

# Bell Gardens Today

SPRING  
2019

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Everything you need for SPRING - Complete recreation program information inside.

# WELCOME TO THIS EDITION OF BELL GARDENS TODAY



Bell Gardens really lives up to its nickname “Hub of Progress” with so many successful programs and community services that support our residents. It’s a great place to raise a family and do business, and more people discover the best about our City every day. We’re proud to present stories of some of our most popular programs, the things we’ve achieved as a City and share our plans for the future.

In these pages, you’ll find a progress report for our five-year Capital Improvement Program, noting that most of the first-year projects have been completed and many of the second year projects are in progress. Take a peek at some of the things we have planned to make this a better City in the coming years.

Along with tackling projects at every level, involving every City department working as a team, City staff has been successful in finding grant funding to cover the costs. Those efforts sometimes take working in tandem with other government agencies and the benefits serve our residents well.

Police Chief Scott Fairfield may be new to his office, but his support team is growing; with a new Captain, new Lieutenant and new Sergeant moving up the ranks. The vast experience brought to the job by the officers and administrators helps the department work efficiently and keep the crime rate low. Public safety is their priority.

Transportation is one of the most important issues facing the residents and two critical programs are aimed at improving the flow of traffic and ease of mobility for our residents. The realignment of Eastern Avenue and Garfield Avenue, changing a Y-intersection into a T-intersection, will facilitate smoother traffic in the area. The Complete Streets program is looking for your involvement in

planning intermodal transportation, from driving to cycling to walking and using public transportation and trains. The next public workshop is coming up soon, make sure to attend and give your input. Your street-view experience could lead to some changes that help commuters and visitors to our City.

Public Works will be rolling out some new energy-efficient trucks, some funded by AQMD to achieve an environmentally-friendly goal and a new stencil truck with state-of-the-art equipment will soon be working the streets.

Spring brings with it thoughts of fresh starts, gardening, cleaning and having fun outside and the Earth Day festival on April 20, with activities centered at Ford Park. There will be tours of the Community Garden (featured on the cover), community volunteer cleanup crews, children’s activities, opportunities to learn about recycling, renewable resources and making a smaller footprint on Mother Earth, and an event that was very popular last year, a drum circle. Don’t miss this one!

There’s so much more to share, we hope you enjoy reading all about it. Your input on all issues is always welcome and we look forward to hearing from you. Send your questions, concerns and comments to City Hall at [Talk2Us@bellgardens.org](mailto:Talk2Us@bellgardens.org).

## NOTICE TO RESIDENTS

### SAFE MEDICAL DISPOSAL OFFERED IN BYPD LOBBY

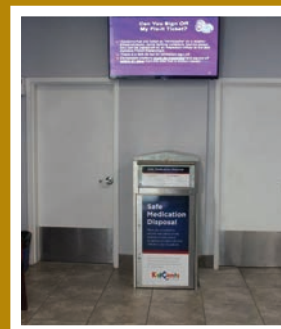
The Bell Gardens Police Department is proud to partner with The Rite Aid Foundation and KidCents to help address drug abuse and accidental poisonings, both of which pose a serious health and safety threat to the youth of our community. Through this partnership, a Safe Medical Disposal Box is located in the lobby of the Police Department at 7100 Garfield Avenue and is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Parents or guardians can take advantage of this free disposal system to drop off unwanted medications.

**Accepted medications:** Prescription medications in common dosage forms, such as tablets, capsules, ointments and patches.

**Not accepted:** Illegal drugs, needles, lotions or liquids, inhalers, aerosol cans, thermometers or hydrogen peroxide.

“Reducing drug accessibility and education on medication misuse, for both parents and kids, are part of an ongoing effort to address these serious issues and make a positive impact in the lives of the children who live in the City of Bell Gardens,” said BYPD Captain Christopher Hubner.

National studies show that teens are now more likely to abuse a prescription drug than an illegal street drug and that prescription medications have become the leading cause of accidental childhood poisonings. The Safe Medication Disposal Program helps to ensure that individuals can safely dispose of unwanted or expired medications in an environmentally-friendly manner while keeping them out of the hands of kids and teens.



