

# Bell Gardens

WINTER  
2017

# Today

COMMUNITY  
RELATIONS,  
ONE CUP  
AT A TIME

## IN THIS ISSUE

- TIGHTER SMOKING RESTRICTIONS AROUND THE CITY
- CITYWIDE SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS UNDERWAY SOON
- COFFEE WITH A COP
- ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS ORDINANCE CHANGES
- GUATEMALAN DIGNITARIES TOUR CITY HALL
- NEW BASKETBALL COURTS AND NEW TURF



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



## MESSAGE FROM YOUR CITY MANAGER

**Welcome** to this information-packed edition of Bell Gardens Today! There are a lot of projects underway, some of them finished and already in use by residents, some of them promising exciting things for the months to come, all with the goal of improving the quality of life in Bell Gardens.

Safety is a priority with a series of citywide improvements aimed at pedestrians and cyclists. Public Works has received a federal transportation grant of \$802,000 to make streets in the City easier to travel and coexist with vehicular traffic.

The City Council approved two ordinances that will further improve health and safety in the City; Community Development guidelines for accessory dwelling units will make it easier to define the requirements to accommodate additional residential space on qualifying parcels, including some garage conversions. And smoking in City parks and buildings is no longer an option, after the Council acted to expand protections for the public's health, especially our youngest residents.

Brand new turf on the Ford Park soccer fields and a new hardwood floor in the gym are a hit with both players and fans of our soccer, basketball and volleyball teams, making the park one of the hottest sports spots in town.

Residents of Bell Gardens needing passports don't have to stand in long lines at the Post Office any longer, now that City Hall has expanded passport services three days a week.



Kudos to the many members of the Bell Gardens Police Department who hosted "Coffee With A Cop." This is a great community relations effort that gives our officers a chance to get to know residents in a casual atmosphere and has already begun to pay off with improved interactions during regular patrol operations. Also, a grant from the state's Alcohol Beverage Control will provide expanded education and enforcement efforts targeting underage drinking and public nuisances in the City.

Those are just some of the highlights of the exciting things going on here in Bell Gardens. As always, your input is welcome on any City issue or concern. Give us a call at (562) 806-7700 or visit us at [www.bellgardens.org](http://www.bellgardens.org).

*Philip Wagner*

CITY MANAGER

## SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

### TACO QUICKIE, QUICKIE DOG FOUNDERS HONORED

The Bell Gardens City Council recently recognized local business owners Russell and Mary Jones, who retired and closed their restaurant Taco Quickie and Quickie Dog on October 8, after serving thousands of customers in the last 54 years.

As proud members of their community, Taco Quickie and Quickie Dog have always been known to sponsor local causes, such as schools, sports teams, pageants, and scouts, as well as law enforcement and fire department events. They also provided jobs to the community, employing many of the area's youth.

Early in their venture, the Jones' partnered with Glen Bell, the founder of Taco Bell, but set out on their own in 1963, opening Taco Quickie on Eastern Avenue near Clara Street in Bell Gardens. The "Quickie" name was a variation of Mary's maiden name of Cuicchi.



The Jones' had customers in several locations, but eventually narrowed their focus to the stand in Bell Gardens. When they announced their plans to retire and close the stand, faithful patrons waited in long lines for a last taste of their favorite menu items – tacos, burgers, hot dogs and "chili beefers."

## CITY OFFICIALS

### Bell Gardens City Council

Maria Pulido, Mayor

Jose J. Mendoza, Mayor Pro Tem

Pedro Aceituno, Councilmember

Priscilla Flores, 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.

## BUCKLE UP FOR SAFETY

A seatbelt safety workshop was held recently in Ross Hall, hosted by Bell Gardens Police Department Senior Officer Cobain and Motor Officer Perez, in conjunction with members of Safety Belt Safe USA. The class was primarily composed of law enforcement staff, community volunteers, and other professionals who work with children and families.



