



# From the City Manager's Desk

a weekly report from Scott Ochoa, City of Monrovia



September 14, 2007

## ***Food Wine & Jazz Festival a Success!***

Please scroll down to the Community Services Happenings section of this report to read more about last Sunday's Food Wine & Jazz Festival in Library Park. A great time was had by all, and \$20,000 was raised for the Monrovia Public Library Foundation. Special thanks to Penny Arroyo and April Soash and their team for putting together such a great event.

### **League of California Cities Conference**

Last week, Councilman Joe Garcia, City Clerk Linda Proctor and I attended the annual League of California Cities Conference in Sacramento. From Mr. Garcia's position as Vice-President of the Los Angeles County Division, he was able to help set the direction of the League for the coming year. We attended quite a number of sessions on the upcoming notice of funding availability (or NOFAs, in government-speak) for the infrastructure bonds, particularly the transit-oriented development bonds.

We will have an uphill battle in getting Monrovia's fair-share of these resources, as the City of LA is already making a major play for the bulk of the funding. However, I do believe that the staffers at the State Department of Housing & Community Development – who visited Monrovia last year at the City Council's invitation – will work to ensure equity among large and small cities. We also attended a host of other interesting sessions, from operating effective Art in Public Places programs to improving fire protection in wildland-interface areas. All in all, it was one of the League's better seminars.

### **City Transit Advertising Program in Full Swing**

If you happen to notice advertisements and promotions on the City's fleet of Monrovia Transit vehicles, it's because our local outreach is gaining traction among local businesses. We already have one committed sponsor and another on the way; additionally, City departments will be promoting everything from the Human Resources job hotline, to the PD's Cell Watch, to Canyon Park on the transit vehicles. This effort is the result of a City Council brainstorming session that asked the question, "Why can't we raise revenues through advertising?" And the effort is already paying dividends. If you would like to inquire about advertising on a City Transit Vehicle, please contact the Department of Community Services.

### **City Council Meeting Preview**

The September 18 City Council meeting will be unusually short for a September session. The only three business items are:

Item AR-1 is an amendment of the Municipal Code relating to the 2008-2012 engineering and traffic study for City street speed limits. In other words, Section of 10.04.010 of the Municipal Code needs to be updated (pursuant to State law) to reflect local speed limits on surface streets. In this case, we need to add Monterey Avenue, between Huntington Drive and Montana Street, to the Code.

Item AR-2 is the award of contract for \$38,600 to Tower Steel Corp. for the disassembling, relocating and reassembling of the steel “butler building” that housed the Fire Department Headquarters while Station 101 was being rehabilitated. The Fire Station rehab project is on-schedule and, thus, Department personnel are prepared to move out of the temporary facilities located at Olive and Ivy. The butler building will be moved down to the City’s Well Field on South Myrtle Avenue.

Item AR-3 is the termination of the City’s Agreement with Los Angeles County for Weed Abatement Services. As you may recall from a previous meeting, the City Council directed staff to review the feasibility of terminating the County contract and performing the related inspections and abatements in-house. Because of the Fire Department and Community Development Departments’ aggressive inspection program, staff believes that each of these departments can absorb this workload – for the most part, they are performing these inspections today anyway. Thus, staff is recommending the termination of the contract with the County, and will return to the City Council at a later date with the necessary menu of abatement and enforcement tools for consideration (fee and fine schedule, etc.)

As always, if you have any question about an item on the agenda, please feel free to give me a call.

### **Up Close and Personal with Monrovia’s Wildlife**

The hot weather is really bringing the wildlife out in the daytime hours. Here’s a photo of a young mountain lion taken in the early morning hours. This home is located up the slope from the main gate into Monrovia Canyon Park. Remember – beautiful and majestic as they are, these are still wild animals, SO BE CAREFUL and observe them from a safe distance.



### **New Lights in Old Town**

This week, I received a call from an Old Town merchant inquiring about the installation of the single-globe lights on Myrtle Avenue. You may recall that it was decided that a new pattern of lighting would be installed in Old Town, whereby the existing five-globe lights would remain at intersections and crosswalks, with single-globes in between. Thus, when fully installed, we will end up with a block-by-block pattern of 5-5-1-1-5-5-1-1-5-5. The existing five-globes that are slated to be replaced will be used on the side-streets, again at crosswalks and intersections.