## CITY OFFICIALS

### Bell Gardens City Council

Alejandra Cortez, Mayor  
Liseth Flores, Mayor Pro Tem  
Pedro Aceituno, Council Member  
Marco Barcena, Council Member  
Jennifer Rodriguez, Council Member  
Philip Wagner, City Manager

*The public is welcome at all City meetings, which are held in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 7100 Garfield Avenue, Bell Gardens:*

## CITY COUNCIL

2nd and 4th Monday of the month at 6 p.m.  
Notice of Special City Council Meetings will be posted at City Hall and City facilities.

## EDUCATION COMMISSION

2nd Thursday of the month at 5 p.m.

## PLANNING COMMISSION

3rd Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m.

## RECREATION, CULTURAL AND YOUTH COMMISSION

3rd Thursday of the month at 6 p.m.

## SENIOR CITIZEN COMMISSION

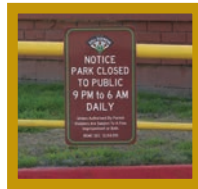
2nd Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m.

## TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION

1st Tuesday of the month at 5:30 p.m.

## NEW PARK CLOSURE SIGNS INSTALLED

Public Works have installed new signs at all park locations in an effort to enforce the "no trespassing/no overnight sleeping" restrictions at City parks. Park use hours are 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., with restrooms closing at dusk. Overnight stays in City parks are strictly prohibited. The Bell Gardens Police Department will be monitoring and enforcing these park rules.



## DOG WASTE STATIONS

Picking up after your pooch just got easier with dog waste bags provided by the City. Bag dispensing stations have been installed at John Anson Ford Park and Bell Gardens Veterans Park. The stations are available for dog owners to use to clean up after their dogs while walking the park grounds. Be a responsible pet owner and help keep the parks clean for everyone to enjoy.



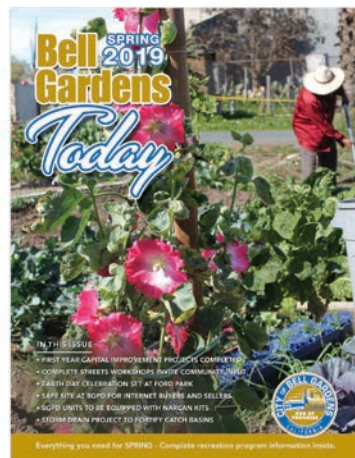
**On the Cover:  
Community Garden in Ford Park.**

## SAFE SITE AT BGPD FOR INTERNET BUYERS AND SELLERS

With the growing trend of internet commerce, the buying and selling of goods between private parties can be dangerous at times. Over the last several years, many crimes have been committed during the exchange of goods and money, ranging in severity from theft to murder.

To provide a safe place for these transactions, the front area outside the lobby of the Bell Gardens Police Department has been designated a safe zone for those making internet transactions. The "Internet Purchase Exchange Location" is open 24 hours daily outside the front lobby of the police station at 7100 Garfield Avenue, Bell Gardens, a well-lit and secure area with all activities recorded on security cameras. During business hours, transactions may also take place inside the police department lobby.

The security provided with a safe meeting location also means that sellers no longer need to reveal personal information such as home addresses to buyers. The probability of criminal activity decreases in the presence of law enforcement and if something does go wrong, the surveillance footage will provide valuable information to investigators.



**Bell Gardens Today** is published quarterly by the City of Bell Gardens to provide information to the community about the City's programs, services and activities.

Visit us at [www.bellgardens.org](http://www.bellgardens.org) for updated City information.

Go to [www.bgrecreation.org](http://www.bgrecreation.org) for recreation programs and events. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

## MOST FIRST YEAR PROJECTS COMPLETED IN FIVE YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

In 2017, the City Council approved a five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to help prioritize, plan and implement major, non-recurring expenditures to improve and enhance the City's streets, public buildings, parks, public infrastructure and equipment.

Of the 17 projects identified as priority in the first year of the plan, 13 have been completed and the remaining four are currently in progress. The completed projects include:

- *Heating/Air Conditioning systems replaced at City facilities*
- *Energy-saving thermostats and building controls installed in City facilities*
- *Synthetic turf installed on the soccer fields at Bell Gardens Sports Center*
- *Hardwood gym floor replaced at John Anson Ford Park*
- *Roofs replaced on various City buildings and facilities*
- *Traffic safety/signal lights upgraded with LED lights*
- *Park lighting (LED) improved*
- *Alley repairs throughout the City*
- *Suva Street rehabilitation (between Emil and Scout)*
- *City Council Chamber lighting upgraded*
- *Marlow Park new playground installed*
- *All street name signs in intersections illuminated*
- *Tree box filters installed on Florence/Garfield*

For the first year CIP priorities, staff has completed \$1,145,000 in Streets and Traffic Projects, \$898,000 in Parks Projects and \$2,845,000 in Facilities Projects, for a total expenditure of \$4,888,000. Of note: Each project received some or all of its funding from local, state, and/or federal grants.

