



FRIENDS OF SUNSET PARK

A California nonprofit corporation of Sunset Park residents • Box 5823, Santa Monica, California 90409-5823 • FriendsOfSP@yahoo.com

SEPTEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

Layout by Bill Josephs

Voter Information

Register by October 19 to vote in the November 3 election: <https://registertovote.ca.gov/> or (800) 815-2666, option 2

Check whether you're already registered to vote: <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/>

LA County Registrar of Voters: www.LAvote.net or (800) 815-2666

For election related questions, email: voterinfo@rrcc.lacounty.gov

Santa Monica voter education website: www.smvote.org

Candidates for City Council (4-year and 2-year), Rent Control Board, College Board, and School Board: <https://www.smvote.org/Candidates/>

Santa Monica ballot measures AB and SM: <https://www.smvote.org/BallotMeasures/>

LA County ballot measure: "Re-Imagine LA" – Amend the county's charter to require that no less than 10% of the county's general fund be appropriated to community programs and alternatives to incarceration, such as health services and pre-trial non-custody services: <https://tinyurl.com/y638vmhp>

California Voter Guide: Voter's Edge: <https://votersedge.org/ca>

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Miramar Hotel Expansion

Development Agreement – September 29

The Miramar Hotel expansion development agreement hearing is scheduled for September 29 at City Council. The hotel is located in the Wilmont neighborhood. Here's what the Wilshire-Montana Neighborhood Coalition (Wilmont) has to say about the project:

For more than eight years, computer billionaire Michael Dell has been trying unsuccessfully to super-size his Miramar Hotel at the foot of Wilshire Boulevard in Santa Monica. Every annual poll of Wilmont members we've ever taken has shown at least 80–90% of our members do NOT want a "Monster" Miramar project to be approved. It's the biggest development issue we've faced this decade. The project would:

- Double the size of the Miramar, so it would be roughly as big as Santa Monica Place Mall (10 acres) but on a single city block of 4.5 acres
- Create a 130-foot tall "wall" all along Second Street, blocking sunlight and ocean breezes

Coronavirus Update

Information updated daily: <https://www.santamonica.gov/coronavirus>

Hotline: 310-458-8400, 8 AM to 8 PM

Email: info@SantaMonica.gov

Free COVID-19 testing: <https://covid19.lacounty.gov/testing/>

Donate to "We are Santa Monica" (Santa Monica COVID-19 Relief Fund): <https://www.calfund.org/wearesantamonica/>

Programs to Help You Save Money on Utilities and Food during COVID-19: <https://tinyurl.com/y7ngkahx>

- Apply for CARE and FERA to lower your electricity and gas bills.
- Apply for the California Lifeline Telephone Discount Program to lower your cell phone or landline bills.
- Switch to free internet if you have school-aged kids.
- Get help putting food on the table by applying for CalFresh.
- Switch to discounted rates with Spectrum or Comcast.

- Include more than 60 top-floor luxury condos selling for \$7 to 10 million dollars apiece
- Move the main Wilshire entrance to Second Street, jeopardizing Wilmont pedestrians and cyclists
- Add four new curb cuts (entrances and exits) on California Avenue and Ocean Avenue, choking traffic from the California Incline to Lincoln Blvd.
- Only provide money for about 42 affordable apartments across Second Street
- Include very little open space for the public
- Only provide a few million additional dollars to the city annually, and the unproven financial projections were calculated long before the pandemic
- A City sponsored study found that the Miramar developers underreported revenue and overstated costs, implying that their financial returns were minimal, even though they are well within industry benchmarks
- Doubles down on a "Tourists First" strategy, seeking revenue that has been

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Miramar Hotel Expansion, continued from page 1

trending downward for several years

- Will subject residents and businesses to at least three years of major construction, with huge cranes, heavy beams, tons of cement, and thousands of big trucks rumbling through the city, clogging downtown, and putting geologic stresses on the fragile bluffs of nearby Palisades Park.

