

FRIENDS OF SUNSET PARK

A California nonprofit corporation of Sunset Park residents • 1122 Oak Street, Santa Monica, California 90405 • (310) 358-7117

JANUARY 2004 NEWSLETTER

Layout by Bill Josephs

Lantana Project: FOSP Takes a Position on Increasing Neighborhood Traffic

Recently, Friends of Sunset Park (FOSP) took a position with the City of Santa Monica, recommending that future development not be permitted in our surrounding community unless it mitigates whatever traffic impacts it causes. The Lantana Project, currently planned to include 190,000 square feet of office space and 1,967 additional vehicle trips per day, is being opposed by FOSP for this reason. The Lantana Project is another phase of the large development bordered by Centinela, Stewart, Olympic, and Exposition Boulevards. Although this project is not in Sunset Park per se, it will have major impacts on our neighborhood.

Mitchell Block and Eric Gabster have been representing FOSP on this issue. Both are members of the FOSP Planning and Development Committee. After meeting regularly to study the issue, the Committee has come to the conclusion that we cannot continue to allow more development in our community today when traffic is already at gridlock on many of our streets during rush hour. Intersection traffic flow is rated on an A-F scale. Many of our intersections are already at the worst congestion ratings of E and F. The Planning and Development Committee, with much-appreciated assistance from Mitchell, produced a video documenting the already intolerable traffic in the neighborhood.

When traffic backs up on the arterial streets and when intersections fail, drivers seek alternative routes. This becomes the phenomenon of cut-through traffic—commuters using our residential streets, which are not designed for high traffic volumes, to get to the freeways or to get to other arterials. The Committee's research found stop-and-go congestion all around us, including on Pico Blvd. to the Los Angeles border, on Centinela from Olympic Blvd. south, on 23rd Street south to Venice Blvd., and on the Stewart/28th Street corridor. Residents can't help but notice that Pearl Street—a residential street in every respect—is becoming a virtual arterial during afternoons and evenings, as drivers seek an alternate route to move eastward, avoiding choked Pico and Ocean Park Blvds.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

"We Need You"

The goal of Friends of Sunset Park is to improve the quality of life for our neighborhood. This involves working to improve safety, to reduce air pollution and noise, to ease the traffic and parking crunch, and to support our local schools and library.

- ◆ **Crime** The community must work together to find ways to reduce crime and eliminate gun violence in the city. Mike Cveyich of the SMPD will speak at our February 4th meeting at 7 PM, at Mt. Olive Church, on "Identity Theft."
- ◆ **Homeless** Continued efforts are needed to find region-wide solutions for the problems of hunger and homelessness. FOSP will be participating on the OPCC Cloverfield Site Community Advisory Board.
- ◆ **Santa Monica Airport** The FOSP Airport Committee is advocating for strict aircraft noise enforcement, for weight-based landing fees, and for the AQMD to address aircraft emissions. We are speaking against a proposed FAA policy that would allow even larger jets to use the airport, and against L.A.'s approval of

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JOIN FRIENDS OF SUNSET PARK

2004 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name(s) _____

 Address _____
 Zip _____ Phone _____
 Email _____
 Today's date _____

I will help with:
 Airport
 Annual Meeting
 Crime and Safety
 Environmental Concerns
 Fairview Library
 Historic Preservation
 Planning and Development
 Public Schools
 Santa Monica College
 Traffic, Parking, Pedestrian Safety

Membership Dues:

\$30 Regular Household Dues
 \$50 or \$100 for Sponsor
 \$10 Minimum Household Dues
 Additional Donation

(Please check):

New Renewal

Please make check payable to
 "Friends of Sunset Park"
 and forward to:
 1122 Oak Street,
 Santa Monica, CA 90405.

Emergency Volunteer Air Corps

The Emergency Volunteer Air Corps promotes and coordinates General Aviation volunteer participation in emergency relief efforts, especially following disasters. The primary mission of the Santa Monica EVAC chapter is to fly the City's emergency personnel to Santa Monica from airports surrounding the Los Angeles area.

The Santa Monica EVAC Chapter, in cooperation with the Santa Monica Fire Department, holds monthly meetings for training and disaster planning. Both pilots and non-pilots are welcome.

For more information, or to join EVAC, call Captain Thomas Riegner at (310) 458-8662 or email him at tom-riegner@santa-monica.org.

Fairview Fundraiser Steps It Up

BY ELLEN MARK

“Come on in—Reading is fun!” “Here we fell in love with Bill Peet books.” “Never stop loving! Never stop learning!” “We love our library!” “In loving memory of....” In honor of....”

These are a sample of phrases that will be engraved on pavers and installed next summer at the Fairview Branch Library, a branch of the SMPL that has strong roots in the community of Sunset Park. I've heard the words “This was my childhood library” many times in the past several months. For those newer to the area, Fairview instantly has the feel of the familiar.