Staff has already commenced with the implementation of the second year projects and significant progress has been made. Recommended second year priorities include:

- *Replace playground equipment at Gallant Park (completed)*
- *Expand recycled water at Veterans Park*
- *Water reservoir at City Well #1*
- *Traffic signal modifications at Lubec/Eastern and Loveland/Garfield*
- *Eastern Avenue Island turf replacement (unfunded, not started)*

Recommended Third Year projects include:

- *Garfield and Clara intersection improvements (in design)*
- *Complete Streets/ATP Master Plan/Transit study*
- *Replace play equipment at Bell Gardens Veterans Park*
- *Wayfinding Sign installation*
- *Police Department Security Upgrades*
- *Watershed improvements on east side of Ford Park*

Recommended Fourth Year projects include:

- *Intersection improvements on Florence Avenue at Ira and Jaboneria*
- *Playground equipment replacement at Ford Park*
- *Replace fencing at ABC Soccer Field*
- *Ford Park Parking Lot Project*
- *Veterans Park Senior Center Improvements*
- *Replacement of flooring and carpeting at Ross Hall*

Recommended Fifth Year projects include:

- *Veterans Park Improvements*
- *Picnic Tables/Shade Structure installation at Ford Park*
- *Gym Door/Storefront Replacement at Ford Park*
- *Resurfacing of Veterans Park basketball court*
- *Preservation of Woodworth House*

The Capital Improvement Program is a living document that is reviewed and updated annually to reflect changing community needs, priorities and funding resources and opportunities.



## MANY CITY SERVICES, PROGRAMS MADE POSSIBLE BY GRANTS

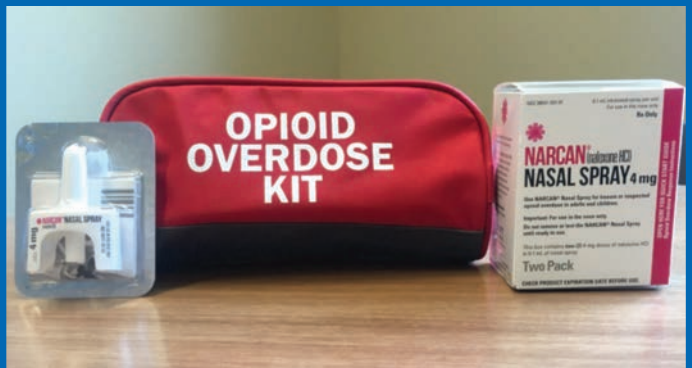
To provide the optimum services for its residents, the City of Bell Gardens often seeks out grant funding to augment General Fund monies. These efforts make possible many capital improvement projects, public safety and recreational programs and services, as well as funding some day-to-day operations.

"Securing outside grant funding is often a complicated and lengthy process, but our outstanding and dedicated Department Directors and support staff have successfully secured more than \$31 million to enhance the budget since Fiscal Year 2011-2012," said Director of Finance and Administrative Services Will Kaholokula.

The grants support all the major City departments, most notably the Police Department, Public Works, Recreation and Community Services and Community Development. Some examples of grant-funded projects include improved communications for patrol units, training and bulletproof vests for the Police Department, which earned \$1,188,304 in grants; the Safe Routes to School program, traffic routing improvements, the Active Transportation Program, recycled piping and waste management programs and the Ford Park cistern projects through Public Works, which received \$22,809,477 in grant funding; playground renovation, field construction, the futsal court, fishing derbies and the Soccer for Success programs became realities after the successful pursuit of grants totaling \$1,128,941 and the Community Development Department's involvement in the U.S Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant program has resulted in \$5,360,532 in improvements and services.



## BGPD UNITS TO BE EQUIPPED WITH NARCAN KITS



Bell Gardens Police officers responding to overdose calls now have a lifesaving tool in their vehicles, with the recent installation of Narcan kits. Naloxone (Narcan) is a medication used to block the effects of opioids and when administered, can reverse an opioid overdose, increasing the survival and recovery rate for victims. It can also block adverse effects of opioid exposure for medical personnel and first responders.

