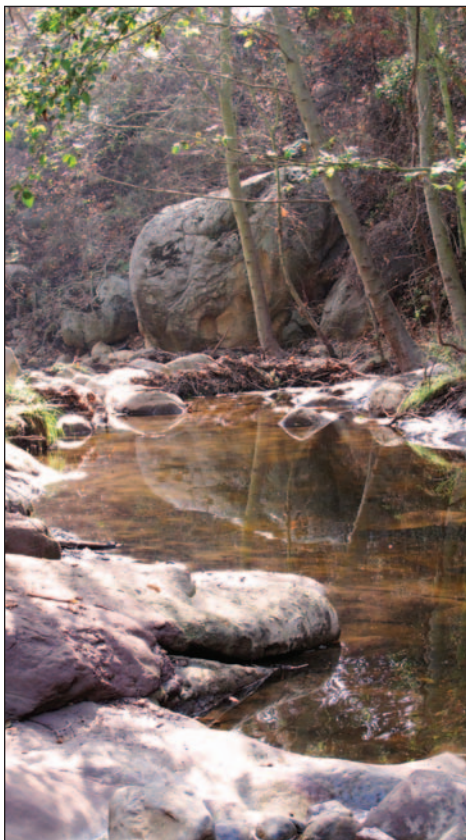


Spring 2014

You and Your Mission Canyon Community Plan



Why we live here: Some of the spectacular beauty in our bucolic canyon.

PHOTO: Lee Anne Dollison

by **Randy Reetz**

Scenic views, historic sites, an abundance of native flora and fauna, and public trails stamp Mission Canyon as a unique area for planning and for management of problems like wildfire, wastewater, and increasing traffic and development. On February 18, the County Board of Supervisors gave our canyon its preliminary stamp of approval for status as a distinct planning area with its own unique set of land use policies and regulations called the Mission Canyon Community Plan (MCCP). Final approval is expected April 1.

Written with the input of hundreds of canyon residents in workshops held over the past eight years, the Plan is discussed here by Randy Reetz and Ray Smith. They were

among the 11 total members of the Mission Canyon Planning Advisory Committee (MCPAC), who met with all workshop participants and worked with county staff to complete the MCCP and Mission Canyon's Residential Design Guidelines ahead of schedule and within budget; the delays since were caused by challenges to the environmental impact report raised by the Museum of Natural History and by staff's work on the residential parking strategy. Throughout, the Mission Canyon Association would like to recognize MCPAC Chair Ray Smith for his serene tenacity in achieving two forward-looking documents that will prove invaluable in preserving the canyon's charm for years to come.

Why is this such a big deal? Before the Plan came into play, Mission Canyon was an unincorporated area within the county, subject to the same rules and regulations governing the county's most remote areas, but with our own special identity and problems. Planning tools did not always meet our needs. Like several other communities—Montecito and Toro Canyon, for example—we wanted a custom-tailored, comprehensive set of rules that better reflected Mission Canyon's specific character and circumstances. We designed the Mission Canyon Community Plan to serve that purpose.

How does the Plan fit into the county legal framework? Without going into tedious detail, our Plan is adopted under the county's "Comprehensive Plan" and addresses topics mandated by state law. Our Plan supersedes the 1984 Mission Canyon Specific Plan, which dealt mainly with wastewater and water supply issues. The canyon's designation as a "special problems area" in 1978—primarily due to wastewater and flooding, remains in effect. Our Plan must be consistent with the county's Comprehensive Plan. Zoning designations for land in Mission Canyon remain unchanged. The county's Land Use and Development Code (LUDC) was amended in various respects to implement the policies of our Community Plan. The LUDC and other county

ordinances will continue to be the governing codes for Mission Canyon.

What is the scope of the Community Plan? In a word—big. Our Advisory Committee spent considerable time just identifying and quantifying the distinctive elements comprising Mission Canyon: Its visual and aesthetic resources, our history and archeology, our land use patterns, traffic and parking (a big issue), our wildfire exposure and post-fire recovery issues, wastewater and water supply, residential design and planning.