The objective of the workshop was to increase health and safety professionals' knowledge of proper child safety seat usage, to reduce the incidence of death and injury in childhood from motor vehicle crashes, and to enhance professionals' roles in the community in reducing those deaths and injuries.

**On the Cover:**  
Bell Gardens Police officers got to know residents over cups of coffee during "Coffee With A Cop"

## CITY WORKERS PARTICIPATE IN SAFE WORKPLACE TRAININGS

As part of Bell Gardens' commitment to providing a safe workplace for staff and the public, all City staff, elected and appointed officials participated in workplace harassment prevention training. They were given an overview of state and federal laws defining inappropriate conduct in the workplace, prevention measures, employee liability, investigation, and appropriate actions on a harassment claim.

Also covered were the subjects of retaliation, workplace bullying and abusive conduct, individual liability, available defenses for the City and responding to complaints.

In addition, all City staff participated in the Great California ShakeOut, an exercise designed to help people get prepared and practice what to do to be safe during an earthquake. The ShakeOut began in California in 2008 and has become a global event, with 55 million participants worldwide in 2016. Last year, more than 10.6 million Californians practiced "Drop, Cover and Hold On" and other safety procedures as part of the ShakeOut drill.

Participants were encouraged to think about their surroundings and preventive measures that could be taken to ensure safety and quick recovery after an earthquake.

One takeaway from the drill was practicing communication with family, friends and co-workers, using texting first before making phone calls for minimal impact on information systems.

The Great  
California  
**Shake  
Out**  
TM



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.

## SMOKING RESTRICTIONS TIGHTENED IN PUBLIC PARKS, CIVIC BUILDINGS

Regulations related to smoking in and around Bell Gardens' parks and public buildings just got tighter and now include electronic cigarettes and vapers. Smoking within 25 feet of any playground or recreational areas specifically designed for children is already prohibited by California law and Government Code 9597 prohibits smoking in and within 25 feet of any public building.

Acting to protect the public's health and well-being, Bell Gardens joins at least 176 other California cities that have already banned smoking in public parks by passing Ordinance 885. Smoking is defined as inhaling, exhaling, burning or carrying any

lighted, heated or ignited cigarette, cigar, cigarillo, pipe and hookah; that definition now includes electronic smoking devices and vapers and smoking any natural or synthetic plant products, including natural or synthetic marijuana.

"Students and teachers from Bell Gardens High School, along with the American Lung Association recently expressed concerns to the City Council regarding smoking and use of electronic smoking devices in and around public facilities, public parks and other outdoor recreational areas," said City Manager Philip Wagner. "This ordinance gives Bell Gardens an opportunity to expand

upon the protections under state law and provide for the public health, safety, and welfare, especially that of our children."

Buildings covered by the restrictions include all enclosed or unenclosed areas of any buildings, structures, or facilities, or complexes owned,

leased, or operated by the City of Bell Gardens. These include City Hall, all City offices and off-site departments, buildings, meeting or conference facilities, library and recreation buildings.

It also includes all parks and parkways owned by the City, including connected parking lots and alleys. It does not include golf courses. Recreational areas covered by these restrictions include picnic areas, playgrounds, sports fields, tracks, walking paths, gardens, hiking trails, bike paths, riding trails, swimming pools and skateboard parks.

Violations of the ordinance are considered a misdemeanor, with fines of \$100 for the first offense, \$200 for the second and \$500 for the third and subsequent offenses within a 12-month period.

More than 438,000 people die every year from tobacco-related diseases, which are considered the leading cause of preventable death. Cities that have enacted smoking bans report reduced litter in public areas, the elimination of secondhand smoke and many other positive health benefits.



## OFFICER ANDRADE RETIRES AFTER 24 YEARS OF SERVICE

When Armando Andrade retired from the US Marine Corps in 1992, he started a new career – as a police officer for the City of Bell Gardens. After 24 years of law enforcement service, which included stints for Escondido and Huntington Park Police Departments as well as a year advising the Iraq police before spending the last 11 years in Bell Gardens, he is retiring to get some well-deserved free time.

