

The Week That Was^{TW2}

April 15 – 18, 2024



1. Public Works Repairs Lifted Sidewalk and Bricks Along Cliff Drive

This week, the Street Maintenance Division of the Public Works & Utilities Department repaired a damaged portion of the sidewalk along Cliff Drive near Jahraus Park. The existing sidewalk panels were significantly lifted by private tree roots, and the adjacent brick parkway had several broken, damaged, or missing bricks. The work was coordinated by Maintenance Supervisor Todd Henry and performed by division staff members Ray Nieto, Elias Campos, Jose Torres, and Jose Cortez.

2. City Councilmembers and Staff Tour the Coastal Treatment Plant

On Wednesday, April 17, Councilmember Bob Whalen and Mayor Pro Tem Alex Rounaghi, along with Acting City Manager Gavin Curran and Director of Public Works & Utilities Mark McAvoy, toured the Coastal Treatment Plant. Located near the County of Orange Aliso & Wood Canyon Wilderness Park, the plant is operated by the South Orange County Wastewater Authority (SOCWA) and serves the City of Laguna Beach, Emerald Bay Service District, and South Coast Water District. The tour was led by SOCWA staff, including Jim Burror, Director of Operations / Acting General Manager; and James Jones, Chief Plant Operator. The tour included a briefing on the history of the plant, current operations, ongoing maintenance, near-term capital projects to maintain and/or improve operations, future capital needs, opportunities for increased recycling or reuse of treated wastewater within the region, and a robust Q&A discussion.

3. Fleet Maintenance Division Repairs Damaged Water Tank for Wastewater Division Vehicle

This week, the Fleet Maintenance Division of the Public Works & Utilities Department performed an emergency repair of a damaged water tank on a sewer maintenance jetter truck. The truck's mounted aluminum water tank and hose connections were recently damaged, requiring specialized welding repairs to put the vehicle back in service. Within the same day, Senior Equipment Mechanic Pat Nicholl was able to fabricate an aluminum patch, weld and seal off any damaged areas of the tank, and replace the damaged hose connections. The repaired sewer maintenance truck was put back into service by the end of the same day.

4. Laguna Canyon Road: Protect and Connect

This week, the Laguna Canyon Road: Protect and Connect design team held multiple public engagement meetings with the Visit Laguna Board, several environmental agencies, and representatives of local environmental advocacy groups. The participants were given an overall project update as well as an opportunity to provide input on the project to the design team. The outreach efforts will continue over the next several weeks with small pop-up events around the community and door-to-door outreach along the project corridor. In addition, a Community Outreach Workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, May 7, from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM at the Laguna Beach Community and Susi Q Center. For questions related to the Laguna Canyon Road: Protect and Connect project, please visit the project website

at lagunabeachcity.net/LCR or contact Assistant Director of Public Works, Tom Perez at 949-464-6688 or tperez@lagunabeachcity.net.

5. Housing Interest List

The City now has a housing interest list! Community members and others can sign up for housing-related updates, affordable housing projects, and fair housing announcements. The list implements Housing Element Program 5.2-11 and there are 84 subscribers. [Click here to sign up.](#)

6. Planning Commission Updates

The Planning Commission held its regular meeting on April 17, 2024. Below is a summary of the items considered:

- **Hotel Laguna – Exterior Modifications:** The Planning Commission, at the request of the applicant, continued consideration of this item to allow additional time to prepare the project documents. The public hearing was continued to the May 15, 2024, Planning Commission meeting.
- **Zoning Ordinance Amendment 24-0519 and Local Coastal Program Amendment 24-0520:** The Planning Commission considered an Ordinance Amendment and a Local Coastal Program Amendment to allow the Community Development Director or their designee (i.e., the Cultural Arts Manager) to review and approve or deny artist occupancy permit applications within fourteen days of receiving a complete application from the applicant. The amendment will expedite the artist occupancy permit application review process. The Commission reviewed the project and the CEQA Notice of Exemption and, after deliberation, voted to recommend that the City Council adopt the ordinance.
- **Commercial Design Guidelines:** The Planning Commission received a presentation and progress report from staff on the development of the Commercial Design Guidelines. The Planning Commission's comments and direction will be incorporated into the first full draft of the Commercial Design Guidelines for review by the Commission at a future hearing. The guidelines would assist with the design review process by clarifying and expanding upon the design review criteria within the context of a nonresidential or mixed-use project. The Commission provided comments and suggested revisions to the draft study. No action was required.