"It is imperative that our officers be ready to deal with this crisis, as we are often the first emergency personnel on scene," said BGDPD Lieutenant Brendan Kirkpatrick.

Opioids are the most significant contributors to drug overdose deaths in the United States. Law enforcement agencies across the country have tracked an increasing number of overdose incidents and deaths to the use of counterfeit pharmaceutical products containing fentanyl or other synthetic opioids.

Fentanyl, a highly concentrated synthetic opioid, is used legally as a replacement for morphine as an anesthetic during surgery, as well as treating and managing chronic pain. Illicit forms of fentanyl have been used as a replacement for heroin and in the production of counterfeit medications that mimic oxycodone, hydrocodone and alprazolam products. Fentanyl and its related substances are more potent than morphine, but effects can vary greatly, depending on the identity, potency and purity.

To provide the optimum response and maximum protection for residents and first responders, Bell Gardens Police officers have been trained in the use of and vehicles have been equipped with mobile field Narcan kits. The kits contain a dose of Naloxone in a nasal spray that is immediately absorbed by the victim, counteracting the effects of any opioid overdose. As BGDPD officers are often first on the scene of an overdose call, having the kits will allow the antidote to be administered in a timely manner and possibly save lives.

# POLICE DEPARTMENT PROMOTIONS

## HUBNER DRAWS FROM LONG-TIME EXPERIENCE TO LEAD



Newly-promoted Captain Christopher Hubner has been serving the community as a member of the Bell Gardens Police Department for 28 years. After graduating from the Golden West Police Academy in 1991, he joined BGD and worked a wide variety of assignments, including

Patrol Officer, Field Training Officer, Gang Detective, General Investigations Detective, and Special Operations Team Operator, as well as an instructor in Firearms, Less Lethal and Taser operations.

In 1998, he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant, where he supervised Patrol Operations, the Special Investigations Unit, and the General Investigations Unit. In 2009, he promoted to the rank of Lieutenant, where he managed the Investigations, Patrol and Administrative Divisions and served as the Special Operations Team Commander. Additionally, he was assigned to a Multi-Agency Narcotics Task Force, managing police personnel from local, state and federal agencies.

Hubner was promoted to Captain in September 2018. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Oklahoma in Administrative Leadership, and is currently working on his Master's Degree in the same subject from the University of Oklahoma. He has been married for 24 years and has two grown children. In his spare time, he enjoys camping and water sports.

## ACOSTA PROMOTED TO SERGEANT



Newly-promoted Sergeant John Acosta graduated from the Rio Hondo Police Academy in 2008 and was hired the next year as a Reserve Police Officer with the Monterey Park Police Department. In 2010, he joined the Bell Gardens Police Department where he

has worked numerous assignments including Patrol, Field Training Officer, Senior Officer, Special Investigations Unit-Gang Detective and currently is a part of the Special Operations Team.

Acosta has also been involved with the youth in the community as a School Resource Officer and as a Bell Gardens Explorer Post Advisor, as well as mentoring and developing younger officers within the department. He has conducted various training and informational meetings for community members about the hazards of drugs and the dangers of criminal street gangs. He is a critical part of the educational outreach and enforcement program that addresses underage drinking and business compliance with Alcohol Beverage Control, implementing the program both in Bell Gardens and in neighboring cities.

He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice and is working on his Master's Degree in Public Administration. Sgt. Acosta has been married for 13 years and has two children.



## MUSQUIZ EARNS LIEUTENANT BARS

Ruben Musquiz, a 31-year veteran of the Bell Gardens Police Department, was recently promoted to the rank of Lieutenant within the department. He recently returned to the Field Services Division (Uniformed Patrol) after a five-year assignment with a major narcotics task force. In the past, Lt. Musquiz worked several assignments in the Special Investigations Unit, but most of his career has been spent as a Sergeant assigned to patrol. He is looking forward to the challenges of his new position.



## EARTH DAY CELEBRATION SET AT FORD PARK

Bell Gardens residents, friends and neighbors are invited to participate in two free, environmentally-friendly events sponsored by the City of Bell Gardens on April 20.

