

Bell ^{SPRING} 2017 Gardens

Today

**GRAFFITI TAGGED
AS PRIORITY IN
REVISED PROPERTY
MAINTENANCE
ORDINANCE**

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

MESSAGE FROM YOUR CITY MANAGER

Welcome to the Spring 2017 edition of Bell Gardens Today! It's a new year with new projects, exciting accomplishments and much to share about future developments. We're proud of the work done by our staff and the support we get from residents, making Bell Gardens a great place to live.

Some changes in the Property Maintenance ordinance should help improve the look and property value in the City; of note, a section focusing on the elimination of graffiti has been added as well as clarification of the offenses involving overgrown vegetation and the storage of inoperable vehicles. All this and a change in the citation process is outlined in our cover story.

And we'd be remiss if we didn't mention the hard work done by our graffiti removal team from Public Works; these crews go out early every morning to ensure that tagging and unauthorized artwork is covered up.

City staff know that protecting the taxpayers' investment is important and work diligently to find alternative or additional sources to fund needed projects. We're proud to highlight their success in garnering more than \$10 million in grant funding to support crime prevention, storm drain construction, traffic safety and park enhancement.

We're also proud of the work done by the Bell Gardens Police Department, not only in continuing its vigilance to keep our streets safe, but as community supporters with the Pink Patch



Project, which resulted in more than \$12,000 being donated to The City of Hope for breast cancer research and treatment. A new officer has joined the department and is now patrolling the streets and dozens of firearms seized during criminal investigations or voluntarily surrendered were destroyed and some parts recycled.

Several City employees took first aid/AED classes recently, making our staff one of the best prepared in case of emergency. Their involvement is just part of our dedication to making Bell Gardens one of the healthiest and most prepared cities in the Southland.

Have an issue you'd like to talk about? Questions about ordinances or procedures? Compliments or comments regarding service you've received from the City? We'd love to hear from you. Give us a call at (562) 806-7700 or visit us at www.bellgardens.org.

Philip Wagner

CITY MANAGER

NOTICE TO VOTERS

IMPORTANT ELECTION INFORMATION: DATE CHANGE

NOVEMBER 6, 2018 IS NEXT GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION

Dear Voter:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, the General Municipal Election has been changed from November in odd years to November in even years to coincide with statewide election dates. Pursuant to California Elections Code § 1301, City of Bell Gardens Ordinance No. 881 and the action taken by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on Feb. 7, 2017, the next General Municipal Election will be held on November 6, 2018. This is the same day as the Statewide General Election.

Current elected City officeholders will have their terms increased by approximately 12 months, because upcoming elections for their current elected positions will now be held on November 2018 and November 2020 (one year later than originally scheduled).

For more information call the City Clerk's Office at (562) 806-7705.

Kristina Santana,
Bell Gardens City Clerk/Elections Official

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.

CITY HOSTS DRUG ABUSE WORKSHOP

In response to growing concerns about drug abuse in the City of Bell Gardens, the Bell Gardens Police Department, in partnership with the Bell Gardens Recreation and Community Services Department and Bell Gardens High School ROP recently hosted a free workshop for parents, "Drugs and Kids: What Parents Need To Know."

The workshop was held in the Senior Center at Veterans Park. City officials and law enforcement officials agree that drug abuse prevention starts before a child starts experimenting with drugs. The evening's presentation was facilitated by Fresh Start – A Drug Rehabilitation and Prevention Program (www.freshstart.net/drug_education.html). Representatives from the City, Police Department, and the local school district were in attendance to offer information and answer questions.

At the workshop, speakers shared resources for parents and families, including websites such as www.drugfreeworld.org, www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov/publications, and www.drugfree.org/get-help.

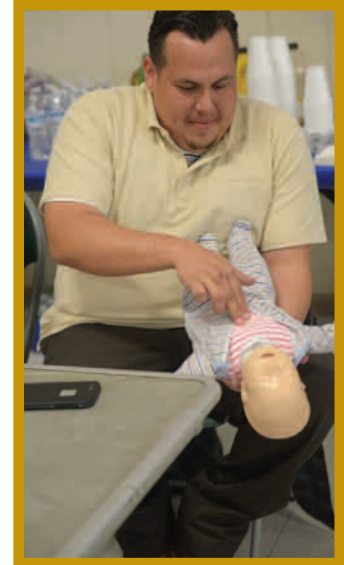
On the Cover:
Graffiti tagged as priority in revised property maintenance ordinance.

