



# FRIENDS OF SUNSET PARK

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

# MARCH 2015 NEWSLETTER

Layout by Bill Josephs

# ***City's Drought Response***

**Water rate increases** On February 24, the City Council voted to increase water rates by 9% per year over the next five years. Compounded, this will equal a 54% increase at the end of the five-year period.

According to the staff report, "California continues to experience severe drought conditions....On January 17, 2014, the Governor declared a Drought State of Emergency and issued a proclamation asking all Californians to reduce water use by 20%. As of late January 2015, the U.S. Drought Monitor classified 98% of California in 'severe' drought condition or greater....In January, the California Department of Water Resources called the snowpack 'dismally meager,' with the Sierra snowpack at about one-third of

**continued on page 2**

# **Zoning Ordinance Update**

The Executive Summary of the 2010 Land Use and Circulation Element of the city's General Plan (LUCE) states that "The goal of the Plan is designed to maintain our City's character, protect our neighborhoods...."

The proposed zoning code update for Sunset Park does not accomplish this goal. Instead, it will lead to encroachment of commercial uses in our residential neighborhood as well as an increase in height and density of projects that are inconsistent with our neighborhood.

When community meetings for the Community Corporation project at 2802 Pico Blvd. were held, standing-room-only crowds repeatedly stated that they didn't want four-story buildings in our neighbor-

**continued on page 3**

# **SM Airport: Hot Topic for City Council on Tuesday, March 24**

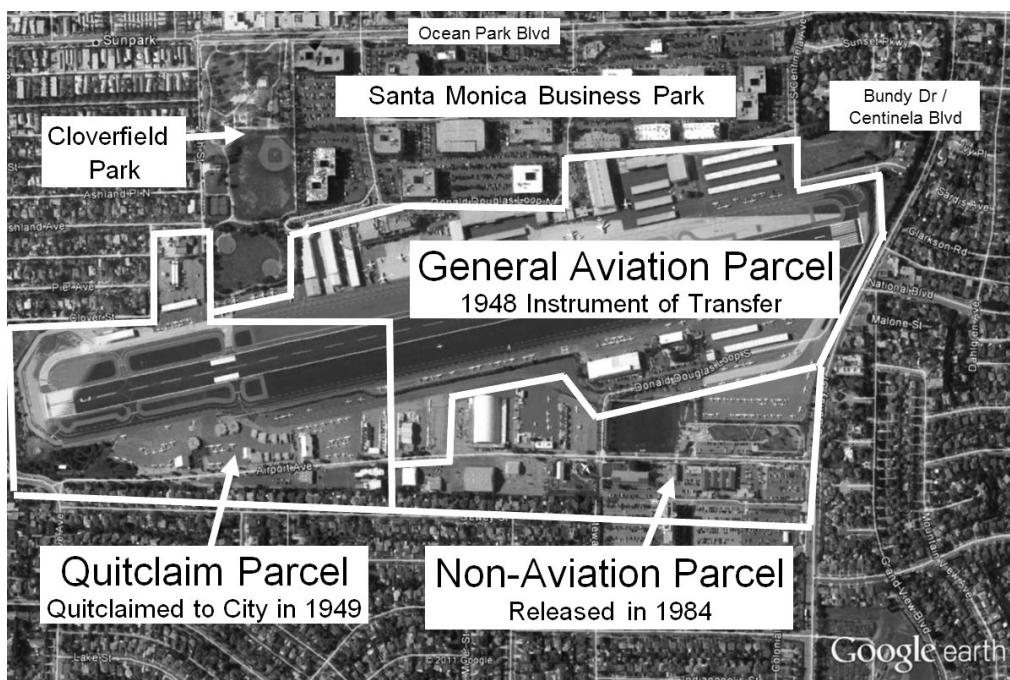
**O**n Tuesday, March 24, the City Council will decide the fate of the Santa Monica Airport, as the July 1, 2015, expiration date of the 1984 operating agreement between the City and the federal government rapidly approaches. Although it is doubtful that the City will move to close the airport at this March meeting, due to ongoing legal battles, the opportunity to alter the character of the airport and how it impacts the adjacent neighborhoods will surely be a priority in how decisions are made.

Inquiries to City staff requesting more information regarding the contents of the staff report have yielded nothing more than a statement that it would be "all inclusive."