Unfortunately, the new single-globes were delayed in shipping and it appears that we will not be able to make the transition in the light standards prior to the advent of the holiday shopping season. With City crews tied up in the Fire Station move, the soon-to-be-completed Corporate Yard move, the relocation of the Public Library to the Mary Wilcox Youth Center and the installation of the Old Town

holiday decorations (in addition to normal water, sewer, park and street maintenance duties), there simply aren't enough forces to complete everything prior to the Thanksgiving holiday. Thus, although the holiday decorations will be installed by Turkey Day, the new single-globes will have to wait until after New Years.

### **Articles Attached**

- **Preparing for a Disaster.** Great article on the Fire Department's CERT program – Community Emergency Response Team. This is a great way to get involved in the community in a meaningful way and on a neighborhood-level. If you or your neighbors are interested in the training, please contact Fire Captain Brad Dover. Although this season's class is already filled, we will be offering a training schedule for future classes.
- **A New Vision for Growth.** Two weeks ago, I included an article on smart-growth policies and efforts in Pasadena. This editorial reiterates the benefits of managed growth. Good stuff.

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

Planning Commission Recap. On September 12, the Planning Commission conducted its regularly scheduled monthly meeting. The following items were reviewed:

- Tentative Tract Map 068620 and Conditional Use Permit 2007-14 - 1415 Alamitas Avenue  
An application requesting approval of plans to convert an existing 32-unit apartment complex into 32 individual condominium units. The application also requested approval of plans to implement the state density bonus and the City's affordable homeownership program to provide seven affordable units.

This is the first proposal to go forward with a condominium conversion since the City adopted a new ordinance regulating conversions. While the Planning Commission and staff felt that the current use of the property as a 32-unit apartment complex is a valuable asset to the City's housing mix, the proposal will provide additional entry-level ownership opportunities in Monrovia. The project is in compliance with City and State regulations and the upgrades such as parking, fencing and landscaping along with the seven units that will be provided as affordable units are a positive attribute.

After review and discussion, the Planning Commission forwarded a recommendation of approval to City Council.

- Tentative Tract Map 069790 and Conditional Use Permit 2007-15 – 309 Violet Avenue  
The applicant requested approval of a Tentative Tract Map and Conditional Use Permit for the development of a four-unit planned residential development. The site is located in a neighborhood that has a mixture of single-family and multi-family units. The Planning Commission determined that the development conformed to all applicable development standards in the RM zone. The four-unit Planned Unit Development will blend in with the multiple family residences found in the neighborhood.

After review and debate, the Planning Commission forwarded a recommendation of approval to City Council.

- Conditional Use Permit 2007-12 and Variance 2007-07 – 410 West Evergreen Avenue  
The Commission reviewed an application that would allow the construction of a 65' high mono-palm cellular antenna in the M (Manufacturing) Zone located at 410 West Evergreen Avenue. The variances requested were for exceeding the maximum pole height (65' in lieu of 45'), not meeting the required setback from a public right-of-way and being within 500' of a residential zone. This project is located at an existing cellular antenna site that was approved five years

ago with a lot of neighborhood controversy. Since that time, new federal regulations have been put in place limiting a City's review of this type of application. While all neighbors were noticed, no one spoke in opposition to the development proposal. After considerable debate on what limits the City is held to, the application was approved.

- Conditional Use Permit 2007-13 - 331 West Colorado Boulevard

The applicant requested approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a two-story unit on a lot that currently has a single-family residence. In multiple-family residential zones a Conditional Use Permit is required for a two-story, second unit behind the main dwelling. The proposal retains an older house that once restored will be an asset to this neighborhood with many older residential homes. The new unit incorporates some of the design qualities of the older house so that it integrates well with the neighborhood. The overall site layout complies with all development standards. After conducting the Public Hearing, the Planning Commission approved the project.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES HAPPENINGS**

### **RECREATION DIVISION**

Food, Wine and Jazz Festival. On Sunday, September 9, more than 700 guests enjoyed an evening in Library Park sampling an assortment of foods, wines and spirits as part of the Sixth Annual Food Wine & Jazz Festival. City Manager Scott Ochoa kicked off the evening thanking the sponsors and local businesses for their support. The starlit evening was the perfect backdrop for this fundraising event which raised \$20,000 in support of the Monrovia Public Library Foundation. Guest's comments included:

"We had a marvelous time enjoying the great music and fabulous food!"