In addition to the engraved bricks, book pins from Designs by Lucinda are for sale. No two pins are alike! A photo with samples of the pins are on display at the checkout counter at Fairview and they are available by calling (310) 392-1306.

As of January '04, the Fairview engraved brick fundraiser has reached 50% of its goal of \$50,000. The campaign will continue until June 30 and pavers will be installed over summer. With the money raised, Fairview will purchase new children's furniture, new lighting covers, a PA system, and patio furniture. Paver order forms are available

Children's Librarian Sylvia Anderle with Ellen Mark (“The Walking Brick”)

at the Fairview Branch, (310) 450-0443, online at www.smpl.org, or by calling (310) 392-1306. We appreciate your support!

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The congestion and impacts we are facing now do not even consider the regional effects of the first phase of the Playa Vista project, which has not yet been completed. Although this development is several miles away, Sunset Park will feel its impacts. The Waters Edge development within Playa Vista, which is not yet occupied, will have 1,000 employees. Many of these people will live in and make use of the amenities within the City of Santa Monica. Further, nearly one million square feet of new office development has been built in Santa Monica since the 2nd Quarter of 1999, and nearly as much office space currently remains vacant. Once occupied, this

office space will bring even more traffic to our streets. All this before new development, such as Lantana, is approved and built.

In a letter to the Santa Monica Planning Department and the developers of the Lantana Project, FOSP president Zina Josephs stated, “The Lantana project and its traffic impacts represent only a small piece of a much larger challenge to the quality of life in our community. We cannot continue to approve projects, one at a time, increasing gridlock on our streets.” Ms. Josephs reiterated, “The FOSP Board is not against development in general, rather our opposition to the Lantana project and others like it is because of the

What I Like About Sunset Park

One feature of our Annual Meeting was the “What I Like” comment board organized by Jennifer Polhemus. Here are the comments that were posted:

- ◆ I like how we pulled together, more than 10 years ago, and stopped a huge development at Santa Monica Airport that would have greatly increased cut-through traffic.
- ◆ I like the diversity. I like the wonderful shop owners — Jose at Café Bolivar, the woman who owns Celise, the people at Edelweiss and the bakery and the shoe repair. I love the trees on our street and the luxury of having two parks nearby.
- ◆ I like the friendly shop owners — Dina at Twist & Shout and Alfredo Sr. at Maya Shoe Repair.
- ◆ I like how when we go to Bob's Market, my kids almost always find someone they know.
- ◆ I like the “old-timers” in their original homes, and I like the young parents walking by with small children. I like the informality and down-to-earth styles. I like being near Pico and Ocean Park Blvd.
- ◆ I like my neighbors.
- ◆ I like walking the tree lined streets in the morning with my wife, evening fog carrying the sound of kids voices from Marine Park, fresh fruits and vegetables within walking distance, the meat at Bob's Market, small neighborhood businesses, the fact that I know the neighbors on both sides of the street well enough to borrow their truck for an hour, or use that 20' ladder, or ask them to help me carry in a new couch. I like having a golf course nearby with all that open space. I like the matter of fact, understated sense of pride I hear in people's voices when they say, “I live in Sunset Park.”

I like the matter-of-fact, understated sense of pride I hear in people's voices when they say, “I live in Sunset Park.”
—John Reynolds

traffic they add to an already intolerable rush hour congestion in our community.”

For a copy of the FOSP position letter on the Lantana project or a copy of the video documenting existing traffic congestion in Sunset Park, please contact FOSP at (310) 358-7117 or visit our website at www.friendsofsunsetpark.org. The Planning and Development Committee meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7 PM in the conference room at 3200 Airport Avenue, next to the Spitfire Grill, and welcomes interested neighbors to join.

Santa Monica Airport News

BY CATHY LARSON

Progress On Aircraft Emissions

SM City Staffer Rod Merl has been invited by the Air Quality Management District (AQMD) to make a presentation on aircraft emissions at general aviation airports (i.e. Santa Monica) to their technical advisory committee. This committee will determine the scope of AQMD's upcoming study of the Southern California basin. These studies are done every three years to determine sources of air pollutants and their impact. The committee then creates proposals for actions to remedy or mitigate these impacts. Mr. Merl has done extensive research for the City of Santa Monica on aircraft emissions of general aviation aircraft. Many general aviation airports in Southern California, including Santa Monica, are in close proximity to residential areas and have a direct environmental impact on their neighbors. In recent years, the

change of fleet mix at many of these airports has seen a rise in jet traffic that has accelerated these environmental impacts. The City is looking for the support of the AQMD to take a more active role of addressing these issues locally and, more importantly, with the federal government, which regulates aircraft emissions.

For more information about the impact of emissions on Santa Monica Airport neighbors, visit the web site of West L.A. resident Martin Rubin at www.jetairpollution.com.

