



# FRIENDS OF SUNSET PARK

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

## APRIL 2023 NEWSLETTER

Layout by Bill Josephs

### **The Future of Santa Monica Airport**

**O**n January 24, the City Council approved a public process to determine the future of the Santa Monica Airport. The 227-acre Airport property represents nearly 5% of the city's land area. 167 acres were purchased in 1926 using a Park bond. Sixty acres were used for an air field (named Clover Field), and the remaining 107 acres were the largest recreational park in Santa Monica.

The park included an 18-hole golf course (where PGA tournaments were played), tennis courts, lawn bowling, skeet shooting, archery, and a clubhouse. When it wasn't being used for planes landing and taking off, the original grass runway was used as a football field. It was by far the largest park in Santa Monica—in comparison, Palisades Park is 26 acres—and it was referred to in a newspaper article as “The Brightest Jewel in the City.”

During World War II, the federal government took control of the property, and the Douglas Aircraft Company on the south side of Ocean Park Blvd. employed 44,000 workers on three shifts manufacturing planes for the war effort.

In 1945, the park was demolished in order to move the runway southward and lengthen it to 5,000 feet. The runway was expanded on the east side from Centinela Avenue to Bundy Drive, and on the west side from 27<sup>th</sup> Street to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, which required the demolition of many Sunset Park homes. The Douglas plant was subsequently closed in 1968 and the 45-acre Santa Monica Business Park took its place in 1978.

In 2014, city ballot Measure LC passed by a 60 to 40 percent margin. It amended the City Charter to prohibit new development on Airport land, except for parks, public open spaces, and public recreational facilities until voters approve limits on the uses and development that may occur.

In 2017, the FAA and the City of Santa Monica reached a settlement agreement, which allowed the city to shorten the runway, and will allow the City Council to close the Airport on December 31, 2028.

The city is now beginning a planning process to determine what will occur on the property once the Airport is closed.

About 167 acres are used by the airport, and the remaining 40 acres are non-airport-related. For example, Airport Park, Barkar Hangar, Cars with Class, the Museum of Flying, the Ruskin Group Theatre, the 18<sup>th</sup> Street Art Center Airport Campus, the Santa Monica College Arts Campus (leased from the city), and the Cloverfield restaurant, all located on Airport Avenue.

The city website for “The Future of Santa Monica Airport Project can be found here: <http://www.santamonica.gov/future-of-Santa-Monica-Airport-Project>

OR here: [tinyurl.com/mn5dh8rh](http://tinyurl.com/mn5dh8rh)

Planning process timeline: [tinyurl.com/ydjk4jyv](http://tinyurl.com/ydjk4jyv)

2020 Santa Monica Airport to Park Conversion Report (draft): [tinyurl.com/y9286xsn](http://tinyurl.com/y9286xsn)

If you have questions, send email to: [TheFutureofSMO@santamonica.gov](mailto:TheFutureofSMO@santamonica.gov)

Additional information can be found at Santa Monica Airport (SMO) website: [www.SantaMonicaAirport.org](http://www.SantaMonicaAirport.org)

Airport Commission agendas: [www.smgov.net/departments/airport/commission](http://www.smgov.net/departments/airport/commission)

SMO landings and takeoffs in January 2023 – 4,243

SMO Future: <https://smofuture.weebly.com>

Airport 2 Park: <https://airport2park.org>

### **Welcome to Our New FOSP President**

BY ZINA JOSEPHS

**I**t has been a pleasure serving as FOSP Board President for many years, and I'm delighted (and relieved!) to welcome our new president, Clare Thomas. Clare is a 17-year resident of Santa Monica. She lives here in the Sunset Park neighborhood with her wife. Their son attended Grant Elementary School, John Adams Middle School, and Santa Monica High School. Clare is interested in preserving the neighborhood feel in this growing city. She is recently retired as an anesthesiologist from Kaiser Permanente.