FOSP anticipates that the City will raise all below-market-rate leases to market rate. Currently, many long term tenants are sub-leasing portions of their leaseholds and turning huge profits while the City runs the airport at a deficit. Some community advocates are pressing the City to offer only month-to-month leases after July 1, with sub-leasing prohibited, to allow the City maximum flexibility in the future.

***Will the different parcels be treated separately?***

The majority of the runway is contained in the "1948 Instrument of Transfer" parcel, which was transferred back to the City from the federal government after WWII. Aviation advocates claim that this parcel has



---

**continued on page 3**

# FRIENDS OF SUNSET PARK

## **Water, continued from page 1**

normal."

The five-year plan to increase water rates was designed to meet the City's goals of achieving water self-sufficiency by the year 2020, investing in capital programs necessary for system reliability, meeting conservation goals, and accounting for decreased revenues resulting from mandatory conservation measures.

Due to projected declining water sales, the City's cost to provide water service was projected to exceed the City's water revenues without additional water rate increases. Water rates were last adjusted in 2008.

**Low income assistance** Information on applying for low income assistance for water bills is posted at: <http://www.smgov.net/Departments/Finance/content.aspx?id=11960>

The City of Santa Monica bills for water, sewer, and refuse every two months. If you are unable to pay by the due date on your bill and would like to make payment arrangements, call the Billing and Collections Office at 310-458-8224, Monday through Thursday from 8 AM to 5 PM, and on alternate Fridays from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

**Water Shortage Response Plan** On January 14, the City Council set a deadline of December 31, 2016 to achieve a citywide 20% reduction in water use and adopted an updated Water Shortage Response

Plan. Santa Monica residents, visitors, businesses and their employees are asked to take immediate action to reduce water use by 2.2 million gallons a day in order to lessen the impacts of the drought on local groundwater and imported water supplies.

**Water Use Allowances** Beginning April 2015, personalized Water Use Allowances will appear on all utility bills, reflecting a 20% decrease in water use from the same billing period in 2013. The 20% decrease will be applied to all customers—single-family, multi-family, commercial, and landscaping.

**Sustainable Landscape Rebate** New and enhanced water conservation rebates, and the latest water-saving technologies and resources will be available to help customers. The most popular rebate, the Sustainable Landscape Rebate, will begin paying \$3.50 for each square foot of lawn that is removed and replaced with climate-appropriate plants, mulch, and/or drip irrigation. In addition, customers may choose to receive, for a small fee, a two-hour consultation with expert landscape designers.

**Residential Water Conservation Thresholds** Residential water conservation thresholds have been set to acknowledge the conservation efforts that many residents have already taken. Customers who are at or below these conservation thresholds on a bimonthly basis will not be required to reduce 20%. The Residential

Water Conservation Thresholds are: 274 gallons a day or less (22 Hundred Cubic Feet) for single-family water customers and 137 gallons per day per unit or less (11 HCF) for apartment dwellers. One HCF is equal to 748 gallons. There is no water conservation threshold for commercial customers because of large variations in water use by individual businesses.

### **Water Use Allowance Adjustment**

**Applications** Residential and commercial water customers may apply for an adjustment to increase their Water Use Allowance if they can demonstrate they have taken all necessary measures to save water and cannot achieve a 20% reduction due to financial hardship or to prevent an emergency condition related to health and safety. Adjustment Applications are available on-line at [www.smgov.net/water](http://www.smgov.net/water) and at the Finance Department's public counter at 1717 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Water customers will have until October 2015 to meet their water use allowance targets before penalties are issued.

Information on water-saving measures, rebates, and programs to help customers reduce water use is available at [www.smgov.net/water](http://www.smgov.net/water) or by calling 310-458-2213.

Water conservation information is available from the city's Office of Sustainability and the Environment: <http://www.smgov.net/Departments/OSE/categories/water.aspx>

## **"My Greatest Concerns Are...."**

Every year, the FOSP Board compiles the "My greatest concerns are...." comments on FOSP membership forms. These comments tell Board members (all volunteers) where to focus our efforts.

In 2014, the largest number of comments involved traffic and traffic congestion.

Next came Santa Monica Airport – primarily noise, pollution, safety, and the jets. Development and over-development came in third.

