

# Bell Gardens FALL 2017 Today

AUDITS PROVE  
STRENGTH AND  
SECURITY OF THE  
CITY'S FINANCES

## IN THIS ISSUE

- CITY ADOPTS \$53.4 MILLION BALANCED BUDGET
- SENIOR SERVES WITH SPIRIT AND A SMILE
- COMMUNITY PARTICIPATES IN UNITY CANDLELIGHT VIGIL
- TOP TRIO HONORED
- RESERVE PROGRAM TO RETURN TO BGPD
- SAVING ENERGY UNIT BY UNIT



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

## MESSAGE FROM YOUR CITY MANAGER

**It looks to be a busy few years ahead**, with some exciting projects, improvements and updated facilities and services supported by the 2017-2018 budget of \$53.4 million that was recently approved by the City Council.

The spending plan includes a \$31.8 million unrestricted General Fund budget with a projected budget surplus of \$66,000 after directing \$200,000 into the City's reserves which now totals \$2.9 million.

In addition to the General Fund, which supports such services as police, public safety, parks, planning, community development, public works, and administrative support services, the total budget includes \$7.7 million in capital improvement projects such as street and alley repairs, improved traffic signal and intersection safety modifications, and more than \$1 million for the replacement of artificial turf on the soccer fields at the Ford Park Sports Complex.

We ended the current fiscal year on June 30 with an unprecedented surplus of \$3.7 million, mainly the result of higher than projected casino revenue and the sale of City-owned property, originally purchased for future redevelopment.

As the City continues to navigate through a tempered economic recovery, we still face some very critical fiscal challenges that cannot be ignored as the cost of operating a city government continues to soar.

The City is always faced with the challenge of maximizing the effectiveness of our resources, and as a result, staff is



continuously seeking grant funds to supplement the budget and fund major projects. Applying for grants is a complex and competitive process, but I'm pleased to report that in the past five years, staff has successfully secured over \$12 million in outside funding sources to supplement our day-to-day operations, capital improvement projects, public safety, and numerous programs and services.

I continue to be inspired and impressed by the City Council's commitment to provide outstanding programs and services to the community and the enthusiasm and professionalism of our employees in delivering this expectation. It is this extraordinary teamwork that has made the City of Bell Gardens the financially stable and well-balanced community that it is today.

If you have any questions about the budget process or any City issue, your input is welcome. Get in touch with City Hall by calling (562) 806-7700 or visit us at [www.bellgardens.org](http://www.bellgardens.org)

*Philip Wagner*

CITY MANAGER

## SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

### ALARMING EFFORTS BY EXPLORERS AND RED CROSS

The Bell Gardens Police Department Explorers Post #673 recently participated in their 3rd annual Red Cross smoke/fire alarm installation in the City of Bell Gardens. With 58 volunteers, including Explorer Posts from the City of Bell and Alhambra, 300 smoke/fire alarms were installed in 109 houses.



## CITY OFFICIALS

### Bell Gardens City Council

Jose J. Mendoza, *Mayor*  
Priscilla Flores, *Mayor Pro Tem*  
Pedro Aceituno, *Councilmember*  
Maria Pulido, *Councilmember*  
Jennifer Rodriguez, *Councilmember*

Philip Wagner, *City Manager*  
John Oropeza, *Assistant 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.

## LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE GRADS

Recently Bell Gardens Police Chief Robert Barnes, Lieutenant Brendan Kirkpatrick and Lieutenant Dennis Timmons attended the graduation ceremony of Officer Mitchell Carrillo and Records Supervisor Nancy Hernandez at the Deputy Leadership Institute (DLI). DLI is a groundbreaking leadership development program designed to enhance an individual's ability to be leaders in the communities they are entrusted to protect. The Bell Gardens Police Department congratulates our participants on their achievement.