Per FOSP bylaws, the general membership elects the Board members, and then the Board members elect Board officers. Here are our current Board members and officers:

President – Clare Thomas

Vice President – Nikki Kolhoff

Secretary – Zina Josephs

Treasurer – Ofer Grossman

Peter Donald

Aliceann Grusin      Jeanne Laurie

Cathy Larson      John Murdock

### **Height Limits for Hedges and Fences**

**T**he city has established the following maximum heights for hedges, fences, and walls:

Front yard – The maximum allowable height for hedges, fences, and walls is 42 inches (3½ feet).

Side and rear yards – The maximum allowable height for fences and walls is eight feet. The maximum allowable height for hedges is twelve feet, although there is no height limit for hedges adjacent to and located within ten feet of an alley.

### **Gelson's Teardown Project**

**T**he preliminary application included replacing the grocery store and retail center at the SE corner of Lincoln and Ocean Park Blvd. with 521 apartments in 12 five-story buildings. Only 10% of the apartments will be affordable for low-income tenants. The applicant has not yet submitted revised project plans in response to the city's 63-page July 2022 code compliance letter.

When revised plans are submitted, staff will update the Gelson's FAQ page: [tinyurl.com/bdhwzdrv](http://tinyurl.com/bdhwzdrv)—That will initiate another review by city staff for compliance with the city regulations. It is not uncommon for there to be several rounds of code compliance review. The applicant is also required to present the design concept to the city's Architectural Review Board (ARB) for preliminary discussion.

If the revised plans demonstrate compliance, an Administrative Approval determination will be issued by the Zoning Administrator. The applicant would then be required to submit a formal design review application, and the ARB would review the project's design, colors, materials, landscaping, lighting, and signage.

## Public Safety Update

SMPD Crime Prevention Coordinator Halima Barreto presented data for February 2023 at the March FOSP meeting: 9 aggravated assaults, 3 arsons, 4 commercial burglaries, 8 vehicle burglaries, 2 larcenies, 14 auto parts larcenies, 2 larcenies from buildings, 5 shoplifting incidents, 8 motor vehicle thefts, 5 simple assaults, and 5 acts of vandalism, for a total of 67 crimes. She stated that almost half of the aggravated assaults took place on Pico Blvd., while the vehicle burglaries were scattered throughout the neighborhood. Most of the catalytic converter thefts took place east of 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. North of Wilshire currently has the highest number of catalytic converter thefts, with Sunset Park east of 23<sup>rd</sup> Street coming in second.

SMPD website: [SantaMonicaPD.org](https://www.santamonica.gov)

SMPD 2022 Annual Report: [tinyurl.com/c5k3fjbk](https://www.santamonica.gov/c5k3fjbk)

SMPD Beat 2 Neighborhood Resource Officers:

Edgar.Navarro@santamonica.gov

Robert.Galvan@santamonica.gov

SMPD Crime Prevention Coordinator:

Halima.Barreto@santamonica.gov

## Fairview Branch Library

Located at Ocean Park Blvd. and 21<sup>st</sup> Street, the library is open for “self-service” on Tuesdays, 12 PM to 7 PM, and on Fridays, 10 AM to 5 PM, allowing users to pick up items on reserve, use the library space, access materials and resources, or use a computer. Apply here for access: <https://smpl.org/selfservicehours>

The first Fairview Branch opened in 1931 on 20<sup>th</sup> Street. In 1942, the store front library was replaced by a new building at 2030 Pico Boulevard. In 1956, the Fairview Branch Library moved to its present location. Designed by architect Weldon Fulton, it is a classic mid-century modern building. The original furnishings came from Eames, Knoll Associates, and Remington Rand.

A community room was added in 1978, and other facility improvements were made in 2002. The library closed in 2015 for interior and mechanical improvements. It re-opened in 2016, only to be closed again in 2020 during the city’s “restructuring,” which resulted in a dramatic reduction in library staff citywide.

Santa Monica Public Library website: <https://smpl.org>

## Active Aging

Subscribe to the monthly Active Aging newsletter to get the latest on program offerings, upcoming events, and announcements at [SantaMonica.gov/Programs/Active-Aging](https://www.santamonica.gov/Programs/Active-Aging)

## Solid Waste

Yvonne Yeung, Acting Resource Recovery and Recycling Manager (RRR), spoke at the March FOSP meeting about the Rate Study and Organics Recycling. Yeung oversees 93 workers providing seven-day-a-week services to keep the city clean and achieve the City Council’s zero waste goal. She presented a PowerPoint showing that RRR is an Enterprise Fund, with 92% of its revenue coming from solid waste utility billing. Rate studies are usually done every five years, but the last one was in 2014, and the last rate increase was in 2019.