Fourth was Public Safety, primarily focusing on crime, speeding vehicles, and pedestrian safety.

That topic was followed by comments about Santa Monica College, listing concerns about expansion, traffic, and parking.

After that came the environment (primarily concerns about noise); providing care and services for the homeless, the disabled, and seniors; the quality of local public schools; complaints about local government; and a few other comments on miscellaneous topics.

We look forward to reading your comments on the 2015 FOSP membership forms!

# FRIENDS OF SUNSET PARK

## Airport, continued from page 1

land use restrictions.

The “1949 Quit Claim” parcel (including the western 2,000 feet of the runway) was not a part of the “1948 Instrument of Transfer” parcel (this includes the eastern 3,000 feet of the runway). The 1949 parcel could possibly be transformed or taken out of service prior to the “1948 Instrument of Transfer” parcel.

**Measure LC** amended the City Charter to (1) prohibit new development on Airport land, except for parks, public open spaces and public recreational facilities, until the voters approve limits on the uses and development that may occur on the land; and (2) affirm the City Council’s authority to manage the Airport and to close all or part of it. Because this charter amendment was passed by voters, it cannot be changed by the City Council. With the overwhelming victory of Measure LC in the November 2014 election guaranteeing expansion of parkland and recreational space at the airport, it is also possible that some underutilized land in the “Non-Aviation” parcel on the south side of the airport can be converted to parks or recreational use sooner rather than later.

**Airport2Park** The Santa Monica Airport2Park Foundation has proposed that the city take a three-step approach to transitioning airport land to Measure LC compliant use. Phase 1, beginning on July 1, 2015, would re-purpose tie-down space on the “Non-Aviation” parcel near Airport Avenue to parkland.

This change would extend the existing seven-acre Airport Park to form a larger 21-acre park. (In comparison, Clover Park is 18 acres.)

Santa Monica currently has about 1½ acres of park space per thousand residents, a much lower ratio than many of our neighboring cities. Manhattan Beach has two acres, Santa Barbara has more than four acres, and Newport Beach has nearly six acres of parkland per thousand residents.

Because Airport2Park’s suggested Phase I involves only the “Non-Aviation” parcel, over which the FAA no longer has any control, it’s realistic to expect that the city could move forward with this proposed plan in July. For more details, see the foundation’s web site at [www.airport2park.org](http://www.airport2park.org).

## Will current legal uncertainty force the City to move cautiously?

More will be revealed when the City Council meeting agenda is posted on the city web site on Thursday, March 19: <http://www.smgov.net/departments/clerk/agendas.aspx>

**FOSP encourages everyone to attend the March 24 City Council meeting – it will begin at 6:30 PM at City Hall and can also be viewed on CityTV (channel 16 on Verizon or Time Warner cable). Public comment can be made in person at the meeting (2 minute maximum). It is also important to submit your comments via email to [Council@smgov.net](mailto:Council@smgov.net) before March 24.**

## Zoning Update continued from page 1

hood. Sunset Park residents seem to support preserving the low-rise scale of our neighborhood and adaptive re-use of commercial properties.

Unfortunately, the proposed Zoning Ordinance Update allows upzoning (increases in height and density), which will encourage developers to demolish existing buildings in order to build larger projects and increase profits.

Development is currently occurring citywide **without** incentives. Nine million square feet of commercial space was built citywide after the 1984 LUCE was adopted, and some have estimated that 15 million square feet of development citywide is still possible with the current zoning code. There is no need to increase heights and densities for either commercial or residential zones in Sunset Park.

Since the LUCE was passed, there are plenty of examples of adaptive re-use taking place on the boulevards without incentives. A walk along the south side of Ocean Park Blvd. from 16<sup>th</sup> Street to 18<sup>th</sup> Street is proof of this, as are the new restaurants and remodeled spaces on Pico Blvd.

Since it appears that the assumptions that the LUCE was based upon are no longer accurate, it would be irresponsible of the City to codify a plan based upon those no-longer-accurate assumptions. It also appears that about 2,000 apartments are in the pipeline for the Downtown area, so there is no apparent need to add housing on the boulevards in Sunset Park or incentivize large, multi-family housing projects that are out of scale with the current residential neighborhood.