First, volunteers from throughout the City will gather at 8 a.m. at Ford Park, 8000 Park Lane, to help clean up various areas, including the river bed behind the Ford Park pond. Bring gloves and wear comfortable clothing for the two-hour work party and help brighten up a corner of the City. Trash bags will be provided.

Then at 10 a.m., Ford Park will come alive with the City of Bell Gardens Earth Day Celebration. The free public celebration will feature children's art activities, information booths with lots of giveaways, face painting, a drum circle and tours of the Community Garden. Come see what's growing, learn about planting and talk with some of the gardeners who work the land. The garden is located on the east side of Ford Park next to the adult school and is accessible via a driveway that separates the school and the garden.

A variety of environmental organizations, recycling and waste services and local community groups will be sharing information about saving energy and water and offering giveaways that will help residents conserve and make best use of their resources.

Children of all ages will find lots of ways to express themselves in the Art Area. Supervised by Recreation staff, there will be chalk art, a large coloring mural, water play and crafts like paper plate tambourines and coffee filter butterfly magnets.

Recreation Supervisor Ana Avalos said that the drum circle is not only popular with people attending the event, it's one of her favorite activities.

"A community drum circle is a noisy and fun, family friendly event, where people come together in order to share their spirit by participating rhythmically as a group," she explained. "People of all levels of musical expertise come together and celebrate community and life through rhythm and music. Everyone who participates has something to offer the circle and anyone is welcome. In its place is a living breathing entity, expressing timeless joy, passion and release through the power of rhythm."

**For more information on the Earth Day Celebration, call 562-806-7650.**



## COMPLETE STREETS WORKSHOPS INVITE COMMUNITY INPUT

The City of Bell Gardens wants to know from residents what would make driving, walking, biking and public transit better and is hosting two workshops to collect opinions and suggestions.



Funded by a Caltrans grant, Complete Streets is a transportation strategy that requires streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users, regardless of their mode of transportation. Community feedback is essential to identifying problem streets and to create a more livable and safe community.

An introductory workshop was held October 18 where staff defined the project parameters, informed the community of opportunities and constraints and participants were asked to share their opinions on pedestrian, bicycle and transit amenities, desired routes for all modes of travel and trip origin and frequency. In addition, questionnaires, surveys and presentation materials are available at [www.facebook.com/BellGardensCompleteStreets](https://www.facebook.com/BellGardensCompleteStreets) for those who cannot participate in person.

A second meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 18 with day and evening sessions (10-11 a.m. and 7-8 p.m.) in Ross Hall at Veterans Park, 6662 Loveland Street, Bell Gardens. This workshop will share the findings from the first workshop and inform participants of the progress in conducting research, gathering data and evaluating the existing conditions of the City's transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Some draft concepts will be presented and once again, the community's ideas, thoughts and comments will be welcomed and considered to ensure the needs of the residents and all commuters are met. Additionally, attendees will be asked to provide insight on the intersections they consider to be most dangerous and the types of enhancements they believe could remedy safety concerns.

At the third workshop, which is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 17, 2019, staff will present a draft of the Complete Streets Plan based on the information submitted by residents, businesses, community leaders, and local agencies. **For more information on the Complete Streets workshops, call (562) 806-7770.**

## PROCESS BEGINS ON REALIGNMENT OF EASTERN AND GARFIELD INTERSECTION

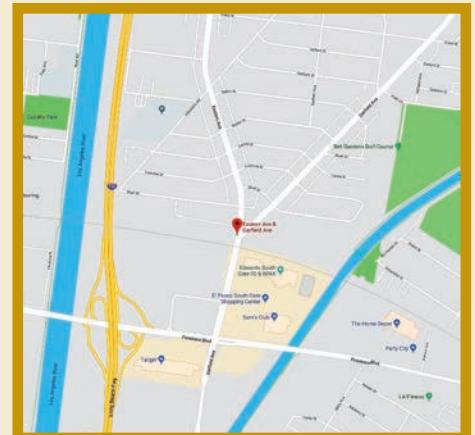
The City of Bell Gardens has begun the process of realigning the Y intersection at Eastern and Garfield Avenues into a safer, wider T intersection. When completed, this project will improve the intersection's capacity, visibility and mobility.

The intersection is presently located halfway between Florence Avenue in Bell Gardens and Firestone Boulevard in South Gate, near at grade railroad signal operations. The realignment will streamline business access, eliminate delays and increase the safety of the area.