His fellow officers said that Andrade's personality and sense of humor were infectious and that he spent his years at BGPD making the department and community a better place. During his time at Bell Gardens, he worked in Patrol and Special Investigations, and included positions as Field Training Officer, Range Master, First Aid/CPR Instructor, Special Operations Team and as a Tactical Medic.





## BELL GARDENS POLICE DEPARTMENT SHARES MULTIAGENCY ABC GRANT

In response to an overwhelming number of alcohol-related public safety and nuisance incidents, the cities of Bell Gardens, Downey and Whittier applied for and received a multijurisdictional grant of \$71,500 from the California Department of Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC). Of that amount, Bell Gardens will receive \$21,000.

The purpose of the grant is to fund education and training on issues such as proper identification checks, underage consumption of alcohol, adults buying alcohol for minors, driving under the influence, public nuisances and intoxicated persons loitering near parks, schools and restrooms.

Sgt. Paul Camacho of the Bell Gardens Police Department will coordinate the local effort. Camacho, who started his career in law enforcement as an investigator with ABC, will conduct trainings in Spanish and English in the rules and regulations of ABC for merchants as well as holding an assembly on the dangers and penalties of underage drinking for students at Bell Gardens High School.

The grant funding will help ensure uniform enforcement of alcohol-related laws in the three neighboring cities, as well as help support efforts of ABC officers.

"We have been doing IMPACT (Informed Merchants Preventing Alcohol-related Tendencies) inspections in the past within the City limits, where we remind licensees of the responsibilities and accountability associated with the sale of alcohol," Camacho



said. "The officers look for loitering, litter, graffiti, posted signs, slot machines, lack of food service in restaurants, illegal weapons, or other violations. Although the focus is to educate, officers will take action if they see any major violations during the inspections."

There has been an increase in alcohol-licensed establishments over the past several years in Bell Gardens; currently there are 61, which include restaurants, bars and retail stores. The funding will cover inspections of several of these establishments as well as prevention programs including minor decoy, shoulder tap (adults asked to buy alcohol for minors) operations, teenage party prevention, beer runs, receiving stolen property, serving intoxicated people, special events and offenses involving drinking in public areas.

"Bell Gardens PD is taking the lead in educating other agencies and addressing these problems," Camacho said. "Along with training the trainers, as the three agencies work together, we can plan and allocate resources for the best result."

## CITYWIDE SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS UNDERWAY SOON

The City of Bell Gardens recently received \$802,000 in federal transportation funding dedicated to the construction of safety improvements for pedestrians and bicycle riders. Five major streets – Eastern Avenue, Garfield Avenue, Gage Avenue, Florence Avenue and Clara Street – will be affected, as the City installs pedestrian countdown signals, access ramps in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, bicycle route signage, shared

lane markings and bike video detection systems.

The objectives of this project are to encourage residents to walk or use bikes to get to local destinations, reduce pedestrian-bike collisions and improve safety by mitigating safety hazards, enhance health and safety by encouraging physical activities and save energy costs and reduce greenhouse emissions.

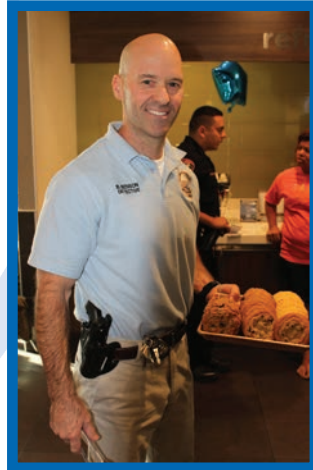
The funding is administered by

Caltrans under its Active Transportation Program, which consolidates federal and state programs addressing transportation alternatives, bicycle transportation and safe routes to school, with the overall goal of making California a national leader in active transportation.

The City's Engineering Department has completed the design and construction documents and solicited bids for the project's construction.