"Great seeing all the restaurants around town that I didn't even know about."

"It was an enchanting evening".

Be sure to save the date for 2008 - Sunday, September 7.

Wal-Mart Grant. The Department of Community Services is pleased to announce that Duarte Wal-Mart has selected Community Services to be the recipient of their \$1,000 youth services grant. The grant was awarded to the special activities program for the Halloween Carnival and Costume Contest. The Wal-Mart Store Manager, Rose Martinez, indicated that it was a pleasure to give this award to a dedicated organization such as the Department Community Services.

### **LIBRARY DIVISION**

Public Library Fund. The Public Library Fund (PLF) is the money that the State of California disburses to every public library in California to help make up for the severe cuts in library funding with the passage of Proposition 13 in the late 1970s. While the fund has never been fully funded, the amount each library receives has fluctuated from low to high, depending on the state budget and whether the governor at the time chose to increase or decrease the amount of money in the fund. Over the 10-year period from 1995 to 2005, the Monrovia Public Library received a low of \$12,565 in 1995 to a high of \$68,317 in 1999, ending that 10-year period with the annual allotment of \$15,609 in 2005. In 2006, the library received \$22,518 when the governor approved a \$7 million augmentation to the PLF fund, bringing the total amount in the fund to \$21.3 million. This year, the Budget Conference Committee approved another \$1 million augmentation to the fund.

However, last week, all public libraries were notified that the budget signed by Governor Schwarzenegger on August 24 included severe cuts in the Public Library Fund and in the fund that reimburses libraries for materials that they loan to other libraries. The Governor removed not only this year's \$1 million augmentation to PLF but also last year's \$7 million augmentation, bringing the Public Library Fund's baseline down to \$14.3 million. Consequently, the Monrovia Public Library is looking at around \$15,000 for this year.

The library finances many of its ongoing services from the revenue from the PLF monies. Two of the largest expenditures that this fund covers are: 1) the library automation system's annual maintenance costs which is currently about \$20,000 each year and 2) the annual costs of the library's subscription to the National Online Catalog (OCLC) which allows the library to borrow books from other libraries on interlibrary loan and which also provides all of the library's online cataloging records. In addition, this fund also currently funds, in the amount of \$1,745 annually, the library's online subscription to Tutor.com which provides live, online homework help to students in grades 4 through 12 Monday-Saturday in the afternoons and evenings. It also provides the funds for major upgrades to the library's automation system, as it did in 2005 in the amount of \$98,705.

In years of higher funding, staff has saved money in expectation of these ongoing costs and major library automation system upgrade costs that are not covered by the City's General Fund. However, with each year of severely low funding and the large expenditure of \$98,000 for the last major computer upgrade, the library is losing its ability to have the PLF monies cover the ongoing costs. At some point, if the revenue remains low, the library will not be able to provide these basic services without funding from the General Fund.

Literacy News. The Library's Literacy Coordinator worked with the Literacy Network of Greater Los Angeles to present Monrovia's last Tutor Training Workshop. The Network staff who worked with Melanie Goodyear and attended the workshop were so impressed with how the workshop was organized and in Monrovia's Literacy Program that they sent their newsletter reporter out to interview Melanie. The result is a comprehensive article, detailing the library's literacy services and complimenting the community of Monrovia, in the Summer 2007 issue of *The Literacy Network News*. The article which provides positive publicity for the program is attached to this report.

## **ON THE POLICE BLOTTER**

During the last seven day period, the Police Department handled 581 calls for service resulting in 153 investigations. Following are this week's highlighted issues and events:

Driving Under the Influence Arrest. On September 8 at noon, officers were dispatched to the 200 block of South Violet regarding a hit and run accident. A description of the vehicle was broadcast, and an officer in the area located the suspect vehicle at Lime and Primrose. The officer stopped the vehicle, and through his investigation, the driver was determined to be driving under the influence and was arrested.

Fraud in Progress Arrest. On September 8 at 3:20 p.m., officers responded to a business in the 600 block of West Huntington regarding a fraud in progress. As officers approached the area, one of the officers saw the suspects' vehicle and followed it to the 100 block of East Huntington. The witness from the business positively identified the suspects and they were arrested. After the arrest, the officer discovered several pieces of evidence linking the suspects to numerous credit card fraud crimes.