The Plan itself includes 25 maps identifying key canyon elements, including, for example, our geology, fire hydrant locations, roadways (sorted by width), parks and trails, environmentally sensitive habitat, and land use designations. The Plan also contains several tables for potential build-out, roadway classification, traffic volume, and other measurable data. We included appendices listing canyon-specific plant and animal communities, guidelines for trail siting and firescape plantings, and our reference sources.

We conducted countless public sessions, receiving input from both canyon residents and county officials at every level. The mandatory environmental review process itself extended for more than a year, analyzing every conceivable impact that the Plan might entail, and appropriate mitigation measures. The Plan contains a detailed narrative of the topics we considered, our thought process in dealing with these topics, and the conclusions we reached. And for every topic, we set forth, hopefully in clear terms, what goals we sought to achieve, the policies that guided our decisions, development standards we could write into the codes, and what action we could take, now or later, to carry out those policies. Completing the fog-stripping of the roads in Mission Canyon Heights is one example of a policy action item.

What role did the county play in shaping the final Plan? County's Long Range Planning Division Office kept the individual MCPAC members (all but one a Mission

Mission Canyon (cont. p.2)

Mission Canyon (cont. from p.1)

Canyon resident) on message during the eight years it has taken to complete the project. Sometimes it was like herding cats; at other times unanimity ruled the day. There is not enough space here to give credit to each county staff member (11 by my count), but Rosie Dyste—the only county person to see this project through from beginning to end—gave us invaluable help every step of the way. Thanks also to Supervisor Salud Carbajal, who in every sense made this Plan possible.

Will every Canyonite be happy with the Plan? Probably not. Mission Canyon has always been sort of a laid-back, laissez-faire type of community, where most everyone felt free to live his or her own lifestyle. Hot tubs, yurts, late-night parties, free-flowing indulgences, woodland campsites were widely tolerated. But as this community grew in size and vacant lots sprouted new housing, and with the sobering effect of two major wildfires, it became evident that some common-sense limits were in order. The county itself instituted various land use controls applicable countywide; the Community Plan adopts additional measures specific to Mission Canyon.

Not all of these measures will be universally approved. As one example, our decision to restrict on-street parking, particularly in the Upper Canyon, sets a standard policy of achieving at least 20 feet of unobstructed passage where possible on every public roadway in the canyon. Canyon residents accustomed to parking on the street may be inconvenienced, but in our judgment, the ability of fire trucks and ambulances to access every corner of the community is paramount.

What do you think the high points of the final Plan are? There were two: First, the Residential Design Guidelines, which we adopted as a stand-alone document, is beautifully illustrated, instructive without being dictatorial, a pleasure to read. The Guidelines should be a tremendous aid not just for designers, builders, and homeowners, but also for county planners and architectural review members reviewing residential plans.

Second, establishing the Mission Canyon Scenic Corridor. I'm not aware of any other community plan that sets aside, as a specially protected area, one distinctive part of the community. This single stretch of roadway was the cradle of our canyon's turn-of-the-century literary and artistic community; it housed our civic leaders, it preserved our

natural woodland setting, and the Mission Creek stone bridge and the stone walls bordering the roadway are local treasures. Glendessary will always be a landmark estate.

Where can I learn more? The Mission Canyon Community Plan can be viewed on the Internet at Santa Barbara County's Long Range Planning webpage under Community Planning (on the left side of the page) [longrange.sbcountyplanning.org]. Scroll down to the Mission Canyon Final Draft Community Plan.

You can also find changes to the LUDC triggered by adoption of the Community Plan at Mission Canyon Final Draft Changes to the Land Use & Development Code.

The final draft of the Mission Canyon Residential Design Guidelines is also listed at this site for download.

Future newsletter articles will discuss specific important goals such as preserving the night sky, preventing greater population density, treasuring the individuality of styles, protecting native ecosystems while establishing defensible space around homes, and more. If you have questions, please contact webmaster@missioncanyon.org.

