

# The City of Costa Mesa is Better than Ever

The Costa Mesa Chamber of Commerce honored the City of Costa Mesa with its prestigious Pillar of the City Award at the annual 2021 State of the City address.

The city was recognized for its many accomplishments, resiliency and dedication to the business community and public safety amid a worldwide pandemic.

The award was presented at the Chamber of Commerce's State of the City luncheon held at the Rene and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall on Thursday July 15 before an audience of 230 attendees. Mayor John Stephens, Mayor Pro-Tem Andrea Marr and Council Members Loren Gameros, Manuel Chavez, Arlis Reynolds and Jeff Harlan presented the City's many accomplishments to a crowd of business leaders.





The award was presented by Chamber of Commerce CEO Carla Valenzuela and President Emeritus Tom Johnson and City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison received the award on the City's behalf.



“Many thanks to the Chamber for recognizing our hard work with this Pillar of the City Award,” said Mayor Stephens. “As we

all get back to our normal lives, I'm proud to say the State of the City in Costa Mesa is better than ever. We are now well positioned to meet our challenges."

The Chamber singled out the City for numerous accomplishments. Costa Mesa was the first city in Orange County to issue a state of emergency, which enabled the City to receive federal stimulus dollars and get a head start on managing the pandemic. It is one of only two cities to balance its budget without the use of reserves.

"Despite the pandemic, we were able to continue our AAA credit rating and balance the city's budget," Farrell Harrison said. "We built major capital projects including our new Norma Hertzog Community Center, the new Lions Park Playground and our permanent 72-bed Bridge Shelter in which we leveraged a regional partnership with Newport Beach and the County securing \$4 million in grant funds."

City leaders held more than 20 meetings with approximately 40 local businesses and opened a call center with 10 volunteers as part of the Costa Mesa's BAC (Business Assistance Collaborative) initiative.

The City issued over 80 permits for businesses to conduct retail and dining outdoors. To further help businesses, the City gave \$2 million to over 450 small businesses through its City-funded small business grant program.

Costa Mesa hired two more police officers, and seven new firefighter vacancies were filled. Public safety responded to a combined 140,000 calls for service. Fire crews conducted more than 1,000 inspections and plan checks, and fire strike teams were called out to help fight 15 wildfires throughout the region and state. The Police Department managed a dozen rallies and protests amid the most civil unrest experienced in decades.

A new Rental Assistance Program was created to provide

\$387,000 in relief to 124 families in need. And through the Cares Act Funding, City leaders were able to give out an additional \$3 million to aid struggling local businesses.

During the pandemic, the City still housed over 200 individuals previously suffering from homelessness and worked closely with the Power of One Foundation to provide meals to the needy.

Costa Mesa also partnered with the County of Orange and 360 Clinic to provide a mass testing site at the Fairgrounds and a vaccine Super Pod to serve the community.

Nearly 11,000 business licenses were issued. And the City was instrumental in the deal that resulted in defense contractor Anduril to sign a lease for The Press site, the largest real estate deal in Orange County at 600,000 square feet.

Costa Mesa is one of four cities in the nation and the only one in Orange County to be awarded LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

After the retail cannabis Measure Q received approval in November with 65% of the votes, the City Council is prepared to start the new business program yielding up to \$3 million or more in new revenue for the City and 150 well-paying jobs.

For a list of many of the City's accomplishments last year please click on the following link

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**City to open new Norma**

# Hertzog Community Center and Lions Park Playground Saturday July 17

On Saturday July 17, the City of Costa Mesa will hold its first public ribbon cutting ceremony in 18 months to celebrate the opening of the new Norma Hertzog Community Center and the new Lions Park Playground (Airplane Park) and add the finishing touches to the City's Lions Park Projects.

"We are beyond excited to present this new community center and playground to Costa Mesa families," City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison said. "The completion of this project fulfills the commitment we made to the community to create a \$36.5 million, world-class campus that will be the jewel of Costa Mesa's Westside."

The ribbon-cutting ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. at the Norma Hertzog Community Center and conclude at the Lions Park Playground, where city officials will unveil the newly engineered Korean War-era Panther Jet.



The opening of the Community Center and Playground marks the completion of Phase 2 of the City's Capital Improvement Project that began in June of 2017. Phase 1 included the new 23,615-square-foot Donald Dungan Library at the City's oldest park that was opened to the public in May of 2019.