Chief Robert Barnes, Lt. Dennis Timmons, Officer Mitchell Carrillo, Records Supervisor Nancy Hernandez, Officer Miguel Torres, and Lt. Brendan Kirkpatrick

**On the Cover:**  
*Enjoying play at Ford Park Synthetic Soccer Field*

## SENIOR SERVES WITH SPIRIT AND A SMILE

At a recent City Council meeting, 73-year-old volunteer Alejandro Ceja Garcia, better known as "Don Alex," was named Bell Gardens' Older American of the Year.

A familiar face at the Senior Center in Veterans Park, Garcia lends a hand with events, helps with the food bank and even dons a red suit to play Santa Claus during the annual Bell Gardens Police Department toy giveaway.

After retiring from a career in food service, Garcia was walking through the neighborhood and found the Senior Center. Now he enjoys the camaraderie of Club Latino, one of the senior groups at the facility and is at the center of many events, from set up to cooking and cleanup.

Selecting Garcia for the honor was easy, according to Ramon Escobedo, recreation coordinator for senior activities for the City of Bell Gardens. He told EGP reporter Nancy Martinez that "he does it because that's the kind of person he is. He does not do anything expecting recognition."



Senior Center Recreation Coordinator Ramon Escobedo with Ana Sanchez and honoree Alejandro Ceja Garcia.



**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.

## BELL GARDENS ADOPTS \$53.4 MILLION BALANCED BUDGET

The Bell Gardens City Council has passed a \$53.4 million balanced budget for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. The spending plan includes a \$31.8 million unrestricted General Fund budget with a projected budget surplus of \$66,000, after directing \$200,000 into the City's reserves which now totals \$2.9 million.



the City Council. He reported that he planned to come back to the City Council to discuss ideas for one-time expenses like increasing reserves, adding to the employee retirement benefits trust fund, and capital improvement projects.

"The Ford Park pool needs major rehabilitation, playground equipment

In addition to the General Fund, the total budget includes all special revenues, enterprise funds, the Successor Agency and \$7.7 million in capital improvement projects that includes street and alley repairs, safety improvements at major intersections and traffic signal modifications, repairs and maintenance to the City's aging infrastructure, and more than \$1 million for the replacement of artificial turf at the Ford Park soccer fields.

in the City's parks need replacement, and the City's aging buildings and facilities need maintenance and repairs that have long been deferred," he said.

In a public budget presentation to the City Council, City Manager Philip Wagner reported ending the current fiscal year with an unprecedented surplus of \$3.7 million, mainly the result of higher than projected casino revenue and the sale of City-owned property, originally purchased for redevelopment.

The City is always faced with the challenge of maximizing the effectiveness of resources and staff has successfully supplemented the budget and funded major projects by applying for and receiving more than \$12 million in grants the past five years.

"The sale of property is a one-time revenue source and should be considered for one-time expenses," Wagner told

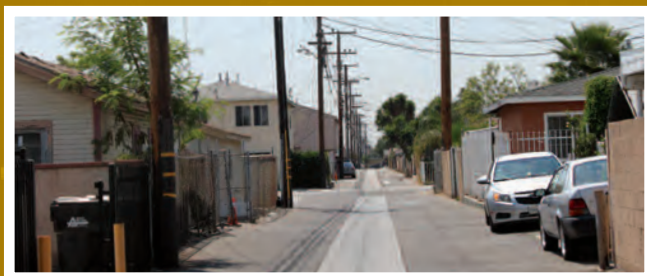
Independent audits continue to prove the strength and security of the City's finances. For the fifth consecutive year, the Government Finance Officers Association, which annually reviews more than 17,000 government agencies, has awarded Bell Gardens the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. "This validates our accountability, transparency, and financial stability," Wagner told the City Council.

## IMPROVEMENTS ARE RIGHT UP THE CITY'S ALLEY

One of the priorities of the City's 2016-2017 Capital Improvement Program includes repaving 10 well-traveled alleys in the City at an estimated cost of \$800,000, which will be financed with Measure R funds. Engineers are currently working on the project, which will result in safer travel through the city's many alleyways. Work is expected to begin on this before the end of 2017; the overall project completion is estimated to take no longer than 40 days.