Weapons Violation. On September 9 at 2:35 p.m., officers were patrolling the 800 block West Chestnut when they saw a male juvenile riding a skateboard without a helmet. They attempted to contact the juvenile, who fled on foot as they tried to approach him. The officers caught the juvenile

after a short foot pursuit. And as the officers were detaining the juvenile, a loaded .25 caliber semi-automatic gun fell out of the suspect's pants. He was arrested.

Burglary / Conspiracy. On September 9 at 7:13 p.m., officers responded to a business in the 1600 block of South Mountain regarding a female and male who were resisting, while being taken into custody by loss prevention employees. Officers responded and the suspects were taken into custody without incident. The suspects had bought a spool of copper wire, using store credit cards. The female exited, and then reentered and handed the receipt to the male, who was carting out a second spool of wire through another exit. The suspects were approached by store security and detained. The male was found to be under the influence of a combination of drugs. Both suspects were arrested and taken into custody.

Burglary / Warrant Arrest. On September 11 at 7:34 p.m., officers responded to a business in the 700 block of East Huntington regarding a theft. When officers arrived, the suspect had fled. An area check was conducted, and the suspect and a second subject were located sitting to the rear of a vehicle in a parking lot. The suspect had the stolen items in a backpack, and he was placed under private person's arrest. The other subject was arrested on a warrant.

Parolee at Large Arrest. On September 12 at 12:14 a.m., an officer spotted a suspicious subject in a vehicle parked in the 300 block of West Cypress. The officer questioned the subject about his business in the area and ran him for warrants. The subject was a parolee at large and was arrested on a parole warrant and taken into custody.

Vehicle Evading. On September 12 at 9:41 a.m., an officer initiated a traffic stop on a vehicle. The driver pulled over towards the right as if to stop, and then suddenly sped off. The officer went in pursuit of the vehicle, which collided into a parked vehicle and the driver was taken into custody. The driver was booked on suspicion of driving under the influence, two warrants, and driving on a suspended license.

Dog Bite. On September 12 at 11:15 a.m., animal control responded to a dog bite victim at Olive and Gladys. The investigation revealed that the victim was walking in front of the location with her small child. The dog charged towards the child, and the victim placed herself in front of the child and was bitten on the lower leg. The dog owner was cited and the dog was quarantined.

Burglary. On September 12, officers were surveilling a business in the 1500 block of South California. At about 12:44 a.m., an officer reported seeing a burglary suspect in the carport area of the complex. Patrol officers responded, along with Arcadia officers, Glendora's canine, and the Foothill Air Support helicopter. Once the owner arrived with the keys, a search for the subject was made, but he was not located. A search of a nearby parking lot was made, and a truck similar to the suspect's truck seen in videos of prior burglaries was located. Officers kept an eye on the truck in the parking lot, and at about 4:13 a.m., a male subject was seen returning to the truck and he was detained. He was the same subject the officer had seen inside the carport.



## **ENGINEERING:**

Colorado Commons: Storm Drain Connections. All site drainage is passing through a clarifier and vortex separator prior to entering the County's storm drain system as specified in the Storm Water Management Requirements. Inspections are being coordinated and completed by the City and County Flood Control.

### Approved Grading Plans:

- 208 Terrace View - Single family residence

### Public Works Inspections:

- Myrtle Avenue Streetscape: Punch list items being completed.
- Colorado Commons: On site inspection of site drainage underground conduits.
- Sewer Main Replacement Program: Site cleanup and project striping completed.
- 337 Highland Place, Retaining wall
- Duarte Road between 5th and Encino - several AT&T cabinet and electrical panel installations, underground conduit inspections
- 435 Monrovia: Driveway inspections

### Construction Documents:

- Colorado Commons Street Improvements - Base map preparation for street improvements
- Recreation Park, Tot Lot Fencing - Cost estimates received and analyzed
- City Yard Site Improvements - Plan revisions to reduce costs of fencing

## **OPERATIONS – Environmental – Facilities – Parks:**

### Household Hazardous Waste/E-waste and Tire Recycling Event, Saturday, September 22.

Los Angeles County will host a free household hazardous/E-waste (HHW/E) event at the Covina Walmart parking lot, 1275 North Azusa Avenue, Covina. The event accepts household hazardous waste and electronic waste, including batteries, fluorescent light tubes and bulbs, fertilizers, household cleaners, paint, old computers, televisions, game systems and other items.