The design of both the library and community center, which was formerly the Donald Dungan Library, was completed by the Southern California-based architectural firm Johnson Favaro and the construction was managed by Costa Mesa's Public Services Department and the Tovey/Shultz construction firm.

The new Community Center features a 330-person capacity main assembly room and 100 person-capacity conference room, upgraded restrooms and a catering kitchen. It also features state of the art technology for special events.

The Lions Park Playground features a new airplane-themed play area with swing sets, a zip line, double-duo see saws and most importantly the refurbished historic Panther Jet that has been a fixture of the park for decades.

The improvements include new restrooms and open lawn areas, modern playground equipment and rubberized surface and sand play areas. Other park infrastructure upgrades include storm drain and irrigation improvements, new site lighting, landscaping and concrete pathways.

Along with the new Donald Dungan Library, Phase 1 of the project included a one-acre park with 25,000-square-feet of programmable grass area. The facility is owned by the City and library services are provided by Orange County Public Libraries.

A total of 225 new trees have been planted in Lions Park as part of this project. Both the Donald Dungan Library and Norma Hertzog Community Center are LEED Gold Certified. Costa Mesa is the only city in Orange County that is LEED Gold Certified.

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# **Costa Mesa City Hall to reopen to the public on Monday July 12**

Costa Mesa City Hall will reopen to the public beginning Monday, July 12, 2021 and will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., except on alternating Fridays (see dates below).

In anticipation of a high volume of customers, appointments are strongly encouraged for expedited service. Appointments will allow us to provide great customer service, reduce wait times and assist our community as efficiently as possible.

Appointments can be made at [www.costamesaca.gov/appointments](http://www.costamesaca.gov/appointments).

For customers with appointments, please check in upon arrival. Customers who arrive 10 minutes after their appointment time will be moved to a waitlist.

Walk-in times slots are available daily and are served by department staff as time permits.

For those without internet access, kiosks will be available in the City Hall lobby and staff will be available to assist with making appointments. If there are no appointments available for that day, customers are able to join a waitlist and be called at the next available time when staff in that Department can assist. Customers must be on site to be called from the waitlist.

As a reminder, many city services are available online.

According to the California Department of Public Health guidelines, face coverings are required inside City Hall for those who are not fully vaccinated. Fully vaccinated

individuals are not required to wear a mask indoors.

Alternating Fridays that City Hall will be closed through 2021.

- July 23
- August 6, 20
- September 3, 17
- October 1, 15, 29
- November 12, 26
- December 10, 24, 31

[Click here for the full City Hall calendar.](#)

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## **No street sweeping on Monday July 5 in observation of Independence Day holiday**

Due to the observation of the Fourth of July holiday, there will be no residential street sweeping on Monday July 5, 2021. The remainder of the week, residential street sweeping will continue with its normal routes.

For more information, residents can call the city's street sweeping hotline at (714) 327-7471, which has been updated with this information.

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**City enters into new**

# partnership with SOY to bring more recreation uses to Westside teens

On Tuesday June 15, the City Council unanimously approved an agreement with Save Our Youth (SOY) to offer joint recreational programming opportunities that will enhance the current recreation offerings to approximately 260 children ages 13-18 from Costa Mesa.

With many of the City's recreational programs being fee-based, teens from lower income households are often not able to take full advantage of the City's recreational programming and offerings.



By partnering with the City's Parks and Community Services Department, teens in the SOY program will be offered shared

use of City staff, facilities and equipment.

“I am pleased that we have partnered with SOY, a great organization that has helped countless teens in Costa Mesa,” Mayor John Stephens said. “This new venture will help fulfill the vision of Council Members Manuel Chavez and Arlis Reynolds and the Council to provide support to this community treasure.”

District 4 Council Member Manuel Chavez and District 5 Council Member Arlis Reynolds were instrumental in advocating for this new partnership.

“I’m happy to see the City of Costa Mesa enter into an M.O.U. with SOY,” said SOY alumni Council Member Chavez said. “It’s an exciting opportunity for both of us to work together and provide the best services to Westside Costa Mesa students.”

Council Member Reynolds agreed.

“Strong community-based organizations are critical for a thriving and resilient community, and they help our City teams better understand community assets and needs and align our services with those needs,” Reynolds said. “This partnership with SOY is a great example and step forward for the partnerships we need to embrace to meet our mission of supporting a vibrant and inclusive city.”