The alleys to be upgraded include:

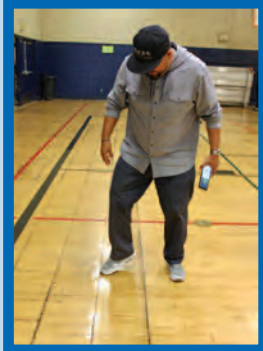
- Alley north of Florence between Ajax and Jaboneria
- Alley west of Eastern between Cecilia and Jaboneria
- Alley east of Eastern between Clara and Live Oak
- Alley north of Gage between Colmar and Jaboneria
- Alley east of Eastern between Muller and Quinn
- Alley west of Eastern between Fostoria and Cecilia
- Alley east of Eastern between Gage and Watcher
- Alley north of Gage between Ajax and El Selinda
- Alley west of Eastern between Gage and Watcher
- Alley south of Gage between Specht and the 710 freeway.



*Please be aware of construction, watch for signs that will be posted in the areas affected.*

## FORD PARK GYM TO GET NEW FLOORING

After hosting thousands of basketball games - from serious league competition to casual pick-up games - the original hardwood floor of the gym at Ford Park that was installed in 1959 is being replaced. A contract recently awarded to Roy's Flooring will complete the renovation of the aging boards. The company will remove existing flooring, clean and prepare the concrete surface beneath the new floor, install the hardwood floor, finish and court-stripe the floor and restore bleachers to their original location to provide a state-of-the-art playing surface. The cost of the renovation is \$119,475 and work is expected to be completed no later than the end of August so as not to interrupt any recreation league play.



## CALTRANS HELPS CITY PLAN TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The City of Bell Gardens was recently awarded a \$162,375 planning grant from the California Department of Transportation, which will bring the City closer to achieving its objective of fostering a bike, pedestrian, transit and motorist-friendly transportation network that is functional, safe and sustainable.

The first phase of the project will be conducting a comprehensive evaluation of existing pedestrian/bicycle conditions and transit services within the city. Planners will identify and analyze existing pedestrian, bicycle and transit deficiencies; prioritize and build consensus of community support for evidence-based solutions to increase non-motorized travel options and close gaps in the transportation network.

The plan will develop a collective list of projects, policies and strategies as a necessary first step to secure funding and implement needed infrastructure projects in keeping with Smart Mobility 2010 Principles. The final document, a citywide Complete Streets Plan, will serve as a guide for future modifications to provide transportation alternatives to residents, increase active modes of transportation, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase roadway users' safety, increase transit ridership, reduce vehicle trips, and create an overall cohesive city with no transportation gaps.

## RAISING THE ROOF(S) OVER MUCH OF THE CITY

In an effort to upgrade City buildings that are from 40 to 60 years old, nearly \$1.5 million has been allocated for roof replacement on the following buildings:

- Ford Park Recreation Center and Pool
- City Hall
- Police Department
- Resource Center
- Ford Park Golf Course
- Old Public Works building in Bell Gardens
- Veterans Park
- Public Works building

Because of significant damage to the roof and interior of the Ford Park Recreation Center building from a series of rainstorms in the spring, that structure will be the first to be renovated. In addition, repairs of termite damage and subsequent water intrusion will be completed on Ross Hall at Veterans Park. Structural pest control advisors have inspected the facility and recommended the replacement of the interior ceiling,

roof, and structural support beams; painting affected areas and abating any environmental conditions that may have resulted from the water and termites.

Replacement of additional roofs and other structural issues will be addressed after work on Ford Park and Ross Hall are completed. The overall roof replacement contract was awarded to Best Contracting Services, Inc. at the cost of \$1,415,370 and should take no more than four months to complete. The City will utilize bonds to finance the project.



## RESERVE PROGRAM TO RETURN TO BELL GARDENS POLICE DEPARTMENT

Bell Gardens Police Department is reinstating its Reserve Police Officer program after a long hiatus. In 2009, the last active member resigned and the program ended. With the support of the City Council, the program is now being revived to provide supplemental assistance to the operations division as well as various community programs and projects.