Opinion: **"The Miramar Monster"** – John C. Smith

9/1/20 – *Santa Monica Daily Press* – <https://tinyurl.com/y2zy8xay>

"They say the monsters from your past will keep coming at you until you kill them off for good. Such is the case with the newly-spawned Miramar mega-hotel project now being peddled by high-powered suits with deep connections and deeper pockets to Santa Monica's Planning Commission and City Council....This new monster will have more than 300 newly-designed hotel rooms most of us will never spend even a single night in. Plus, don't forget the 60 luxury condos they want to sell for \$5 million apiece so billionaire computer mogul Michael S. Dell (MSD Capitol, get it?) won't have to shell out any of his fortune to build it. It's hard, you know, super-sizing existing hotels when you're only worth about \$27 billion or so...."

Opinion: **"Miramar Project Not a Good Deal for Santa Monica"** – Denny Zane

9/9/20 – *Santa Monica Lookout* – <http://tinyurl.com/yxon6v6e>

"Santa Monica residents have waged a long battle to protect their city from becoming an exclusive and expensive beachside resort. The battle in the early 70s to save the Pier, the fight for rent control in the late 70s, and subsequent fights against major developments were all, at their core, battles to preserve an economically inclusive community. The gentrifying impact of the proposed Fairmont Miramar Hotel redevelopment, with 60 luxury condos for the super-wealthy, is a direct challenge to this inclusive character, especially of Downtown and the Promenade. That alone should be sufficient for the City to say, no, thank you...."

"Miramar Project Moves Ahead to City Council"

9/11/20 – *Santa Monica Daily Press* – <https://tinyurl.com/y6er2tk6>

"The Fairmont Miramar project has moved to the next phase of the approval process and is set to be discussed by Santa Monica City Council following a 6-1 vote from local Planning Commissioners Wednesday night. Commissioner Mario Fonda-Bonardi was the only dissenting vote.... The prospective hotel expansion has received mixed reactions from community members...."

"Planning Commission Urges Council to Fast Track Miramar Redevelopment"

9/14/20 – *Santa Monica Lookout* – <http://tinyurl.com/y34ksc8t>

"The Planning Commission voted 6 to 1 last week to support the proposed redevelopment of the Fairmont Miramar Hotel and urged the City Council to fast-track one of the most ambitious projects in Santa Monica history....Concerns about the size of the approximately 502,157-square-foot project facing historic Palisades Park were trumped by the need to bring jobs and revenues to Santa Monica's crippled economy, Commissioners said...."

The project description is posted at <https://tinyurl.com/y4zv4yt>

Residents can email their support or opposition to the Miramar Hotel expansion project to City Council members until noon on September 29 at Council@smgov.net

Street Sweeping

The street sweeping schedule has been reduced from weekly to monthly, during the first full week of each month. Move your vehicle if necessary to avoid a parking ticket.

City Council Meetings

Agendas are posted at www.smgov.net/council. The meetings can be viewed on CityTV: Cable Channel 16; streaming <https://tinyurl.com/y2j8urf3>; and Live Stream (Chrome Browser Recommended) at <https://tinyurl.com/yd5qjbvk>

On September 29, the Council will decide whether to approve the development agreement for the Miramar Hotel expansion project. It will fill the block bounded by Wilshire Blvd., Ocean Avenue, California Avenue, and 2nd Street.

Library Update

Santa Monica Public Library curbside pickup has changed to allow you to get your items faster. An appointment is no longer needed to pick up your Library materials. You will receive notification that your holds are ready by your preferred method (email, text, or phone). Items will be available at the pickup location you selected when you reserved the items. The two current pickup locations are the Main Library and the Pico Branch Library. Pick up your items Monday through Friday, 10 AM to 3 PM. Bring your Library card or ID, please wear a mask, and practice physical distancing. www.smpl.org

Santa Monica College

SMC began its Fall 2020 semester on August 31 with 2,868 online classes. It is currently in Phase 2 of recovery, where telework is the preferred mode for as many employees as possible, the use of buildings is limited, and instruction is mostly remote, with very limited on-ground programs and services. In compliance with the LA County Department of Public Health's protocols for higher education institutions, SMC has made available limited lab and practicum tools for interaction design, respiratory therapy, and nursing (the last two considered essential by the California Governor's Office).

City Council Takes Steps to Advance Racial Justice

On September 8, the Santa Monica City Council voted to create a Santa Monica Black Lives Association (a nonprofit designed by Black community leaders to support Black Santa Monicans), approved Equity and Inclusion Officers for every City department, and advanced steps toward police reform, including the creation of a Police Commission.