The agreement with SOY is for three years with an option for two additional years if both the City and SOY agree to continue. The \$42,000 in funding for the program will come from the City’s contingency funds.

SOY was established in 1993 through the hard work and steadfast vision of parents on the Westside of Costa Mesa as a non-profit agency serving low-income youth that often lack opportunities due to limited economic means. The nonprofit provides a productive and healthy environment where teens receive mentoring, tutoring, and college preparedness.

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# **Costa Mesa Fire and Rescue crews to conduct training in Talbert Park to prep for wild land fire season**

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue will conduct training exercises June 22 – June 24, 2021 in and around Talbert Park from 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Training is in preparation for the upcoming wild land fire season

CMFR wants to ensure the community is aware of the upcoming training and requests residents and park visitors to be mindful of equipment and preparations occurring by fire personnel.

These annual mandatory training exercises take place in Costa Mesa and countywide to help prepare the firefighters for vegetation fires within and outside city limits.

“As California rebounds from the catastrophic wildfires of 2020 and the worldwide pandemic, the California fire service remains strongly at the tip of the spear on both fronts,” Costa Mesa Fire Chief Dan Stefano shared. “Our firefighters are preparing hard and will continue to meet this moment in time without pause or hesitation, and working relentlessly to that end.”

There will be approximately 10 to 12 fire personnel present for the training and two to three pieces of apparatus (fire

engine, truck, ambulance, or command vehicle) daily. Firefighters will train on trails in South Talbert Park, where there is dense vegetation and moderate terrain features. The training is conducted to promote safety, mitigation, terrain recognition, and, area familiarization while focusing on the fundamentals of wild land firefighting.

The department is conducting the training with full awareness and sensitivity of all environmental impacts and ensures this training will exclude any live burn training modules. The training is facilitated with the assistance of the Orange County Parks and County Park Rangers. In addition, the training will also adhere to County and City requirements and recommendations in regards to COVID19 safety precautions.

For questions please contact Captain Joseph Noceti, Public Information Officer of Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue at (714) 754-5091.

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## **City Council approves budget that restores staffing and services to pre-pandemic levels**

The Costa Mesa City Council on Tuesday, June 15, unanimously approved a \$197.9 million Operating and Capital Improvement Program Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22 that restored core services while incorporating key strategies that chart a distinct path towards economic resilience for both near and long-term.

The adopted budget, themed “Charting the Path to Recovery,” provides for strategic investments in Citywide infrastructure, restores staffing and services to pre-pandemic levels, and maximizes Federal stimulus dollars while the global, national and regional economies recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

“In this budget you see the product of the persistence of the Council Members who were elected in 2018, such as funding for the arts, active transportation, youth programs, and capital improvements on the Westside,” Mayor John Stephens said. “I’m also pleased with the long-term efforts to improve our information technology and city assets such as the golf course as well as investments in police training facilities and fire apparatuses. I am proud to support this budget and thank the budget team, Finance Director Carol Molina and City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison and everyone who played a part in making this budget happen.”

The balanced budget was inspired by the new Mission Statement and five strategic planning goals that were developed at the January 2021, City Council Strategic Planning workshop.

This budget addresses City Council’s mission statement for a safe, inclusive and vibrant City. It provides grants to Costa Mesa families experiencing financial hardship to participate in the Parks and Community Services programs; and fully funds Year One of the Council-adopted Arts and Culture Master Plan

Further, the approved budget includes funding for 530 full-time employees, restores General Fund cuts taken in FY 2020-21, allots for capital improvement projects at \$24.5 million, over half dedicated to streets, information technology improvements, funding to administer Measure Q, and designates over 53% of the General Fund to public safety.

For additional details on the adopted budget click [here](#) to read the staff report.

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# **Irma Garcia is presented with the May City Manager Leadership Award**

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison presented Public Services Administrative Secretary Irma Garcia with the City Manager Leadership Award for May.

“Irma stepped up during the pandemic to provide continuity of service, dedication and commitment to public service,” Farrell Harrison said. “I so appreciate her dedication to our Costa Mesa community at a time we needed it most. Congrats on a job well done.”

During the pandemic, Garcia assumed the role of Acting Executive Secretary and on many occasions filled in other roles due to absences, vacancies, etc.

She goes over and above the call of duty to make sure the department is represented well. She has also been the “go to” person for Spanish translation needs for various departments.