“The department’s needs have changed,” explained Bell Gardens Police Captain Scott Fairfield. “This will provide an avenue to bring on individuals who may decide they want to take an active role in law enforcement as volunteers, plus it creates a pool of people from which we can hire new officers. It also gives us the opportunity to bring back retirees from our department or other departments who have expertise in specific areas that they can share.”

Fairfield added that the Reserve program will also offer an opportunity to department retirees who still want to be engaged, giving them a chance to mentor other officers and staff and share their knowledge and experience.

Fully-trained Reserve Officers will assist in day-to-day patrol operations as well as being available to work



special City events, special enforcement programs and community policing projects. All reserve officer positions are volunteer in nature and provide no compensation, other than an annual uniform allowance of \$500. Additionally, reserve officers will have the opportunity to acquire and develop the skills and experience to qualify them to apply for regular, full-time police officer positions. Anyone interested in learning more about the Reserve Program should email [bfairfield@bgpd.org](mailto:bfairfield@bgpd.org).

### TOP TRIO HONORED

The Bell Gardens Police Department recently recognized three of its staff members as Employees of the Year for 2016. Honored for their continued commitment and dedication to the City of Bell Gardens and the Bell Gardens Police Department were Supervisor of the Year, Sgt. Angelo Sinisi, who is assigned to patrol on weekdays, and is involved in a variety of other Department programs; Officer Miguel Torres, who works as a Detective on general



Sgt. Angelo Sinisi



Officer Miguel Torres



Laura Martinez

investigations and also helps with the Department’s social media; and Civilian Laura Martinez who works in the Records Bureau as the Gaming Clerk, handling the voluminous paperwork, fingerprinting and record keeping for the casino.

# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATES IN UNITY CANDLELIGHT VIGIL



The City of Bell Gardens Faith-Based Community and the Bell Gardens Police hosted their annual Candlelight Vigil on June 21 in support of the area's youth.

Captain Scott Fairfield said that the event does a lot to foster a cooperative relationship between the community and the Police Department.

"This event allows us to get together with the faith-based organizations on positive terms and pray for and support each other," Fairfield said. "It shows a unified community and fosters a dialog that builds trust and ensures that we work together.

We all want the same thing, a safe community where our residents, businesses, and faith-based organizations support each other while improving the quality of life in our city."

Participants gathered at Veterans Park for a march to City Hall, then returned to the park for hymns, comments from local religious leaders, prayers and fellowship.



## BELL GARDENS POLICE TO PINK UP FOR BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

Hoping to meet or exceed last year's success, the Bell Gardens Police Department is once again participating in the Pink Patch Project, a collaborative cancer awareness and fundraising effort in partnership with the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs' Association.



During the 2016 campaign, Bell Gardens PD raised \$12,243, which was donated to the City of Hope for cancer research and treatment efforts. Bell Gardens was the third highest law enforcement fundraising group, contributing to an overall total of \$205,000 raised for the cause.



During the month of October, uniformed personnel will wear special pink patches on their uniforms to bring awareness and educate the public in early detection and prevention of breast cancer.

In the months leading up to October, the department will be selling patches for \$10 each, newly-designed challenge coins for \$15 each and commemorative shirts for \$20 each. All are available at the Bell Gardens Police Station at 7100 Garfield Avenue, and at many Bell Gardens community events. Proceeds will once again be donated to the City of Hope.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM OUTLINES NEW AND IMPROVED FACILITIES

A five-year plan for fixing, replacing and renovating facilities in the City of Bell Gardens has been approved by the City Council and work on the most critically needed fixes has already begun.

The Capital Improvement Program plan is a community planning and fiscal management tool used to identify the types of projects, timing and financing of needed improvements for streets, public buildings, parks, public infrastructure and equipment. Ranked by priority, the plan presents a year-by-year schedule of expected project funding and an estimate of project costs and financing sources.