## COFFEE WITH A COP CAFFEINATES COMMUNICATION

The conversation flowed as freely as the caffeine at “Coffee With A Cop” recently at McDonald’s on Eastern Avenue, when police officers sat down with residents for friendly conversation in a casual setting. Sponsored by the Bell Gardens Police Department, the gatherings are part of a national campaign to bring the public and law enforcement together to educate each other in an informal setting.



Officer Dano Neslen, who oversees the program for BGDPD, said that there have been six Coffee With A Cop events since it was launched in Bell Gardens in February 2016, and all have been well-attended.

“Every event we’ve had, we’ve been busy and plenty of conversations were happening,” he explained. “We get a lot of questions asking why we do some of the things the way we do them, and that’s really the purpose of the program, to explain why and how we do what we do. Hopefully we educate the people who are asking the questions and sometimes we may not agree on things, but the point isn’t necessarily to agree, but to educate.

“We also get a lot of people who come to us and tell us about a problem on their street or neighborhood, they’ll say ‘I think the house next door might be selling drugs’ or they’ll tell us they see gang members hanging out and we are able to look into those issues,” he said.

Neslen said that many people find it difficult to approach a police officer while they are on duty, but events like these provide an easy way to communicate.

“It’s an absolutely stress-free environment, the police haven’t stopped anybody, this is 100 percent voluntary and there’s no worry from the community that we’re going to take some sort of enforcement action at these events.”

He also emphasized the importance of communication and mutual understanding, especially with law enforcement being in the spotlight of the news media recently.

“With every event, the support grows,” Neslen said. “That’s one of our goals, for every single person we talk to walk away saying ‘that’s not just a police officer, that’s a person.’”





## ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS ADDRESSED IN ORDINANCE CHANGES

The City Council recently approved some important changes to the ordinance governing residential units and improvements to those structures.

Previously referred to as "second dwelling units," they are now called "accessory dwelling units" (ADUs) and can be new, attached or detached units separate from the primary residential structure; either as a separate unit within the residence, one within the walls of an accessory structure on the same lot, or a garage conversion.

The new rules include the following provisions:

- *ADUs and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs) are only allowed on owner-occupied single family residential lots 7,500 square feet or greater in size, with one existing single family residential unit.*
- *The maximum size is 600 square feet for an accessory dwelling unit or 500 square feet for a junior accessory dwelling unit.*
- *ADUs must be rented for periods of no less than 30 days.*
- *ADUs may not be sold off as separate structures.*
- *There must be a covenant filed that provides current and future property owners comply with owner-occupancy and sale/rental restrictions.*
- *Anything created within an existing structure must be permitted and comply with California building codes.*
- *Structures attached or detached (but not those within existing walls) require site and floor plans and a building elevation application ministered through the City's Community Development Department.*
- *All ADUs must comply with setbacks for fire safety. Only those built outside existing structures are subject to special development standards.*
- *Off-street parking requirements are governed by the Government Code, which requires flexibility.*



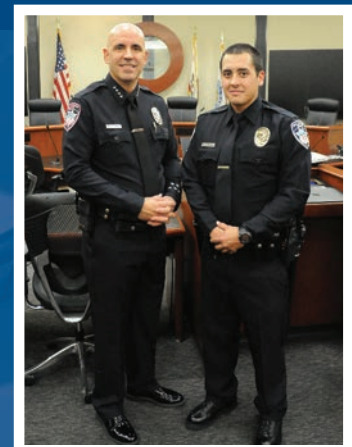
The new regulations come after the state passed laws making it easier for people to get approval to build secondary residential units. The ultimate authority lies with cities to regulate the building and safety of the units.

"These are reasonable and enforceable regulations that helps us identify properties that might be eligible for the second units," explained Abel Avalos, Director of Community Development.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT A FAMILY TRADITION FOR NEW BGPD OFFICER HENSHAW

Officer Justin Henshaw, who was recently sworn in to service for the Bell Gardens Police Department, has been around law enforcement his entire life. He has several relatives in law enforcement and the name Henshaw is well-known and respected in Southeast Los Angeles.