The conversion will create a T intersection where Garfield Avenue will terminate at Eastern Avenue. Straightening the right of way on Garfield will have a small impact on a parking lot, the City monument sign will be moved to the opposite corner and the bus stop on Garfield will be relocated.

The project is needed to improve capacity, operations and traffic safety conditions. It will benefit the City of Bell Gardens and resolve existing traffic deficiencies. The business and property owners affected by the revision will be involved as part of the outreach process. Estimated cost of the project is \$4,635,000, which will be covered by Measure R funding via METRO.

Currently, METRO is approving the funding for the project and after agreements are executed, preliminary engineering will begin this Spring. Construction bids are expected to be issued in the Spring of 2021, with construction anticipated to begin in Summer 2021 and finish in Summer 2023.





## NEW EFFICIENT STENCIL TRUCK HEADED FOR BG STREETS

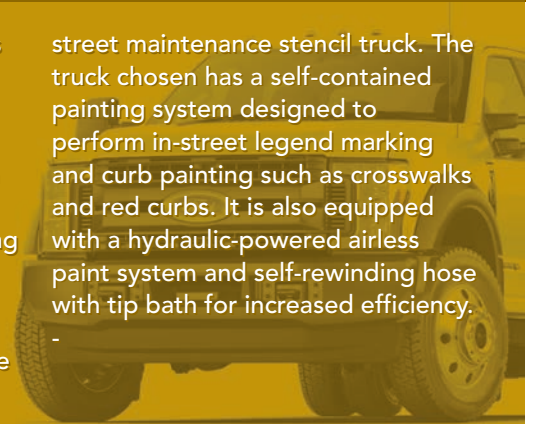
The City Council has approved the purchase of a 2019 Ford F450 specialty stencil traffic truck, replacing a 22-year old vehicle that is in need of significant repairs.

Last year, \$25,000 was spent on vehicle maintenance and repairs for trucks in the Public Works fleet. Most utility trucks in the fleet are more than 20 years old. The stencil

truck currently in service is 22 years old with mileage of 126,626. Recently, repairs were required for the transmission, power steering, hydraulic brakes and suspension. In addition, the truck's paint pumps and arrow board are failing, resulting in inefficient and unsafe operation.

The current budget includes \$120,000 for the replacement of the

street maintenance stencil truck. The truck chosen has a self-contained painting system designed to perform in-street legend marking and curb painting such as crosswalks and red curbs. It is also equipped with a hydraulic-powered airless paint system and self-rewinding hose with tip bath for increased efficiency.



## PUBLIC WORKS TO REPLACE TWO TRUCKS WITH AQMD FUNDS

Bell Gardens has joined the Local Government Partnership Program (LGPP) of the Mobile Source Air Pollution Review Committee (MSARC) to qualify for a grant to buy two new heavy-duty, CNG trucks that are near-zero emission vehicles.

The City's Public Works Department has a fleet of 26 vehicles that are aging and need costly repairs. Most have exceeded the recommended usage. Repairs required include replacement engines, alternators, transmissions, brakes and electrical components.

Grant funding is available from the MSRC program, which also provides guidance to help the City reduce air pollution within the regional air basin with a goal of being in compliance with clean air standards. The LGPP receives funding from the collection of vehicle registration fees which are then allocated to projects that reduce air pollution.

The cost of replacing a heavy-duty CNG truck is \$50,000, which the City has budgeted in this fiscal year. The LGPP matches the City dollar for dollar, making possible the purchase of two heavy-duty CNG trucks and taking two higher-polluting vehicles out of service.

## STORM DRAIN PROJECT TO FORTIFY CATCH BASINS

New connector pipe screens are being installed in storm drains to help reduce the amount of trash discharged into the Los Angeles River watershed.

The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board requires the City of Bell Gardens to decrease the trash that ends up in the watershed by 10 percent per year. This is achieved by two methods; using structural devices, such as the pipe screens, and taking other institutional measures, including community education programs, advising the public on what can and can't go down the storm drain.



Thirty-nine pipe screens will be installed in the flood control catch basins that are within the City limits. The screens will retain debris until the basins are cleaned by City maintenance crews, who service them monthly.

Fabrication and installation of the screens will be completed by United Storm

Water, who were awarded a \$17,753 contract. Infrastructure Engineers will provide project management, permit coordination and inspection services, which are separate.