The Council also adopted a Racial Equity Statement: “The City of Santa Monica acknowledges the effects of generational and institutional racism, and its consequences that continue to impact our residents. These lessons of our history cannot be ignored. The City is committed to advancing racial equity and social diversity to improve the wellbeing of people who live, work, play, and do business in our City, by:

- Identifying and rectifying the policies, practices, and behaviors that perpetuate racism, discrimination, and other negative racial-based outcomes.
- Cultivating an inclusive and fair environment where all people in Santa Monica, in particular disenfranchised communities of color, thrive in the areas of health, economic vitality, and connectedness.”

Census – Time Is Almost Up!

Every ten years, the federal government is required to conduct a national census of all residents in the U.S., regardless of citizenship status, age, or criminal history. Your participation is critical because an accurate population count helps ensure that the federal government funds are allocated fairly according to population. In California, the census will dictate how \$115 billion dollars is allocated among its cities. You can participate online, by phone, or by mail. For more information, visit www.census.ca.gov or call 844-330-2020. **The deadline is October 31st.**

Santa Monica Airport (SMO)

New Commissioner: The City Council has appointed a new Airport Commissioner, Bruce Malarky. He is an instrument-rated commercial pilot with 25 years of experience as an Army flight instructor, currently employed as an engineer for Boeing. Along with a Civil Engineering degree, he has experience in Transportation Planning and Environmental Engineering, which could prove valuable in planning for SMO’s eventual transition into park and recreational space.

A 20-year resident of Santa Monica, Malarky is an active cyclist and Club Soccer Team Manager, and he is committed to supporting the expansion of Airport Park. On the Commission, he joins retired Air Force Major Joseph Schmitz, PhD; attorney Geoffrey Neri; environmental engineer Chris Waller; and Commission chairperson Andrew J. Wilder.

Airport Commission: The next Airport Commission meeting will be on October 26 at 4 PM via teleconference. The agenda will be posted online at least 72 hours before the meeting at <https://www.smgov.net/departments/airport/commission/>

Operations: Aircraft landings and takeoffs at SMO in July 2020 included 4,674 piston/propeller planes, 237 turboprops, 164 helicopters, and 195 jets, for a total of 5,270 operations.

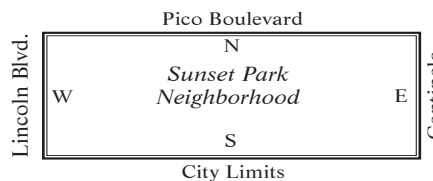
Neighborhood Council Candidate Questionnaire

Friends of Sunset Park participates in monthly meetings with the Santa Monica Neighborhood Council. The Council is an informal organization consisting of representatives from six of the city-recognized neighborhood organizations: Friends of Sunset Park (FOSP), Mid City Neighbors (MCN), North of Montana Association (NOMA), Northeast Neighbors (NEN), Pico Neighborhood Association (PNA), and the Wilshire-Montana Neighborhood Coalition (Wilmont).

Our groups put together a questionnaire for candidates for the City Council 4-year terms, with several citywide questions, plus several questions specific to each neighborhood. (The candidate for the 2-year term in running unopposed.) The FOSP-specific questions had to do with Santa Monica Airport, Santa Monica College, and the Sunset Park Traffic Management Plan (currently de-funded).

The result is much too lengthy to print in this newsletter, so we will post it shortly on our website – www.friendsofsunsetpark.org – on the “What’s New” link.

The Sunset Park neighborhood is bounded by Lincoln Blvd. on the west, Pico Blvd. on the north, and the city limits on the east (Centinela) and south (Airport, Dewey, Ozone).