His uncle, Ty Henshaw, worked for the City of Bell for several years before moving to Irwindale PD as a Captain and promoting to Chief of Police. Closer to home, Justin joins his uncle Sgt. Troy Henshaw, who has proudly and professionally served the City of Bell Gardens for the past 29 years.



## GUATEMALAN DIGNITARIES TOUR CITY HALL

Elected officials from Guatemala visited Bell Gardens City Hall recently to expand their knowledge of community development and exchange information with their American colleagues.

This is the 10th year that the dignitaries have come to the City, coinciding with an annual international conference of elected officials. Abel Avalos, Director of Community Development served as the group's tour guide.

Avalos gave the visitors an extensive tour of his department and that of Code Enforcement, and said that they had a lot of questions about Bell Gardens' practices. Last year, the group learned about police services and budgeting.

"They learn from us and we talk about how they do things as well. It's a good exchange of ideas on an international level," Avalos said.



## PASSPORT SERVICES NOW AVAILABLE THREE DAYS A WEEK

Residents of Bell Gardens needing passports don't have to stand in long lines at the Post Office any longer, now that City Hall is offering passport services three days a week. Recently, a position for a part-time Passport Acceptance Agent, certified by the State Department and employed by the City of Bell Gardens, was included in the 2017-2018 budget.

Passport processing services are now available from the City Clerk's office at Bell Gardens City Hall on Mondays from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Appointments may be made by calling (562) 806-7706.

To apply for a passport, you must bring the following:

- One recent passport-sized photo (2x2)
- Valid proof of identity (applicant or parents of minor) and copy of front and back of ID
- Completed application for a passport (use black ink only; applications and forms are available at the City Clerk's office or can be downloaded online from <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/forms.html>)
- Evidence of U.S. Citizenship (Certificate of Citizenship or certified copy of birth certificate) and copy. If you have had a name change (such as marriage or adoption), or special circumstances, additional documents may be required

- *Passport fees, payable to the U.S. Department of State, in the form of check or money order only*
- *\$25 execution fee payable to City of Bell Gardens by cash, credit, check or money order.*

**Passport fees:**

Under 16 years of age: \$80 for passport book, \$15 for passport card. Age 16 and over: \$110 for passport book, \$30 for passport card.

Additional information is available by calling the City of Bell Gardens City Clerk's office at (562) 806-7706.





## NEW PLACES TO PLAY

### RESURFACED BASKETBALL COURT SCORES WITH COMMUNITY

More than 1,500 people use the indoor basketball courts at John Anson Ford Park gymnasium every week and the crowds are excited about the new floors installed recently. Both the fall youth basketball and girls' volleyball programs use the courts, with at least 150 players in each, who bring friends and family to watch their games. More than 250 youth and adults engage in free play on the courts,

averaging 1,000 visitors per week during practices and 1,500 users during the games.

"The Bell Gardens community is very appreciative of the new hardwood basketball court," said Recreation

Supervisor Armando Andrade. "In the three weeks since they've opened, I've noticed that the community has taken ownership of the new floor as they have been extremely

cooperative in following the gym rules. This, along with the proper maintenance, will help us protect the City's investment. The enhancement will allow our department to host youth tournaments and adult basketball leagues."



### RENEWED TURF BRINGS SPRING BACK TO SPORTS

Soccer players are a happy group, now that the fields at Ford Park are being resurfaced. The synthetic turf replacing the 11-year old, well-worn artificial grass will bring back the natural grass look and feel, as well as the true speed, bounce and roll of the ball.

The fields are home to 70 youth soccer league teams, with an average of 15 players per team or approximately 1,050 participants. The City's Recreation and Community Services Department offers a Senior Soccer League with two divisions and a total of 17 teams, fielding just over 300 participants.

These two fields receive approximately 5,000 participants and spectators each week. The new turf fields are expected to last 8-10 years with the proper maintenance. The project, part of the City's Capital Improvement Plan

introduced in the spring, is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