CITY WORKERS LEARN LIFESAVING TECHNIQUES

As part of a program to help civic employees be informed and able to help during medical emergencies, 29 people attended a recent training session in Ross Hall at Bell Gardens' Veterans Park that covered first aid, CPR and the use of AED devices.

Of the attendees, 20 were employees of the City of Bell Gardens, coming from the City Manager's office, Finance and Administrative Services, Public Works, Community Development and, Recreation and Community Services. Nine were employees of the cities of Diamond Bar, Lakewood and Commerce.

Bell Gardens has always taken a proactive stance on educating its employees to be of assistance and was one of the first cities in Los Angeles County to install AEDs (Automatic External Defibrillators) in civic buildings and police patrol vehicles.



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 for updated City information.

Go to www.bgrecreation.org for recreation programs and events. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

GRAFFITI TAGGED AS PRIORITY IN REVISED PROPERTY MAINTENANCE ORDINANCE

As part of their quest to promote appropriate property maintenance and enhance the appearance, habitability and safety of all structures and premises, the City of Bell Gardens established property maintenance guidelines as part of its Municipal Code. These codes have been revised three times; in 1988 and 2002 and in 2016.

The most recent revision of Code 16.20 related to property maintenance changed some enforcement procedures and added clarification to several offenses included in the code. One of the most important changes was the addition of graffiti to the list of property standard offenses that requires property owners and tenants to be responsible for preventing the defacing of structures and vehicles to the best of their ability.

The graffiti-related offense reads; "causing, permitting, aiding or abetting or suffering any graffiti (including defacement due to any writing, inscription, figure, scratches, or other markings) that is visible from any real property, public street, sidewalk, alley or other public right-of-way or other area open to the public to remain on; any building or structure exteriors, or portions thereof; walls; fences; trees; driveways; walkways; or any vehicle owned, possessed, or within the custody or control of such person."

Other changes include a revision of the citation process previously used by Code Enforcement Officers, which has been replaced by a Notice of Violation that allows the City to use any of its available administrative, civil or criminal remedies, including prosecution, to force compliance.

The previous ordinance allowed violators "at least 10 calendar days, but no more than 30 calendar days" to



correct violations; this has been replaced with shorter compliance deadlines, including a 24-hour deadline in emergency situations requiring immediate corrective action.

Section 16.20.040(A) clarifies that any violation of the Ordinance constitutes a misdemeanor offense and refers to the City's general penalty provisions.

Nine of the 17 offenses have been slightly modified to provide clarification as to the nature of violations. In addition to the graffiti provision, the other major revisions are related to overgrown and dead vegetation and storing or parking of inoperable vehicles.

According to the revised ordinance, overgrown vegetation includes 1) vegetation likely to harbor or promote the presence of rats, vermin or insects, 2) vegetation causing detriment to neighboring properties or out of conformity with neighborhood values, possibly causing diminished property values, including lawns with grass six inches high or higher and untrimmed hedges, trees or other plants,

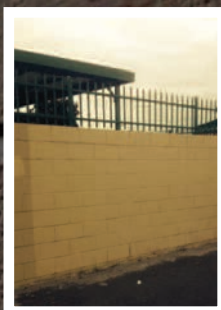
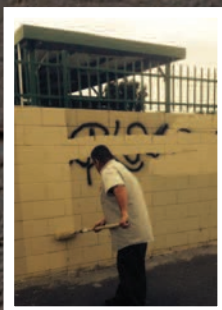




3) vegetation that creates a fire hazard, 4) vegetation that overhangs into public property, causing an obstruction to persons or vehicles and 5) tree branches or other vegetation within five feet of the rooftop of a structure that might facilitate rodent or animal access.

New rules applying to abandoned, wrecked, dismantled or inoperative automobiles, trailers, campers, boats or similar vehicles require them to be stored within a completely enclosed, lawfully constructed structure. These vehicles include those with a "non-operational" status with the DMV or those that are lacking current, valid registration, a working engine, transmission, wheels, inflated tires, doors, windshield or any other part required for legal and safe operation on the road.

The City has an active graffiti removal program that addresses incidents of tagging or defacement of property. Anyone can report graffiti and request its removal by calling the Public Works Department at (562) 806-7770.