The Good Neighbor, Hugh Twibell

By Sandy Robertson

When I drive down a freeway and see one of those "Adopt a Highway" signs, followed by the name of the sponsoring company, I have mixed emotions. There's gratitude for the service the company is paying to provide, but is it an act of civic virtue if one gets public credit for one's good deed? My cynicism is only matched by that of the counter-argument: It's a "win-win" situation: The business gets free advertising along with a positive rep -- a driver who's briefly noted the name in passing and later browses the Yellow Pages or Internet for a service sees a familiar name and calls -- and the rest of us get a tidy roadside. (Why our fellow citizens throw their trash along the road is an entirely different subject. Don't get me started.)

This quirk of mine — feeling irritated at that freeway sign — had not raised my blood pressure for quite some time, but I was reminded of it one day while on a favorite walk through our canyon. I met Karen and Hugh Twibell, also frequent trekkers along



our roads and trails. After our "Hello"s, Karen and I continued to chat while Hugh carried on with his daily hiking routine. Besides getting exercise, Hugh always carries with him a big plastic bag. He's done this for so many years that he can scoop-and-dump without breaking his stride, filling that bag on his way up and down Tunnel Road with soda cans, candy wrappers, cigarette butts (yes!), and even broken glass. Mondays are

the days he may have to break his stride to keep up with Karen and still gather all the debris left from the weekend.

I was impressed and touched by Hugh's quiet act of civic virtue, and I felt grateful to have such a proverbial good neighbor. Now that Hugh is on the Mission Canyon Association board (and is head of the canyon's architectural review group), I thought others would like to know about the good deed Hugh does on his walks for us, his neighbors, and for our canyon. And he does it without any expectation of recognition or even a "thank-you," but I felt sure that we'd all like to thank him. He might even be a little upset with me for taking this liberty, but he deserves this recognition partly because he doesn't seek it. His leadership as a citizen and a neighbor are exemplary, and while I am sorry to embarrass him, I am impressed by his commitment and his humility. Now, instead of feeling irritated when I see one of those "Adopt a Highway" signs, I will put my energy into following Hugh's example and help clean up our cherished Mission Canyon.

N E W S I N B R I E F



People have been taking desperate measures to insure parking in neighborhoods with few off-street choices.

PHOTO: Lee Anne Dollison

No “Residents Only” Signs

The County Department of Public Works sent letters in October and January requiring residents to remove private “no parking” signs. Many complied, and many didn’t want to. In Mission Canyon, while the numbers of people and cars have increased over the past 40 years, the road system has not. The public right-of-way, the area outside of the travel lanes, is maintained by taxes paid by all and is for public use. Under county code, only the county can post parking signs there.

When building permits are issued, homeowners are required to provide two on-site parking spaces. But over time, these spaces get converted to other uses, the family acquires another car, or tenants move in with their cars. When residents put up “tenant only” or similar signs to claim the right-of-way in front of their house, then other residents lose parking for guests or delivery trucks.

In some neighborhoods, the parking situation is so tight that people even park in the traffic lanes. NOBODY has the right to block a lane of traffic. This endangers the lives of all neighbors who may need an ambulance or fire truck, or who might be hit by an oncoming car when they have to pass a parked car.

The drought has caused the worst fire season I have seen in my 48 years living in the canyon. A car parked in the traffic lane will block residents who are evacuating and fire trucks rushing to the scene. The threat to public safety is serious.

Please show consideration for your neighbors and share scarce street-side parking. Common sense solutions can be worked out if the common need is recognized.—Barbara Lindemann

Scuffle at Skofield

Smoldering campfires, illegal camping, and graffiti in Skofield Park; gates left open; and

break-ins at homes nearby began to occur too frequently for neighbors’ comfort in the wake of the retirement of the park’s resident ranger at the end of 2012. Concerned residents protested City Parks & Rec’s plan to rent the ranger’s residence to Joe Public instead of a Parks employee, with the money to go to park operations and a third ranger, explained Jill Zachary, assistant Parks & Rec director, with supervision of Skofield by other Parks employees.