The CIP development process consists of three major tasks: infrastructure needs assessment, funding analysis and management, and projects development and engineering. The first determines the complete scope of the City's assets; the second explores avenues of financing available from special funds or grants and the third outlines the actual execution of the projects through their completion.

It is important to note that most of the City's buildings, parks and facilities range in age from 40 to 60-plus years in age and have been maintained without major capital improvements for most of their existence. First year projects that present the most immediate need include upgrading and replacing HVAC and building controls at various city facilities; replacement of the hardwood floor in the Ford Park gymnasium and replacing the roofs of numerous city-owned buildings.

Other prioritized projects for the first year include the replacement of artificial turf at the soccer fields of Bell Gardens Sports Center; lighting repairs and installations at four major entry islands to the City; two monument signs for Ford Park and new LED lighting at park facilities.

There was also a project initially designated as the "Pool Energy Upgrades" for the replacement of the pump and filter system at the Ford Park pool, but the



latest inspection findings reveal that the entire pool infrastructure needs major renovations that go far beyond the energy upgrade. A detailed technical inspection and study will be conducted by commercial pool architects and engineering professionals to determine approximate costs for pool system renovations.

A sampling of subsequent years' recommended projects, which will not begin until funding has been secured from grants or the General Fund, include:

- *Recycled water expansion at Veterans' Park*
- *Water reservoir at City Well #1*
- *Eastern Avenue island turf replacement*
- *Intersection improvements at Garfield and Clara*
- *Replacement of the play equipment at Veterans and Ford Parks*
- *Security upgrades at the Police Department*
- *Picnic tables and shade structure at Ford Park*
- *Woodworth House preservation*

The CIP is a working document and should be reviewed and updated annually to reflect changing community needs, priorities and funding resources and opportunities. Preparation of the CIP and the annual budget are closely linked.





# SAVING ENERGY UNIT BY UNIT



*Bell Gardens is on its way to becoming one of the most energy-efficient communities in the area,* granting a contract to PacificWest Energy Solutions to make improvements at city facilities that will significantly reduce overall energy use and operating costs, curtail ongoing maintenance costs and positively impact the environment.

This will be the second time that PacificWest has helped the City cut costs and save energy; in 2011, they installed energy-efficient lighting at various City facilities, resulting in more than \$42,000 in energy savings per year. Since then, PacificWest completed an energy audit and found that upgrading building controls and the heating/ventilation/air conditioning systems could result in more energy savings of \$56,000 per year, when coupled with maintenance savings (eliminating costly repairs and emergency replacements), for a savings of more than \$1.1 million in costs over the 20-year lifetime of the project. The project's anticipated energy cost savings are greater than the project costs themselves.

The majority of the HVAC systems in city facilities are in poor condition and show wear from excessive age. Average equipment age ranges from 25 to 30 years or more. In addition, many units were originally installed and replaced incorrectly with improperly sized platforms, curbs, wiring, conduit, fuses, roof flashing and other code issues as missing controls and shutoffs or improper intake/vent distances.

Building controls (thermostats) throughout the City are outdated, with schedules for digital thermostats varying widely and many do not have override capability.



Replacing these controls with premium, programmable thermostats will allow the City to optimize set points and operating schedules. Controls are scheduled to be replaced in City Hall, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, the Resource Center, the Senior Center, Ross Hall/Old Senior Center and the Youth Center, which will include 71 zones of service. Also, HVAC units in service more than 15 years will be replaced; 13 roof units at City Hall, 5 roof units in Public Works, 6 roof units at the Resource Center, 8 ground units at Veterans Park and 2 roof units in Parks and Recreation.

"The buildings are over 50 years old and long overdue for cost-effective improvements," said Assistant City Manager John Oropeza. "This will help us operate more efficiently, be more green in our energy consumption and save money."

PacificWest has been successful in saving as much as 30-50% in energy costs for client cities and several school districts in Southern California. The agreement with PacificWest Energy Solutions is in the amount of \$1,014,819, which will be funded by Infrastructure Bond funding and repaid in full from realized energy cost savings and incentives. The project is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