Throughout her service with the City, Garcia has demonstrated a collaborative spirit, getting along with fellow administrative staff and providing excellent support to the leadership team.

Garcia began her career with the City of Costa in April 2000 as an Administrative Secretary in the Recreation Department.

In July 2004, she joined the Costa Mesa’s Public Services team as the Transportation Division’s Administrative Secretary and in June 2013 as the Engineering Division’s Administrative

Secretary.

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# **Applications for Independence Day block party street closure requests due June 22**

Applications for Costa Mesa residents who would like to request a street closure to throw a block party on Independence Day are due Tuesday, June 22.

The application packets are available online or can be requested by phone at 714-754-5300. The packets include instructions and rules and regulations governing Fourth of July block parties. Applicants will also need to show proof of liability insurance for the event.

The completed applications must be submitted by 5 p.m., Tuesday, June 22.

To obtain an online application package, visit the City's website [here](#).

For phone requests, please contact the City Hall at (714) 754-5300 or via email at [cmrecinfo@costamesaca.gov](mailto:cmrecinfo@costamesaca.gov). Completed applications can be placed in a drop box in front of City Hall or mailed to the Parks & Community Services office on the third floor of City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa, Calif. 92626.

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# **Statement on arrest of suspects in the death of 6-year-old Costa Mesa resident Aiden Leos**

The City of Costa Mesa joins with the entire community to thank the California Highway Patrol for apprehending the two individuals suspected of killing 6-year-old Aiden Leos on Sunday, June 6.

On Tuesday, June 1, the Costa Mesa City Council voted to add \$50,000 to the reward fund to help find the suspects who shot at the car Aiden and his mother were traveling in on the 55 Freeway.

The gunshot mortally wounded Aiden, who lived in Costa Mesa with his mother.

“It is our hope that Costa Mesa’s reward contribution and surrounding publicity aided in apprehending these two suspects, and that this development brings some comfort to Aiden’s grieving family,” said Mayor John Stephens.

The California Highway Patrol issued a statement that the suspects, Marcus Anthony Eriz, 24, and Wynne Lee, 23, were arrested at their home in Costa Mesa.

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# Costa Mesa City Council agrees to add \$50,000 to the reward fund to find killer of Aiden Leos

The Costa Mesa City Council voted unanimously on Tuesday June 1 to provide \$50,000 in reward money to help find the killer of Aiden Leos, the 6-year-old boy who was shot as he rode in his mother's car on his way to school on May 21 on the 55 Freeway.

Aiden and his mother were traveling from their Costa Mesa home to his kindergarten class in Yorba Linda.

"The senseless tragedy of Aiden Leos' death has been felt by the entire community," Mayor John Stephens said. "We want to do what's necessary to bring Aiden's killer to justice, to take him or her off our streets, and to deter others from engaging in this type of dangerous conduct."

Currently, the California Highway Patrol is investigating the shooting and has received multiple tips from the public after releasing a photo of the suspected killer's white Volkswagen Golf Sportswagen. The car was reportedly occupied by a female driver and male passenger.

Costa Mesa's \$50,000 brings the total amount of reward money to more than \$450,000. Last week, the Orange County Board of Supervisors voted to add \$100,000 to the reward fund, taking \$50,000 each from the budgets of Supervisors Katrina Foley and Don Wagner.

Click here for a picture of the suspect vehicle and more information about the reward funds <https://www.aiden-reward.com/>.

Anyone who may have information about the suspects is urged to call the CHP at 714-567-6000 or email [santaanachptipline@chp.ca.gov](mailto:santaanachptipline@chp.ca.gov).

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# **No Residential Street Sweeping the week of May 31 Due To The Memorial Day Holiday**

Due to the observation of the Memorial holiday on Monday May 31, there will be no residential street sweeping the entire week as Costa Mesa Sanitary District also observes this holiday pushing trash collection back one day.

This results in residential gutter lines being cluttered with trash cans making it difficult for street sweeper operators to do an efficient job. Street sweeping will resume back to normal schedule starting the week of June 7.

The following are a list of task that Clean Street's operators will be conducting next week.

1. City wide alley street sweeping
2. Sweeping of park parking lots and other city owned facilities
3. Accident call outs and special request.
4. Night route sweeping on all arterial streets.

For more information, residents can call the city's street sweeping hotline at (714) 327-7471, which has been updated

with this information.