7. Police Department Reports

Patrol Activity:

- At 12:18 PM, officers were dispatched to a possible assault outside the library, 363 Glenneyre. The suspect fled on foot and was followed by a resident to the Mobil Station. Officers detained the suspect who was later arrested for assault with a deadly weapon, various drug charges, and elder abuse. The victim (77 years old) was taken to Mission Hospital, Mission Viejo, for a head injury.
- At 3:52 PM, officers responded to a traffic collision in the 1200 block of Temple Hills Drive. A driver crashed their car into a residence. No injuries were reported.
- On Thursday, April 11, at 12:47 AM, officers conducted a traffic stop on N. Coast Hwy at Emerald Bay. The driver was arrested for DUI.

- At 3:56 PM, an employee at Mobil reported a customer broke a gas pump and fled the scene. During the investigation, it was determined the driver left with the hose still in the car and it broke. The driver tried to return the hose, but panicked and left the area. Officers located the vehicle and conducted a traffic stop at Reef Point. All parties were counseled over the civil issue.
- At 5:16 PM, officers were dispatched to a report of a grand theft (\$3,000) which occurred last week at a restaurant on Forest Avenue. Officers recognized the suspect in the surveillance video and last located the suspect on Main Beach. The subject was arrested.
- On Saturday, April 13, at 5:58 AM, officers responded to a traffic collision at the bottom of Third Street. A vehicle going up the hill lost traction and was unable to continue up the steep hill. The vehicle rolled back, lost control, and collided with a building. When officers arrived, 10 juveniles were standing around the car. It was discovered all the juveniles were in the vehicle and it is believed the car lacked the power to continue up the hill, causing the car to roll backward down the hill. No injuries were sustained, and no damage to the building.
- At 10:03 AM, officers arrested a sex registrant at the front counter of the station for being out of registration compliance.
- At 4:09 PM, officers were dispatched to 31600 Coast Hwy. for a suspicious subject. Officers contacted a known subject, and he was arrested for an outstanding warrant.
- At 5:55 PM, officers responded to 400 Park for a possible domestic violence incident occurring inside a vehicle. Officers located the vehicle and, after an investigation, arrested both the male and female for domestic violence and DUI.
- At 6:59 PM, officers responded to CVS for a petty theft. A subject removed miscellaneous items from a display and left without paying. The store provided the vehicle description, but officers were unable to locate it.
- At 11:45 PM, officers conducted a traffic stop in the 200 block of N. Coast Hwy. Inside the vehicle were numerous open alcohol containers. One of the occupants was an extremely intoxicated female juvenile. Laguna Beach Fire responded to assess her, while her mother was contacted. The mother picked her up at the hospital. Another occupant was arrested for an active warrant and others were given citations for alcohol-related issues and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. Another 16-year-old minor was taken to the station and later picked up by her father.
- On Sunday, April 14, at 1:37 AM, officers responded to Jack in the Box, 1201 S. Coast Hwy., for a physical fight. The subjects were detained, and one known subject was arrested for possession of stolen property. The property was related to a commercial burglary in which he is a suspect.
- On Tuesday, April 16, the combined Newport Beach/Laguna Beach SWAT team responded to a home invasion robbery in Newport Coast involving shots fired. Once the home was secured, it was turned over to Newport Beach Detectives for investigation.

- At 3:27 PM, a caller reported her computer had been hacked and given her a phone number to call. The victim called the number and was instructed to pay the “FBI” \$60,000 in cash. The victim withdrew the money and contacted the police department to inquire about the issue. They were advised it was fraud and the victim was afraid the unknown suspect was headed to the victim’s house. The investigation is ongoing.
- On Wednesday, April 17, at 2:01 AM, an officer conducted a traffic stop in the 21000 block of Laguna Canyon Road. After a search of the vehicle, the subject was arrested for various drug charges. The subject was on probation in Los Angeles County. Los Angeles County Probation no longer violates probationers for out-of-county arrests, therefore a probation hold was not obtained.

Homeless Liaison Officer (HLO) Section

- Completed a Project Homecoming for an individual who returned to New Jersey.
- Updating trespass letters with downtown businesses.

Traffic Section

- The new motor officer started the pre-academy before the Basic Motor Academy course in May.
- Traffic officers attended many different traffic-related training courses throughout the county.

Park Ranger Section

- Park Rangers are attending ATV riders training this weekend.

Parking Services Section

- Working with HR to hire new PSO/AI and part-time PSOs.

Community Services Officer (CSO) Section

- The CSO is continuing to plan the Road Safety Expo that is scheduled for Sunday, May 19.

8. Upcoming Event

Memorial Paddle Out

On Saturday, April 20, 2024, a memorial paddle out will be held for fallen Orange County Fire Authority Captain Robin Culp. The paddle out will occur at Brooks Street Beach at 6 p.m. following an 11 a.m. service and reception in Capo Beach. All are welcome to attend. Additional details about the event are listed on the flyer below.

Gavin Curran
Acting City Manager