

The Week That Was^{TW2}

November 6 – November 9, 2023



1. Annual Laguna Canyon Creek Clearing Work Completed

On Friday, November 3, the City's contractor completed the annual Laguna Canyon Creek Clearing project, which included removal of 120 cubic yards of overgrown vegetation, weeds, invasive plants, and other debris from select portions of Laguna Canyon Creek between El Toro Road and the Laguna Beach Dog Park. This work is performed annually prior to the rainy season and helps mitigate the potential for flooding associated with the creek. The work was overseen by City Arborist Matthew Barker.

2. Annual Tree Pruning Cycle Underway

The City's tree maintenance contractor, West Coast Arborists, has begun the annual tree pruning cycle to inspect and prune approximately 2,000 public trees. This year's cycle includes public trees located in the downtown area and trees located north of Park Avenue. This work is being overseen by City Arborist Matthew Barker.

3. Semi-Annual Downtown Sidewalk Inspection and Maintenance Program Underway

This week, Public Works staff began inspecting sidewalks in the downtown area to identify lifted, depressed, or damaged sidewalk panels in need of repair. Deficiencies are generally corrected by City maintenance staff for minor repairs such as grinding or small panel replacements, with assistance from one of the City's on-call contractors for larger repairs that get identified. The inspection and repair work are expected to occur over the next 3-4 weeks and is overseen by Maintenance Supervisor Todd Henry.

4. SCWD Water Reservoir Replacement

This week, the South Coast Water District (SCWD) began construction of a water reservoir above Ceanothus Drive in the Coast Royale area. The \$8.7 million Reservoir 2B Replacement Project includes replacing a 100,000-gallon water tank built in 1946 with two new 100,000-gallon tanks. The project helps SCWD achieve its goal of supporting wildfire mitigation efforts by doubling the storage capacity within a critical water pressure zone for wildfire response. Construction is estimated to be completed by Summer 2025. For additional information, please visit SCWD's project web page: [South Coast Water District, CA \(scwd.org\)](https://www.scwd.org).

5. Utility Underground Assessment Deferment Loan Program

With the upcoming Woods Cove Assessment District vote scheduled for December 12, the City has received a lot of interest in the Utility Underground Assessment Deferment Loan Program. Proposed revisions to the loan program are scheduled to be presented to the City Council on November 21. The proposed revisions include lowering the age limit

requirement and raising the income qualifications. The revisions are intended to make the program available to a greater number of residents. The draft agenda report for this item is now posted on the City website and can be accessed by [clicking here](#). Questions regarding the loan program can be addressed to Project Manager, Pierre Sawaya at psawaya@lagunabeachcity.net or 949-497-0751. Additional information regarding the Woods Cove Undergrounding can be found on the City Website by [clicking here](#).

6. Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Open House November 14, 6 p.m. to 8 a.m.

The public is invited to participate in an open house on November 14 dedicated to the City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. The open house will include a brief project overview followed by an interactive breakout session. During the interactive session, participants are invited to offer their comments on the preliminary findings in the report and share their thoughts on how the City should prioritize its response to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and its preparedness for natural disasters associated with climate change. Comments received during the open house will help shape the final report, which will be presented to the City Council in the fall of 2024.

The event will take place at the Laguna Beach Susi Q and Community Center from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on November 14.

7. Open Space and Conservation Element Update

This week, Community Development Director Marc Wiener spoke to the Coastal Greenbelt Authority about the update to the City's Open Space and Conservation Element (OSCE). The OSCE is one of the elements of the general plan and provides policy direction on the future preservation and maintenance of the open space areas in the City, including watercourses. The Community Development Department is soliciting proposals for a biological assessment, which will likely occur this spring and will inform the OSCE update.

8. Outdoor Dining Program/Lower Forest Promenade

On Tuesday, the City Council approved a 2-year extension of the outdoor dining and parklet program. The extension applies to outdoor dining on private property and public property outside of the Promenade. Staff is contacting restaurant permit holders to learn if they want to renew their respective Temporary Use Permits (TUPs). Separately, consideration of a 3-year extension of Lower Forest Promenade street closure is scheduled for the November 15 Planning Commission meeting.

9. Surfers Awareness in Life Saving Techniques Class

On Thursday, the Marine Safety Department provided its Surfers Awareness in Life Saving Techniques (S.A.L.T.) class to the Laguna Beach High School Surf Team. The course teaches surfers and bodyboarders how to recognize, react, and respond to emergencies in the ocean. S.A.L.T. is targeted toward groups and individuals who frequent the beach. Please contact Marine Safety Captain Kai Bond at kbond@lagunabeachcity.net for more information about the S.A.L.T. program.

10. Police Patrol Activity

Officers continue to conduct patrol checks for the Chabad Center and vicinity.

On Friday, 11/03, Corporal McGuire located a stolen U-Haul van traveling northbound into Newport Beach. A traffic stop was conducted, and the lone occupant was arrested.

On Sunday, 11/05, officers conducted an area search for a tan Chevy with an Indiana license plate regarding a critically missing 15-year-old female juvenile. Officers located the vehicle at Cress Street and South Coast Highway. Officers attempted to initiate a vehicle enforcement stop, however the male driver fled in the vehicle. A short pursuit entailed throughout the downtown area of Laguna Beach and then proceeded northbound onto North Coast Highway. Laguna Beach officers canceled the pursuit once it entered high speeds toward Newport Beach to avoid an accident. The vehicle was later located by California Highway Patrol (CHP) on I-5 northbound, and a second pursuit ensued in and out of several Los Angeles County Cities. The pursuit was captured on multiple news channels as the vehicle continued to evade officers. Whittier Police Department (WPD) finally got the vehicle stopped and arrested the male driver, who fled the vehicle on foot before being apprehended by WPD officers. The male driver was in possession of a firearm at the time of his arrest. The 15-year-old juvenile was returned to Laguna Beach Police Department until she could be reunited with her mother.