A free tire recycling event will be at the Claremont City Yard, 1616 Monte Vista Avenue, Claremont. The event will accept used tires from LA County residents only.

For directions, event hours, and other restrictions, log onto [www.888cleanLA.com](http://www.888cleanLA.com). Informational fliers are also available at the City Hall front lobby, the Public Works front counter, Fire Stations #1 and #2 and the Police Station.

CASQA Conference. Environmental Services Staff attended the 2007 California Stormwater Quality Association's (CASQA) Annual conference in Costa Mesa. The conference offered training workshops, presentations and exhibits for holders of municipal, industrial and construction NPDES stormwater permits centered around this year's theme of "Stormwater Management - Tools for Success: Research, Policy, Planning, Implementation, and Assessment. Additionally, staff attended a workshop titled "Improving Water Quality through Community Design & Low Impact Development". Through the many sessions, staff received extensive policy updates, stormwater technology research data and recommended best management practices that will assist the City in implementing standards to address current and future stormwater quality concerns and mandates.

New Plants for Planters. The decorative planters on Lemon Avenue between Ivy and Myrtle Avenues will receive new plants and irrigation lines this week to replace the original plants that were vandalized.

Work on South Peck Road. Our street tree contractor, TruGreen, removed 3 large Liquid Amber trees along South Peck Road this past week, due to the extensive damage they had caused to the sidewalk, curb and gutter. The sidewalk and tree wells were repaired, and new trees will be planted to coincide with Make a Difference Day on October 27<sup>th</sup>.

## **STREETS:**

Driveway Approach Rehabilitation:  
130 McKinley Place

Miscellaneous:

- Work continues on dirt removal from the Mountain Ave. Reservoir site.
- Construction work continues on Material and Handling Storage Facility at 2655 S. Myrtle Ave.

**UTILITIES:**

Customer Service

- 2,759 water meters were read and recorded
- 37 work orders were completed
- 170 shut-off notices were distributed
- 2 water meters were replaced
- 8 water services were reactivated

Water Production

Water consumption is 71.3 millions gallons, a decrease of approximately 2.5% compared to last week's water usage.

Department of Health Services Required Water Samples:

- 31 water system samplings
- 15 well samplings
- 8 water treatment facility samplings

Utility Maintenance

- 4-1" residential water services were repaired
- 10 underground service alert's utility location requests were completed
- 9,000 feet of sewer main were cleaned
- 1 water service leak at Fire Station No.1 was completed
- 1 water service leak at Colorado Commons was repaired

Have a great weekend!

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**FOR YOUR CALENDARS:**

<b>Mon., Sept. 17, 10-6 p.m.</b>	<b>Boys &amp; Girls Club of the Foothills Golf Tournament, Via Verde Country Club</b>
<b>Tues., Sept. 18, 5:30 p.m.</b>	<b>City Council Study Session</b>
<b>Tues., Sept. 18, 7:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Salute to Service</b>
<b>Tues., Sept. 18, 7:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Regular Council Meeting</b>
<b>Sat., Sept. 29, 9 to 3 p.m.</b>	<b>Old Town Car Show, Myrtle Avenue</b>
<b>Tues., Oct. 2, 7:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Regular Council Meeting</b>
<b>Thurs., Oct. 4, 6:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Monrovia Reads Spaghetti Western, Historical Museum</b>
<b>Thurs., Dec. 6, 7:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Holiday Parade, Myrtle Avenue</b>

## **CMO ATTACHMENTS:**

### **Preparing, training for a disaster**

By Emanuel Parker Staff Writer

Pasadena Star-News

Article Launched:09/10/2007 07:06:43 PM PDT

MONROVIA - During the 1985 Mexico City earthquake, untrained volunteers saved 800 lives. But 100 volunteers lost their lives trying to save others.

With training, those 100 deaths could have been prevented, Monrovia Fire Department officials say, and that's one of the goals of the department's Community Emergency Response Team training program.

It's first CERT program will be held Sept. 22, 29 and Oct. 6. But if you're aiming to sign up, forget it. The program already is full.

Twenty-five residents who signed up will receive eight hours of free training. Upon completing the program, the volunteers will receive a certificate and a city-issued identification card proving they are qualified to assist in a major disaster.

"Those volunteers will be able to work beyond the borders of Monrovia. This is a national program recognized from Florida to California," said Capt. Brad Dover, the Monrovia Fire Department official in charge of CERT training.