Weight Based Landing Fees Challenged

Santa Monica City Attorney, Marty Tachiki, has informed us that National Aviation Business Association (NBAA) has challenged the City of Santa Monica's recently imposed weight based landing fees. An official complaint was filed with the FAA by the

NBAA, representing eleven unnamed users of the Santa Monica Airport. In Aug. 2003, the city established weight based landing fees. The heavier aircraft pay more and the lightest (less than 10,000 lbs) pay nothing. Up until this time, the city has not collected landing fees. The city has presented the logical argument that the aircraft that cause the most wear and tear on the runway should be responsible for its upkeep. Stay tuned...

The next Airport Commission Meeting is on Monday, February 2nd, at 7:30 PM at the Ken Edwards Center. The agenda will be posted the Thursday prior on the Airport web site, <http://santamonicaairport.org>.

If you have a friend or neighbor who would like to be added to our notification list or if you would like to be dropped from the list, contact us at rcbreeze@labridge.com or (310) 392-1907.

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Playa Vista Phase 2, including two new helipads that could lead to an increased number of executive jets using S.M. Airport.

- ◆ **Planning, Development, and Traffic** Regarding the increase of cut-through car traffic, many of our intersections already carry E and F designations. We are advocating against approval of Playa Vista Phase 2, which would bring increased traffic on Lincoln, Centinela, and Walgrove/23rd. Playa Vista Phase 1 and 2, as planned, will generate 80,000 additional car trips per day. We are also asking the City of Santa Monica to look at the traffic impacts of the continuing growth of development in our own community. Office space in Santa Monica has grown by nearly one million square feet since 1999, and most of that is not yet occupied. Our new FOSP Planning and Development Committee is addressing these issues and has produced a video documenting current traffic conditions during rush hour.
- ◆ **Parking** The shortage of parking is making it difficult for residents to go to stores, restaurants, schools, libraries, and friends' homes. Santa Monica is already one of the most densely populated cities in L.A. County (more so than Beverly Hills and Culver City). FOSP is participating in the city's East-West Traffic Corridor Task Force to begin solving this problem.
- ◆ **Environment** The FOSP Airport and Planning and Development Committees are addressing air pollution. Past President Kathy Knight has spent eleven years working to save the Ballona wetlands ecosystem. Ninety-five percent of L.A. County's wetlands have been destroyed, and FOSP supports Kathy's determined efforts to preserve the remaining 5%.
- ◆ **Fairview Library** Ellen Mark is the FOSP liaison with the library and is spearheading the fundraiser to equip the newly renovated facility.
- ◆ **Grant, Rogers, and JAMS** Our schools shape the future. Lack of adequate, stable funding makes this task much more difficult. Local K-12 public schools are expected to provide high quality education with \$5,000 per student per year, while private schools are spending \$15,000-20,000 per student per year. Actions by the federal government (cutting funds for federally-mandated educa-

tion programs while lecturing teachers about "accountability") and the state government (varying funding levels year-to-year due to the effects of Prop 13, the requirement of a two-thirds majority to approve funding measures, and the unpredictability of state income tax revenues) complicate matters. Good schools benefit everyone, not just the parents of current students. If we want quality education, then we must find a way to pay for it.

- ◆ **Santa Monica College** FOSP College Committee members attend most SMC Board of Trustees meetings and talk with SMC officials about issues of concern. FOSP member Ed Moosbrugger is also serving on the Citizens Bond Oversight Committee.

If you have thoughts you wish to share on these or other topics concerning Sunset Park, we welcome your communication by phone (358-7117), by email (friendsofsp@yahoo.com), and in person at our next meeting on February 4.

Our hardworking Board—Tom Cleys, Karen Comegys, Emmalie Hodgkin, Kathy Knight, Cathy Larson, Ellen Mark, and John Reynolds—welcomes your membership in 2004. We need your participation! There is strength in numbers. Working together, we can make Sunset Park even better.

Happy New Year!
Zina Josephs

Protecting Against Identity Theft

BY KATHY KNIGHT

Recently there has been a problem in Sunset Park with people going through trash cans, not to find recycling items, but to find documents they can use in identity theft. Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in America, and it can be very disruptive to your life. So remember, when you are going through your mail or dealing with financial affairs, to shred any documents that have personal information on them. It is worth the extra time! For more information on how to protect yourself from this crime, or what to do if you have been a victim, go to the website <http://santamonica.org>.

Santa Monica College

BY KAREN COMEGYS AND ED MOOSBRUGGER

Santa Monica College's building activity will soon pick up steam again. Here's a quick update on some projects.