These are the 17 items that Code Enforcement Officers look for and could result in a Notice of Violation:

- Property erosion or poor surface water drainage
- Overgrown vegetation; unsightly or creating fire or public safety hazard
- Storage or accumulation of debris or trash
- Storage or accumulation of broken items in public view
- Materials stored on rooftops
- Clotheslines in front yards or items draped over walls or fences
- Trash, recycling, yard waste containers visible from street
- Fences or walls unsightly or unsafe
- Attractive nuisances such as pools, ponds, appliances or excavations
- On- and off-site signs advertising services or goods no longer valid
- Temporary banner and real estate signs up past legal timeframe
- Abandoned, wrecked, dismantled or inoperative vehicles
- Vehicles parked on unpaved portions of property
- Swimming pools not properly treated, likely to harbor insects or vectors
- Displaying merchandise for sale outside of an approved establishment
- Unsightly structure or covering in view of public right-of-way
- Graffiti on structures or vehicles visible from any property, street or public right-of-way

CITY TREES TRIMMED WITH CARE

Residents may have noticed tree trimmers working overhead, thinning out branches and leaves in the nearly 4,500 trees that make up Bell Gardens' urban forest. The trees, which grow in public parks, near municipal facilities, along streets and on median islands, are groomed over a two-year cycle. Trees north of Florence Avenue are trimmed in one year and those south of Florence Avenue are taken care of the next.

Tree-trimmers prune the sides to lighten and balance vegetation, reduce the crown, remove deadwood and crossed branches and raise lower limbs and branches to a legal height to provide for the general health of the trees and safety of the public. If needed, tree and stump removal is also performed.

Trimming Land Company, Inc. does the work for the City and has 31 years of experience working with many public agencies, including LA World Airports, the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles and eight other cities in Southern California.



Any residents with questions about the tree trimming or to report a tree that has been damaged may call the Public Works Department at **(562) 806-7770**.



A NEW PLACE TO PLAY AT GALLANT PARK

Continuing a partnership that revived Marlow Park, Bell Gardens is working with GameTime to replace the play structure and swing set at Gallant Park, with work expected to be completed by early summer.

"Updating our play equipment is another way that the City provides a healthy environment for children and families to interact," said Chris Daste, Director of Recreation and Community Services.

The City applied for and was awarded a \$8,828 grant from GameTime to help defray expenses. Removal of the

existing equipment and surfacing will be handled by the City's Public Works Department, saving the City more than \$10,000 in potential outside contractor costs.

The custom, brightly-colored play structure will feature multi-level activities for children, including two slides, a loop ladder, spiral and ridge climbers. It will be complimented by a new swing set which will be installed nearby.

The overall cost of the project is \$65,000, which will come from the Public Works' Operations and Capital Improvement Project accounts.



BELL GARDENS TO BENEFIT FROM STORM WATER GRANT

The first phase of an infiltration cistern project at John Anson Ford Park will be funded by a \$10 million grant from the Storm Water Grant Program. Working with The Gateway Water Management Authority, the City of Bell Gardens joined seven other cities in the LA River Upper Reach 2 Watershed Group for the submission of the \$9,949,842 request.

This project will divert and retain storm runoff from a three-square mile urban catchment into a cistern below the park for reuse and recharge. Phase I (of four) includes planning, permitting, parking lot, diversion and dry-weather cistern construction tasks.

This project was one of 84 competing for the available \$80 million in grants from the State Water Board Division of Financial Assistance Prop. 1 Storm Water Grant Program. Twenty-seven projects were successful and received partial or complete funding.