A list of all the City-recognized neighborhood organizations and a map of their boundaries are posted at www.smgov.net/content.aspx?id=4241

Santa Monica Police Department

SMPD Website – www.SantaMonicaPD.org

Emergency – 9-1-1 – Report an in-progress, life-threatening emergency

Dispatch (non-emergency) – 310-458-8491 – Request non-emergency police service

Phone & Email Directory – <https://tinyurl.com/y4ujes63>

Neighborhood Resource Officer – Edgar.Navarro@smgov.net – 310-458-2201 ext 4137

Crime Prevention Coordinator – Halima.Barreto@smgov.net – 310-458-8618

Crime Mapping – <https://www.crimemapping.com/map/ca/santamonica>

“Six Month Wait for Looting Report”

9/11/20 – *Santa Monica Daily Press*– <https://tinyurl.com/y2kh8u2p>

“Santa Monica residents will not see a report on the May 31 looting this year, let alone before this year’s election. Any company hired to complete an after action report will have about six months to complete the work with the option to extend that timeline if necessary according to recently posted documents.

“The selected firm will be asked to complete its independent after action report and evaluation on an expedited timeline with the goal of having a final written report and evaluation within 180 days,” said a request for proposal (RFP) posted this week....

Santa Monicans were initially promised two reports about the incident. The first would be an after-action report listing the timeline and facts. The second would provide analysis of the facts.

City officials said publicly that the first report would be finished in August of this year, but the police department said it was unable to prepare the document and handle regular police work. In response, council has authorized staff to hire a third party company to combine both reports into a single document....”

“Chief Discussing May Looting with Community Groups”

9/18/20 – *Santa Monica Daily Press*– <https://tinyurl.com/yxcknbnf>

Renaud said the scope of the work for the after action report covers about a week as the department was on tactical deployment through June 8, and includes contacting individuals from multiple departments.

She said officers are working hard on criminal investigations related to the incident and the quantity of work necessary to provide a comprehensive report is daunting.

“We had multiple agencies through mutual aid from as far as Santa Barbara and Santa Maria,” she said. “They all have information as well and that all has to be collected and gathered.”

In several community meetings, the Chief has reiterated that the report following the shooting at Santa Monica College took nine months to complete, and the Woolsey Fire report was compiled by an outside agency in about a year.

She said the department didn’t have the capacity to focus on the detailed report and maintain day-to-day duties.

According to SMPD, there are 120 active cases with workable leads, 751 segments of body camera footage, 114 usable license plate images and 19 investigative bulletins. The Department has made 19 felony arrests and served 29 search warrants.

A single warrant can cover multiple locations and under the 29 issued so far, SMPD has searched 11 phones, 6 vehicles, and 10 locations....”

The Plaza at Santa Monica

This proposed development agreement project, also known as the “4th/5th & Arizona Project,” would be built on publicly owned land on the south side of Arizona Avenue, stretching from 4th to 5th Street.

The original hotel/office plan, submitted in 2014 – <https://tinyurl.com/y5buco9d> – was described as 12 stories (148 feet tall), 420,000 sq ft in total, with 200 hotel rooms, 209,000 sq ft of office space, 48 affordable apartments, and 1,120 underground parking spaces.

In 2018, the plan was revised and reduced somewhat – <https://tinyurl.com/y6yfsowu> – with a height of 129 feet (in an area where 84 feet is the maximum allowed) and a total of 357,000 sq ft.

Here is some of what architect Ron Goldman wrote about the project:

“We Need a Real Plaza at Santa Monica”

10/11/19 – *Santa Monica Mirror* – <https://tinyurl.com/y2xz9yqg>

“What defines some of the greatest cities in the world? Their grand plazas and public spaces. A place where one goes first when arriving at a new city and returns to many times while there. The same could be true for Santa Monica. There could be a place to gather for public events and an animated social environment that would activate the downtown area, providing a venue for civic events and respite from our busy lives.

But apparently our City Council is in the midst of an identity crisis. They believe that we should live in a different, much denser urban environment. They believe that we need a massive iconic building called the “Plaza at Santa Monica” on city owned land at 4th/5th and Arizona to attract visitors, one that will little serve our residents. But we already have the Pacific Ocean, our beach, our Palisades Park, our historic pier, our promenade, our courtyard housing, and our relaxed beach culture with its open skies, sunlight, moderate temperature – assets in abundance!

The size of the Plaza at Santa Monica (an offspring of Rem Koolhaas’ Singapore project <http://www.theinterlace.com>) will create significant traffic, cut light and blue sky, cast enormous shadows on adjacent properties, increase demand on infrastructure and services, and most importantly waste this site’s potential. This is a highly questionable precedent to set, and worst of all, totally unnecessary....”