On Tuesday, 11/07, Officers Brooks and Parrino conducted a traffic stop near Emerald Bay and SR-1. The driver took an extended time to stop his vehicle. Upon being requested to exit his vehicle, the driver stated he had a firearm. The driver was arrested for possession of a loaded firearm, open container of alcohol, and illegal fireworks.

On Wednesday, 11/08, Park Rangers conducted a pedestrian stop on a subject near the dog park on Laguna Canyon Road. A records check revealed the subject was on probation and was in possession of drug paraphernalia. OC Probation was contacted, and a hold was placed on him. He was taken into custody without incident and transported to Orange County Jail.

11. Neighborhood Enhancement Team (NET)

Homeless Liaison Officer (HLO) Section

- The HLO has been conducting mental health follow ups with our representative from the Orange County Mental Health Agency.
- The HLO is continuing to work closely with Be Well.

Traffic Section

- The Traffic Section officers are working on gathering data from areas that have been identified as traffic related community concerns and conducting the necessary enforcement.

Park Ranger Section

- The Park Rangers are assisting with the upcoming annual Dirt Fondo mountain bike ride. Additionally, Park Ranger Kirk-Johnson will once again represent the Laguna Beach Police Department by riding in the event. The event is on Saturday, November 11.
- The Parking Services Section is moving forward with the purchase of the mobile ALPR system for the new PSO truck.

Community Services Officer (CSO) Section

- Community Outreach Services Officer Rice is working on a community education project related to some recent vehicle burglaries. She will be working with residents as well as posting on our social media platforms.

Animal Services Announcement

- In celebration of Veterans Day, and in gratitude for the service provided by our country's veterans, we are proud to announce our new Pets for Vets no-cost adoption program at the Laguna Beach Animal Shelter. Any active-duty military, honorably discharged, and retired veterans residing in Orange County will be eligible to adopt a pet from the Laguna Beach Animal Shelter at no cost. The potential adoptee will still have to apply and be approved to adopt a pet. This new no-cost adoption program for active-duty military and retired veterans is permanent. If anyone has any questions, they may call the Laguna Beach Animal Shelter at (949) 497-3552.

Community Events

- The Laguna Beach Police Department, along with the other City Departments, is once again participating in Grow & Give during the month of November as a way to raise awareness and collect donations for prostate cancer research. You will see employees growing beards for the month of November.

The primary objective of Grow & Give is to bring awareness to those effected by prostate cancer. All funds raised this November go directly towards patient support programs, research for new treatments and better diagnostics, and awareness outreach.

To donate follow the [link here](#).

Technology Updates

- This week the Police Department began deploying new Mobile Data Computers (MDCs) to the fleet of vehicles. This will update our fleet with the newest technology and increased technological capabilities. Each vehicle will be set up in the same manner for ease of use and portability for employees so they can remain in the field to complete reports and handle other administrative tasks.
- This week Dispatch began training on a new Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) system called "Flock". The Police Department is deploying three Flock devices to increase the ability to pinpoint wanted vehicles. In the next week or two field employees will receive the training so they can use this tool to locate stolen vehicles, missing person vehicles, and many other types of vehicle alerts for vehicles. These devices are solar powered so there is no need to tap into a power supply, which allows more options for mounting and deployment locations. Officers will also have a cell phone application that puts the information in their hands, increasing situational awareness and access to the database.

Police Personnel Updates

- Lateral police Officer Andrew Lopez successfully completed his Field Training Program early and is now a solo officer. Andrew joined us from the Signal Hill Police Department with eight years of experience. He left as a Detective.
- Lateral police Officer Brendan Rowland started at as new officer. Officer Rowland joined us from the Chino Police Department with eight years of experience. He left as a Corporal and K-9 Officer.
- Park Ranger Jaegar Zenk started as our newest Park Ranger. Seven of our eight positions are now filled with one person in background.

12. Forest Lane Trash Enclosure

The City's contractor, SDC Engineering, Inc., is constructing a Forest Lane Trash Enclosure. Construction is scheduled to take 6 weeks and be completed by mid-December, weather permitting. Construction activities will impact access through Lot 4 downtown. Work will occur Monday through Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., excluding City holidays. The trash enclosure is designed to consolidate trash and recycling from adjacent businesses along Forest Avenue that currently place their numerous receptacles along the Forest Lane alley, which will streamline collection services while also improving aesthetics.

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14. Outdoor Dining Program/Lower Forest Promenade

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15. Parking and Transportation Demand Management Report Update

The Parking and Transportation Demand Management Report, adopted by the City Council in July, includes a request for a semi-annual progress report on the implementation of the short-term strategies and information on parking revenue, parking occupancy, economic activity, and trolley and microtransit usage. Staff has been meeting regularly to coordinate the implementation of these strategies and meeting target implementation dates. The item is tentatively scheduled to be presented to the City Council at the February 27 meeting.

16. City Manager Recruitment

The City Council is recruiting for City Manager through December 4, 2023. Interested candidates may apply by [clicking here](#).

17. Upcoming Notable Community Events (of which staff is aware)

- **Saturday, November 11:** World Kindness Day Celebration from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Main Beach Cobblestones
- **Saturday, November 11:** VFW Veteran's Day Celebration at 11:00 a.m. at Monument Point in Heisler Park
- **Tuesday, November 14:** Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Open House from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Community and Susi Q Center
- **Friday, November 17:** Sawdust Winter Fantasy from 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. (open each Friday, Saturday, and Sunday through December 17)
- **Friday, December 1:** Hospitality Night from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Downtown Laguna Beach

Sean Joyce

Interim City Manager