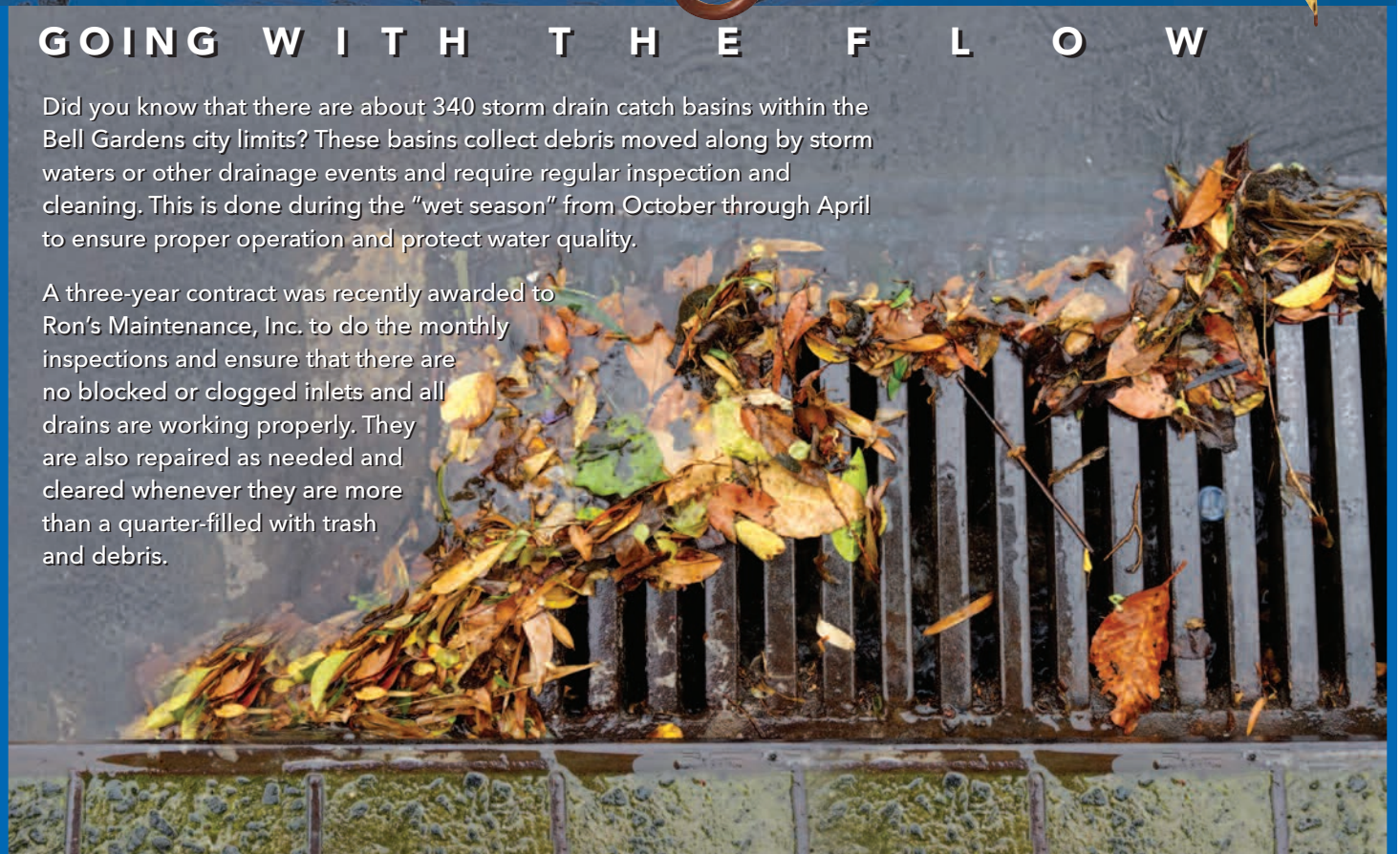
According to Chau Vu, Director of Public Works for the City of Bell Gardens, work on the project will begin in June 2017, with an expected completion in July 2020.



GOING WITH THE FLOW

Did you know that there are about 340 storm drain catch basins within the Bell Gardens city limits? These basins collect debris moved along by storm waters or other drainage events and require regular inspection and cleaning. This is done during the "wet season" from October through April to ensure proper operation and protect water quality.

A three-year contract was recently awarded to Ron's Maintenance, Inc. to do the monthly inspections and ensure that there are no blocked or clogged inlets and all drains are working properly. They are also repaired as needed and cleared whenever they are more than a quarter-filled with trash and debris.



PINK PATCH PROJECT A SUCCESS

During the month of October, the Bell Gardens Police Department led a charge to increase public awareness about breast cancer, raising money for the fight against the disease and stimulating conversation with the community about early detection and treatment. The effort was part of the Pink Patch Project, a collaborative effort between the Los Angeles County Police Chief's Association and 82 public safety agencies across the nation.