The program is offered quarterly, Dover said, and the next class is scheduled for Jan. 26 and Feb. 2 and 9.

The training is a response to predictions from experts who say it could take rescuers up to three days to arrive following a major earthquake or other disaster. During that period, neighbors will have to depend on each other for help.

Local fire officials hope CERT-trained volunteers will take lead roles in organizing neighborhood relief efforts.

"We're teaching community volunteers the basics on how to take care of themselves in a major disaster," Dover said. "We will try and teach them all the things they will encounter in a disaster."

That includes disaster preparedness, disaster fire suppression, two classes on disaster medical operations, light search and rescue operations and disaster psychology and team organization.

Rena Delgado, a Realtor, signed up for the program, "primarily to be of service to my family and neighbors and to survive," she said.

"I don't want to panic," she said. "I want to be informed and prepared, to have direction and be able to implement a plan. I want to know how to turn off gas lines, treat water, treat the sick, do triage.

"After seeing Katrina, citizens should know how to take care of themselves for three days," she added.

Monrovia fire Chief Chris Donovan said CERT is an important step in preparing Monrovia residents to handle any natural and man-made disaster.

"We're taking a very aggressive and proactive approach to getting our community members, our business partners, trained in the event of a natural or man-made disaster," said Donovan. "They're going to be our true first-responders. By giving these individuals those 24 hours of intensified training, it will help us do a better job."

To obtain more information about CERT, or to register for the next program, call (626) 256-8144.

[emanuel.parker@sgvn.com](mailto:emanuel.parker@sgvn.com) (626) 578-6300, Ext. 4475

## A new vision for growth

Article Launched:09/10/2007 06:29:23 PM PDT

CHANGE is scary, sure. Who among us likes too much change?

This simple fact has been a driving force, and an understandable one, behind a reluctance to embrace a number of development changes in the downtowns of Pasadena, Whittier and now several cities in the East San Gabriel Valley.

Pasadenans who were used to the city's mostly suburban character - even though it's had a "real" downtown for over 125 years, including housing - frequently lament the condo-ization of Old Pasadena and Colorado Boulevard.

That the planning changes that brought about the new look were put on a citywide ballot over a decade ago and were overwhelmingly approved just shows that the idea and the reality are not quite the same.

There has also been some citizen resistance this year to new mixed-use planning guidelines calling for hundreds of housing units above retail in Uptown Whittier. But advocates of a pedestrian-friendly city that makes it possible to get around without a car are thrilled - as are many merchants.

Beginning reviews at the El Monte City Council tonight is a proposal for a \$1.2 billion transit center around that city's Metrolink station, one of the biggest housing and business centers envisioned anywhere.

But right now, it's some Covinans who are scared of the changes proposed for their city's downtown.

Surely, after decades of suburbanization, some of the urbanization that is implied in the two planning department buzz words of the moment - "smart growth" and "mixed use" - can seem like a whole lot of change indeed.

What staff writer Dan Abendschein described last week as nearly a dozen commercial and residential projects planned for Covina's downtown is certainly a massively different way of looking at our cities than planning guidelines of the recent past.

But the goal, as Covina Mayor John King said, is a simple one: to make his city's downtown a place where people can live, work and shop. Nothing all that scary about that.

The business community is certainly applauding. "You can have great retail, but if no one is there to shop, you've got a problem," said Dawn Nelson of the Covina Chamber of Commerce.

And the charming downtown of Covina, originally created during the citrus boom early in the last century, is, like Pasadena's and Whittier's, a real downtown, with its Midwestern-style brick buildings and strollable environment. Through signage and mild traffic-calming measures, among other city-sponsored efforts, it already is a small hub of weekend and weeknight "urban" retail and dining activity.

But it's not just sales that should be driving the zoning and development changes. Smart growth addresses problems that would otherwise overwhelm us in Southern California, which is essentially built out from the sea to the desert.

They are the problems that can be summed up in a mental image all of us can easily conjure: the Foothill (210) Freeway eastbound on a Friday afternoon. Without making it easier to live where we work and where we buy, the entire Southland will soon be permanently blinded by the brake lights' glare.

So we like the idea of, for instance, being able to choose to live in the new three-story, 90-unit Vintage Walk condominium development near the Metrolink station on Covina's San Bernardino Road. Professionals working in downtown Los Angeles can take the train from there, free from the workaday gridlock they would otherwise experience. New townhomes across from City Hall will add to the choices, especially for younger people and empty-nesters who want to sell the family house but not leave the old hometown.