- ◆ **Library** Now open. Santa Monica residents can obtain an SMC library card for \$20 a year (requires photo ID and cash payment), but you can browse the library for free. A card is required to check out materials. Unfortunately, the SMC library is not open on weekends. Hours are 9 AM to 7:45 PM Monday through Thursday and 9 AM to 3:45 PM Friday.
- ◆ **Spring** Three major projects are scheduled to start this spring, including the Liberal Arts replacement building and Main Stage renovation in the center of the main campus, and the remodeling for college classes of a four-story building at the west end of SMC's new Bundy/Centinelita Campus (BAE) just south of the Santa Monica Airport.
- ◆ **1410 Pico** The college has held up development of this property at the southeast corner of 14th and Pico, and says it is coordinating planning with the city. According to a SMC report in December, the building will include a community meeting room, park-like landscaped area, underground parking for faculty and staff, classrooms, a computer lab/learning center, student tutoring space and faculty offices.
- ◆ **Some Plans** Master planning efforts are underway for a central quad area and the location of a proposed Student Services complex. Santa Monica College's facilities planners say that extensive community outreach is also part of the development of new facilities.

We hope they will live up to that promise and include the Sunset Park neighborhood as SMC's numerous projects move forward.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

February 4 — FOSP Board/Membership, 7 PM, Mt. Olive Church. Presentation on "How To Protect Yourself Against Identity Theft" by Mike Cveyich, SMPD.

February 11 — FOSP Planning & Development Committee, 7 PM, Conference Room, 3200 Airport Ave.

February 19 — SMMUSD Board of Education, 7 PM, City Council Chambers. Agenda at www.smmusd.org

February 23 — Airport Commission, 7:30 PM, City Council chambers. Agenda at <http://santamonicaairport.org>

March 1 — SMC Board of Trustees, 7 PM, Business Building Rm. 117. Agenda at <http://www.smc.edu/admin/trustees/meetings/>

Ballona Wetlands/Playa Vista

BY KATHY KNIGHT

FOSP Board members testified at the December 9th S.M. City Council hearing about the need for further studies to be done on the proposed Playa Vista Phase 2 development at Jefferson Blvd. and Centinela. It would include 2600 condos and 108,000 square feet of retail space, and would generate 24,000 additional car trips and nearly two tons of additional air pollution daily. This is on top of the estimated 50,000 car trips and several tons of air pollution daily expected from Phase 1 of the Playa Vista project.

FOSP's concerns are that no traffic studies were done on Lincoln Blvd. north of Washington Blvd., and no studies were done of cut-through traffic on our streets, especially on Cloverfield, 23rd, 21st, 17th, 16th, 11th, Marine, Dewey, Ocean Park Blvd., Pearl Street, and Pico Blvd. We are seeing increased cut-through traffic even without the full impacts of Phase 1, which is only about 10% occupied. And yet Phase 2 is already going through Los Angeles City's approval process. Playa Vista's main traffic mitigation (with no monitoring system) is for its residents/workers to take buses instead of driving.

Another concern of FOSP is that no studies have been done regarding the impact of this massive development on air traffic at Santa Monica Airport. The high tech clients that are being sought by Playa Vista are likely to use corporate jets. And since LAX is discouraging corporate jet travel, it will put more pressure on Playa Vista business executives to use our airport. In addition, there are two grandfathered-in helicopter pads at Playa Vista that will have unlimited flights that could ferry executives to Santa Monica Airport.

All of this spells a great need for an impact study to be done. Thus far, Playa Vista and the City of Los Angeles have refused to do one.

On the positive side, 193 acres of the wetlands were recently purchased for \$140 million with Prop 50 Bond funds, thereby saving all of the Ballona wetlands west of Lincoln Blvd. from development. Playa Vista developers Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs lost their development option on another 69 acres east of Lincoln and north of Ballona Creek. Held in trust for the State of California, this acreage will now be transferred to the California Fish and Game Department.

Citizens are still working hard to save more of the Ballona ecosystem by looking for funding to acquire the Ballona West Bluff and the remaining undeveloped land east of Lincoln Blvd. as an interactive wildlife park for children.

For future notices on Playa Vista Phase 2, send a letter to Sue Chang, Los Angeles City Planning Dept., 200 No. Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012, phone: (213) 978-1397.

Parking Proposals Hit The Road

BY ERIC GABSTER

Following its last meeting on January 22nd, the City Task Force assigned to study options to increase available parking along the major East-West corridors of Santa Monica will present its recommendations to the Planning Commission.

Sunset Park could see changes along Pico and Ocean Park Blvd. that include increasing the number of curbside spaces through elimination or reduction of red zones, shortening parking spaces, and, where feasible, introducing angled parking on side streets.

Most visibly, the Task Force will recommend that zoning be changed behind Trader Joe's and parking areas directly east. New zoning will allow construction of subterranean and surface level parking.

After review by the Planning Commission, these recommendations will be open to public comment at a future City Council meeting. No City funds have been identified for implementation of these recommendations.