doors so that a person cannot pass through them, and participating in Neighborhood Watch programs. Erin Drown coordinates the Neighborhood Watch Program for our community and can be contacted at 619-337-2037 for

further information about this very worthwhile program designed to help curb crime in neighborhoods. Good news for those who do not want cell sites in their neighborhoods. A new ordinance now requires a Major Use Permit for new cell phone sites. This ordinance also states that they should not be sited in residential areas. Previous applications are not included, unless they received an Environmental Impact Report. In accordance with the Major Use Permit procedure, the County will send notices to residents living within 300 feet of any proposed cell site project.

The current State Budget crisis has eliminated all of the funding previously designated for accomplishment of the 94/125 Ramp Project (to provide the two missing permanent ramps required at that interchange). That major project has an ultimate price tag of \$90-120 million, depending on selection of the final design to be used. Work on the current Environmental Phase of the critical 94/125 Ramp Project is being continued by use of limited funding made available through the efforts of SANDAG and CALTRANS. Hopefully, continued progress on the Environmental Phase while restoration of



Panel (l. to r.) Jack Phillips, Erin Drown, Tony Salazar, Moderator Al Platt, Dianne Jacob, Gary Gallegos and Pedro Orso-Delgado.

the funding for the entire project is being pursued, will preclude any delay in the previously planned completion date of the entire project. Restoration of funding for this critical freeway project is being worked on by CALTRANS and SANDAG supported by GMIA and the County.

Supervisor Jacob informed the community that the West Nile Virus is here. We must diligently remove all possible standing water, such as plant trays, old cans and tires, etc. Mosquitoes can breed in as little as a teaspoon of standing water. The virus is a health threat to people and to animals. For more information on the West Nile Virus and its symptoms and how to prevent is, please visit the County of San Diego's website at [www.cosd.ca.gov](http://www.cosd.ca.gov).

In addition to the scheduled presentations and a question and answer period, tables around the room made further information available about Neighborhood Watch and how to protect your home, West Nile prevention, the Jacob Journal, and the C3 organization. ■

## Calendar of Events

### 2004

**Sunday, April 11, 6:30 a.m.**  
Easter Sunrise Service  
Mt. Helix Park

Shuttle starts at 5:30 a.m.  
Pastries and beverages served starting 5:45 a.m.  
Sponsoring church to be announced

**Sunday, May 2, Noon to 4 p.m.**  
GMIA Annual Art & Garden Tour

A detailed announcement will be mailed to all GMIA members  
Sponsor: GMIA

**Monday, May 10, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.**  
GMIA Annual Dinner Meeting  
La Mesa Community Center

Sponsor: GMIA  
Dinner is served at 6:00 p.m.  
Reservation form will be mailed to all GMIA members

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

## Thanks to Our Donors

Members often make donations to support the operations and functions of GMIA, in addition to paying their annual dues. Your GMIA Board appreciates these financial gestures and periodically recognizes these donors in this newsletter. Below are the names of the most recent donors since the publication of the last list of donors. Again many thanks from your GMIA Board of Directors.

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### About GMIA ... And What We Do

**T**he Grossmont- Mt. Helix Improvement Association (GMIA) is the oldest and largest association of its type in San Diego County, if not the entire State of California. It was formed in 1938 as a result of community concern for the lack of adequate land use planning and zoning type requirements. It is a non-profit public benefit corporation that represents thousands of families residing in single family residences in the large unincorporated area of the County that is east of the city of La Mesa, south of the city of El Cajon and generally north of SR94. The GMIA membership area consists of over 5,000 single-family owner occupied residences with a population approximating 20,000 people.

The primary mission of GMIA is to work on behalf of all GMIA community members to ensure that the quality and character of our community is preserved and enhanced. Unlike a typical "homeowners association," GMIA does not



own any property or facilities, nor is it responsible for any property maintenance. GMIA is served by an elected, unpaid Board of Directors and has no paid officers or employees. The GMIA Board works with County and regional governmental entities to help resolve issues that impact our community such as transportation systems, traffic control, planning and land use, zoning, code enforcement, as well as crime prevention and law enforcement.

GMIA invites and encourages all residents in our membership area to become active members and to support the efforts of the GMIA Board to preserve and enhance the character and lifestyle that are currently enjoyed in our wonderful community.

For more information on GMIA, please visit our website at [www.GMIA.net](http://www.GMIA.net) ■