In the cover story to this month's CM, the magazine of the International City Managers Association, former Azusa City Manager Rick Cole, a major proponent of smart growth, cuts to the chase about the need to educate on planning: "Smart growth should be all about 'a place for everything and everything in its place.' This can come about only when people have not only a sophisticated understanding of regional context but also a collaborative framework for coordinating how neighboring jurisdictions grow."

## PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT

### Monrovia Public Library Literacy Program



Monrovia Public Library

Park, El Monte, Rosemead and even San Marino.

The library's literacy program was started in 2000 and its energetic coordinator, Melanie Goodyear, has been at the helm for the last three years. The program not only offers adult and children's literacy, it also includes a mobile library, which (unique to Monrovia) supplements its book offerings with recreational services like story time, tutoring or even a Scrabble tournament.

#### Reaching underserved communities

The van goes to different areas reaching out to underserved populations, offering books and activities and fostering a spirit of community. Trying, as Melanie explains, "To get communities back to getting out and playing in the street, getting to know the neighbors instead of just sitting in front of the Game Boy." Both the library van and the literacy program are dearly needed in a city with 41% of the population living in low-income neighborhoods and 52% of its adults having below basic or just basic literacy skills.

#### Strong civic sense

In an environment with so many needs, one thing the literacy program doesn't lack is volunteers. As Melanie says, "Monrovia has a really strong civic sense; it's a really civic minded community." Accordingly, for the most part volunteer recruitment is very successful, with 25 or more people signing up for each tutor training. The more than 90 volunteer tutors working with adults and children at the library come from all over the service area, as do the 120 students. Even though the literacy program is blessed with this comparatively easy volunteer recruitment, there usually is a waiting list for the one-on-one tutoring. Word of mouth is the biggest recruiter for students. Nonetheless, the library does some outreach in schools and specific industries, such as cleaning services, hotels or construction to inform about the literacy program.

#### Mortician Certification Program

Success stories abound among the program's students. For example, two learners just finished reading their first entire book—

In the heart of old town Monrovia, surrounded by a lush green park and shaded by the wide reaching branches of a giant Moreton Bay Fig tree, the Monrovia Public Library welcomes readers from more than ten surrounding cities, including Duarte, Baldwin

an accomplishment both had never imagined for themselves. Another student started classes at Pasadena City College. After working with a tutor at the literacy program, she was able to attend an adult school and receive a genuine high school diploma, not just a GED. Still touched, recalling that day, the literacy coordinator describes, "I just sat there crying at the graduation—when she thanked the program." One of the more unusual success stories certainly would be the student who wanted to become a mortician. The tutor and library quickly adjusted to meet this unconventional request, "We ordered a book and actually found a mortician certification program, we helped her with that." Even though this particular case may be slightly out of the ordinary, it is very common for tutors to help students acquire necessary job skills. Many go on to find employment. As Melanie explains, "That's the great thing about one-on-one tutoring, it's so flexible."

#### Library expansion

As the literacy program grows, the community is starting to realize that libraries aren't just a passive area. This will become even more apparent after the construction of a new library building will enable an expansion to twice the current size. The new library will feature a separate literacy section with comfortable chairs and a computer room. The ultimate dream is to offer a drop-in homework center with extended services for children. For the immediate future, however, the new building—erected at the old site, and, of course, sparing the beloved old tree out front—will allow for more courses and specialized literacy trainings, such as health, financial and civic literacy.

Literally serving as a cool oasis of learning in the San Gabriel Valley heat, the Monrovia Public Library and its literacy program are very much appreciated by its beneficiaries.

As Melanie puts it, "The students really want to be here, they really want to make their lives better." Not just the students are inspirational, the tutors make the literacy program staff's (one full time employee and two part time AmeriCorps volunteers) work rewarding as well. The coordinator continues, "It's just so inspiring, I am surrounded by volunteers, people who want to improve their community. It's really, really nice."

For more information on the Monrovia Public Library's literacy program, please go to [www.ci.monrovia.ca.us](http://www.ci.monrovia.ca.us) or call 626.256.8272.



A young reader stopping in at the Monrovia Public Library

Monrovia Reads & Plays Literacy and Recreation Van