Jan Vanderford raised the neighbors’ concern over park security with MCA, and Boardmember Kellam de Forest noted that the deed might have something to say about the matter. He was right. The purchase of the property—from Los Adobes de los Rancheros, a charitable arm of Rancheros Visitadores it turns out—was restricted to public use, which excludes a private rental. Parks Director Nancy Rapp let us all know that a new resident Parks employee will assume some of the previous duties like monitoring use and opening and closing park gates in the next few months.

Sewer and Waterwork

The Botanic Garden currently has a sewer and water line project being installed in Mission Canyon Road between Tunnel Road and just north of Las Canoas. The sewer line extension will bring the sewer up from where it currently ends at the bridge over Mission Creek further into the canyon and allow the Garden (and other neighbors if extended further) to shift from septic to sewer. The new water line between Tunnel Road and Las Canoas Road will allow an existing line that forms a fish barrier in Mission Creek to be retired. Both of these projects were county requirements that had to occur before construction of the Garden’s new Pritzlaff Conservation Center. The sewer and water lines should be completed by mid-May, and construction should start in earnest on the Conservation Center in June and is estimated to take 18 months. If you would like to see the plans for new construction and new and restored gardens, please email registrations@sbbg.org for available tour times.—Steve Windhager

MCA Dues

It is dues season, and we want to give a big thanks to all of you who have already paid your dues. The response has been terrific, and the number of residents who add a donation to their dues is impressive. The MCA Board of Directors is a diverse group that in-

cludes scientists, historians, lawyers, architects, businessmen and women, all working together to ensure that our canyon remains a beautiful place to live. And doing it strictly as volunteers. If you have not already paid your dues, do it today: MCA, P.O. Box 401, S.B., CA 93102.

Community Invited

Museum of Natural History Master Plan community meetings: Thursday, April 10, 7–8:30 p.m.; and Saturday, April 12, 10–11:30 a.m. Farrand Hall. RSVP to 682-4711 ext. 178.

Mission Canyon Corridor Caltrans Grant 2nd Workshop (a step-cousin to the Safe Passage project): Tuesday, April 22, 6:30 p.m., S.B. Woman’s Club – Rockwood.

Whoops!

When we wrote about the homeless encampment removal from Rocky Nook Park in the last newsletter, our notes were obviously too scribbly in part. We should have said it was Senior Deputy Doug Jones who walked the homeless encampments with county personnel, informing the tent dwellers that it was time to pack up and go. Thanks again, senior deputy!

MCA Officers & Directors

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- Laurie Guitteau: Vice President; Fire*, Membership*, Newsletter; 682-4474, guitteau@cox.net
- Jean Yamamura: Treasurer; Fire, Land Use, Newsletter*, Ordinance, T&P; 845-3051, jean.yamamura@gmail.com
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- Hugh Twibell: ADRC*; 687-9671, heck2@cox.net
- Alastair Winn: Museum, Safe Passage*; 687-5682, alastair@appliedsilicone.com

*Chair of committee

The MCA Newsletter was prepared with the help of **Lee Anne Dollison**, graphics, production and photography.

MCA’s Board of Directors meets the first Tuesday of each month, at 7:30 p.m., at the S.B. Natural History Museum’s MacVeagh House. All residents are welcome to attend.



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Your MCA Newsletter Spring 2014

Save the Date!
MCA Annual Meeting
Thursday, April 17

Join us at the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Mission Canyon Association

Discussion topics include:

- Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History's latest revisions of its development plans.
- Safe Passage update on pedestrian corridor between Mission and Museum.

Come mingle with friends and neighbors and elect new and continuing Board Members to MCA. Find out more about the issues that affect you and your neighborhood.

Carpooling is encouraged! Come with your neighbors!

Date: Thursday, April 17

Time: 6:30 p.m.: social half-hour
7-8:30 p.m.: meeting

Place: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
Fleischmann Auditorium
2559 Puesta del Sol Road