Allowing increases in height and densities in the proposed Zoning Ordinance Update will drive up land values, incentivize demolition and construction of larger projects, and make housing and retail space less, not more, affordable.

### In general, the FOSP Board is opposed to:

- The proposed “Activity Center” at Lincoln and Ocean Park Blvd. in the LUCE, adding several stories of housing above retail and underground parking.
- So-called “Opportunity Sites” in downtown,
- Tier 3 development,
- Lot consolidation,
- A-lots behind businesses being re-designated as “commercial” rather than “residential,”
- Commercial day care centers in residential zones,
- Other commercial intrusions such as hotels/motels/B&Bs/Airbnb (a website for people to rent out lodging) in residential zones,
- Taller heights in Sunset Park residential and commercial zones,
- General Commercial and Mixed-Use Boulevard Low design-

**continued on page 4**

# FRIENDS OF SUNSET PARK

## Save the Date

**March 24** – 6:30 PM – City Council discusses changes at Santa Monica Airport after July 1, 2015.

Agenda posted at: <http://www.smgov.net/sm.gov.net/departments/clerk/agendas.aspx>

**April 9** – 7 PM – Joint meeting of Friends of Sunset Park and the Pico Neighborhood Association at Virginia Avenue Park

**April 14 & 15** – 6:30 PM – City Council study sessions on the proposed Zoning Ordinance Update, which would allow increased heights and densities on Pico, Ocean Park, and Lincoln Boulevards

**April 22** – 7 PM – Planning Commission hearings on appeals of Architectural Review Board approvals of 802 Ashland/2919 Lincoln (10-unit apartment building) and the Village Trailer Park project (replacing 100 trailers with 374 apartments in 5-story buildings – <http://www.smgov.net/Departments/PCD/Projects/2930-COLORADO-AVE/>)

**May 2 – 1:30 PM – FOSP Annual General Membership Meeting**

**May 9** – 11 AM to 6 PM – Santa Monica Festival at Clover Park

### Zoning Update, continued from page 3

nations on Pico Blvd. and on Lincoln Blvd. south of the I-10 freeway,  
➤ Unbundled parking,  
➤ Exempting 100% affordable projects up to 60 units from Development Review Permits and public process,  
➤ Basing a “Mixed Use Transportation District” on bus stops at Lincoln & Pico Boulevards,  
➤ Allowing new auto dealerships on Lincoln Blvd. south of the I-10 freeway.

#### We support:

➤ Preservation of residential neighborhoods (and neighbors),  
➤ Preservation of courtyard apartments,  
➤ Maintaining current height and density limits in Sunset Park,  
➤ Inclusion of second story decks/balconies in lot coverage calculations,

- Making it less cumbersome/expensive to add up to 500 sq ft to small hillside homes,
- Maintaining current parking standards,
- Requiring appropriate transitions from commercial to residential properties,
- Preservation of locally-owned businesses,
- Adaptive re-use of commercial properties on our boulevards, and
- Confining Mixed Use Transportation Districts to within ¼ mile from Expo Stations.

**You may or may not agree with the FOSP Board position. The City Council will be reviewing the draft Zoning Ordinance Update on April 14 and 15. Email your comments to the Council between now and then at [Council@smgov.net](mailto:Council@smgov.net). Put "ZOU" in the subject line. You may also speak to the Council during public comment on April 14.**

## JOIN FRIENDS OF SUNSET PARK

## 2015 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

I will help with:

Address \_\_\_\_\_

- Airport Committee
- Annual Meeting
- Crime/Safety/Graffiti
- Emergency Preparedness
- Membership Committee
- Neighborhood Mailings
- Planning and Development
- Santa Monica College
- Traffic, Parking, Pedestrian Safety
- Website/Internet

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Dues:

\$30 Regular Household Dues

\$50 or \$100 for Sponsor

\$10 Minimum Household Dues

Additional Donation

(Please check):

New  Renewal

Please make check payable to  
"Friends of Sunset Park,"  
and mail to:

FOSP, P.O. Box 5823, Santa Monica, CA 90409

What I like best about living in Sunset Park: \_\_\_\_\_

My greatest concerns are: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership dues and contributions to FOSP, a 501(c)(4) organization, are not tax deductible.