Twenty-eight staff members were laid off during the city’s 2020 restructuring. In February, 2023, City Council approved a rate adjustment that will restore 15 positions.

Santa Monica charges less than Beverly Hills, Glendale, Los Angeles, Pasadena, and Torrance, plus RRR provides free hazardous waste pickup and quarterly paper shredding and electronics recycling. A sample increase for a single-family home would be from \$108 to \$120 for 2 months. (Water, sewer, and solid waste are all included in the same bill.) Without a rate increase, the RRR fund will be depleted by 2024–25. Residents will receive a Prop 218 notice in the mail in May regarding a public hearing at City Council in June.

## Builder’s Remedy Projects

The Housing Accountability Act (the “HAA”), passed by the California legislature in 1990, includes a special provision that is often referred to as the “builder’s remedy.” It only takes effect when a city’s Housing Element is out of compliance.

Every eight years, cities are required to submit a Housing Element to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Santa Monica’s Housing Elements have been approved without question in the past, but last year was different. According to HCD, the city’s 2021–29 Housing Element was substantially in compliance, but it had to be revised and re-submitted.

While we were technically “out of compliance” for a few months, preliminary applications for 15 builder’s remedy projects totalling 4,260 units, and ranging from 6 to 18 stories, were submitted to the Planning Department. (The law allows developers to propose **any** housing projects of **any** height and **any** density **anywhere** in the city if they include 20% affordable housing.) A city web page shows the status of the projects that were submitted as of February 2023: <https://www.santamonica.gov/builders-remedy>

## Trash and Recycling Bins – What Goes Where?

**Green Bin (Organics)** – yard trimmings, all food scraps, bones, coffee grounds & tea bags, paper napkins – You can save food scraps in a reusable container in the freezer, then dump them into a paper bag and place that in the green bin on collection day.

**Blue Bin (Recyclables)** – Clean and dry bottles & cans, paper, flattened cardboard, clean aluminum foil, plastics #1, #2, and #5 (must be clean and dry)

**Black Bin (Everything else)** – Garbage, Styrofoam, diapers, takeout containers, bioplastics, cigarettes, thin film plastic packaging, plastic bags

**Hazardous waste** – The city provides free door-to-door collection of hazardous waste. To make an appointment, visit: <https://www.cleanearthinc.com/santa-monica-ca-residential-household-hazardous-waste-program> or call 1-800-714-1195.

The next city recycling event will be on May 13 from 9 AM to 2 PM at the City Yards, 2500 Michigan Avenue: Free paper shred; electronics waste, mattress, box springs, and carpet recycling.

If you have any questions, go to the city website at <https://santamonica.gov> (keyword “organics”) or email [ZeroWaste@santamonica.gov](mailto:ZeroWaste@santamonica.gov)

## Leaf Blower Ban

City ordinance S.M.M.C. 4.08.270: “No person shall operate any leaf blower (gas, electric, or battery powered) within the City. A leaf blower is defined as any motorized tool used to propel fallen leaves and debris for removal. Infractions will be punishable by substantial fines to property owners, property, and landscape management companies, individual operators, and/or water customers.” [tinyurl.com/49tfkaw6](https://www.tinyurl.com/49tfkaw6)

Leaf blowers pose multiple health risks due to air pollution attributed to their use. The pollution comes in the form of unburned fuel, from the inefficient combustion process inherent in such devices, and from a mixture of fine particles blown into the air, particles that can go deep into the human lungs.

With a muzzle velocity of 150 miles per hour, gas blowers blow herbicides, pesticides, and fecal contaminants up from the ground into the air, especially troubling asthmatics and allergy sufferers. Many cities have banned leaf blowers, and Santa Monica’s ban has been in place since 1991.

You can report violations by email at [code.enforcement@santamonica.gov](mailto:code.enforcement@santamonica.gov) or by phone at (310) 458-4984. Provide an address, date, and time of day.