Officers in Bell Gardens wore vibrant pink commemorative patches on their uniforms, supported by staff members and colleagues at City Hall wearing

Pink Patch Project commemorative T-shirts, during Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October). Patches and T-shirts, challenge coins and other items were sold to help the cause at several community events.

Nationally, more than 25,000 pink patches were distributed and more than \$325,000 was raised for the fight against breast cancer. In Los Angeles County, police agencies were responsible for raising \$205,000 of that \$325,000 and of those agencies participating, Bell Gardens Police Department ranked #3 in highest amount raised with a total of \$12,243.



In November, law enforcement agencies united to present \$205,000 to the City of Hope for their cancer research and treatment efforts.

FIREARMS REDUCED, REMOVED, RECYCLED

More than 80 firearms, many confiscated during the commission of dangerous crimes, were destroyed recently by the Bell Gardens Police Department. While most of the weapons were seized after illegal activity, some of the handguns and rifles were voluntarily surrendered by residents wishing to dispose of them in a safe way.

"The completion of this project ensures that these dangerous weapons are never again used to harm residents of this or any other community," said Bell Gardens Police Chief Robert Barnes.



Many of the guns were evidence from several criminal cases, including robberies or assaults with deadly weapons. These cases have been resolved and the weapons ordered for destruction by the court.

Members of the Bell Gardens Police Department prepared approximately 85 handguns and rifles for destruction.

The weapons were dismantled and separated into recyclable and non-recyclable parts. The non-recyclable material was transported to an off-site location and melted down, any the recyclable material was sold to an authorized vendor.



SAFETY FIRST WITH GRANT-FUNDED UPGRADES

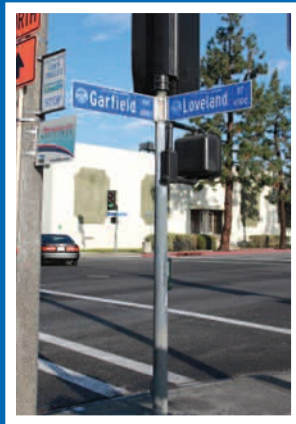
The City of Bell Gardens recently received two grants from the Caltrans Highway Safety Improvement Program that will make significant changes in two major intersections.



The locations that will be improved are Eastern Avenue at Lubec Street and Garfield Avenue at Loveland Street, two of the City's busiest

intersections. The improvements will make travel through these areas safer for both vehicles and pedestrians.

Each grant was in the amount of \$220,000, for a total of \$440,000 and will be used to install protected-permissive left turn phases and signal heads on new poles where left turn lanes already exist for north- and southbound traffic.



The grants will cover all project costs with no additional funding required from the City.

SOTO MOVES FROM CUSTODY TO CRIME FIGHTING

Officer Jose Soto was sworn in as Bell Gardens' newest police officer on December 5, 2016 during a ceremony in City Hall Council Chambers. Officer Soto previously worked with the police department as a jailer. A graduate of Golden West College Police Academy, he is currently involved in a 20-week field training program.



BGPD GRANTED MORE SAFETY PROGRAMS

Bell Gardens Police Department was recently awarded a \$70,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. This grant will supplement the police department's existing Traffic Safety Program, funding a 12-month campaign of public awareness and selective enforcement to prevent traffic-related injuries and deaths.

"The police department has a strong commitment to pedestrian and driver safety, said Police Chief Robert Barnes. "This ongoing partnership with the Office of Traffic Safety will assist our personnel with enforcement and education efforts over the next year. I am confident that this program will improve safety and have a positive impact on our community."



After falling to a 10-year low in 2010, the number of persons killed has climbed nearly 17% across the state with 3,176 killed in 2015 according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Particularly alarming is the six-year rise in pedestrian and bicycle fatalities, along with the growing dangers of distracting technologies, and the emergence of drug-impaired driving. This grant funding will provide opportunities to combat these and other devastating problems such as drunk driving, speeding and accidents at intersections.

Activities that the grant will fund include: educational presentations; DUI checkpoints and saturation patrols; bicycle, pedestrian and motorcycle safety enforcement; seat belt and child safety seat enforcement; speed, red light, and stop sign enforcement; warrant service operations targeting multiple DUI offenders; compilation of DUI "Hot Sheets," identifying worst-of-the-worst DUI offenders and specialized DUI and drugged driving training such as Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (SFST), Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE), and Drug Recognition Evaluator (DRE).