

Costa Mesa recognized with Tree City USA designation for the 21st year

The City of Costa Mesa has once again been recognized as a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation. 2025 marks the 21st year that the city has met all the criteria required to receive this designation.

Earning Tree City USA recognition is a great accomplishment for our community as it recognizes the City's commitment to growing and maintaining its urban forest.

According to the Arbor Day Foundation, a thriving urban forest offers a number of advantages to the community such as:

- Trees help absorb the sounds of traffic in urban areas by 40%.
 - Neighborhoods with trees are seven to nine degrees cooler than those without.
 - Trees reduce energy costs up to 25% by shading buildings and protecting them from winter winds.
 - Homes with trees have higher property values.
 - Green space plays a major role in improving mental and physical health.
 - Planting and maintaining trees absorbs carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, mitigating the effects of climate change.
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The draft Fairview Developmental Center Specific Plan is coming soon to the public

The City of Costa Mesa will host a series of Community Open Houses as it continues the public outreach process for the Fairview Developmental Center Specific Plan.

Spanish translation services will be available at all events. Please join us at one of three workshops to learn more about:

- The Community's Vision for the Plan
- Development Standards Crafted to Accomplish the Vision
- Review and Provide Feedback on the Draft Plan

The Community Open Houses are scheduled to take place at the following locations, dates and times, and community members are encouraged to attend a meeting that best meets their schedules. Children's activities will be available for the in-person events and the same information will be shared at each event:

March 24, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Los Lagos Room, Costa Mesa Country Club

1701 Golf Course Drive

Costa Mesa

March 26, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Grand Hall, Costa Mesa Senior Center

695 W 19th Street

Costa Mesa

March 30, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m

Virtual Workshop: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83371215287>

The City is seeking the community's input during the public review period beginning on March 16 to April 15.

The Public Draft Fairview Developmental Center Specific Plan includes the regulations that will guide the future redevelopment of the Fairview Developmental Center.

The draft document will be available to review, access, and provide written comments on the project webpage at: www.FDCHousingPlan.com.

City demonstrates safety improvements at Placentia Avenue and Center Street intersection

On Sunday, March 8, City Public Works Department staff hosted a community outreach event at the Placentia Avenue and Center Street intersection.

Mayor Pro Tem Manuel Chavez and Council Member Arlis Reynolds attended the event that provided a forum to discuss the project and gain input directly from residents about planned safety improvements.

City staff creatively used plants and construction equipment to temporarily demonstrate a high visibility crosswalk and curb extension, providing residents with hands-on experience of the potential improvements.

During the event, residents could visualize safety improvements and speak directly with City staff for questions and input. City staff will utilize the input to inform the design, which is expected to begin soon and will include a new crossing of Placentia Avenue.

Approximately 60-80 residents attended the event, which was promoted by Resilience OC.

Fire Captain Heunemann receives the March City Manager Leadership Award

City Manager Cecilia Gallardo-Daly presented the City Manager Leadership Award to Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Captain John Heunemann.

“Captain Heunemann has a broad range of valuable life skill sets that continue to be noteworthy contributions to those around him and to his evolution as a Costa Mesa Fire Captain,” Gallardo-Daly said. “He does an excellent job of connecting with people and getting the job done with a valued blend of mindful professionalism, sound technical competency and a congenial disposition. I’m proud to present him with this award.”

Captain Heunemann attended Mission Viejo High School and after

graduation went on to study chemistry at San Diego State University. Heunemann had aspirations to be a Chemistry Professor, but then one day he realized he didn't want to work inside all and decided to pursue a career in the fire service. Heunemann decided to test for a fire agency and the rest is history.

Heunemann began with CMFR as a Firefighter in 2003 and was promoted to Fire Captain in 2010. During his tenure with the department, Heunemann has been a key member in many of the Urban Search and Rescue drills and he introduced the electronic charting program to both the city and the county.

In 2024, Heunemann volunteered to be a Regional Task Force training manager. Those duties include developing and coordinating all the necessary certifications for each of the 30 positions needed to deploy as a Regional Task Force. Additionally, Heunemann maintains all the training records, including quarterly training exercises, of the task force. He is responsible for coordination of all training aspects of the task force and four partner agency training officers.

Heunemann developed the first of its kind certification track task book for each position within the task force. The task book is in the process of being recognized at the State level by the CAL OES Urban Search and Rescue Working Group as the standard moving forward for all 13 Regional Task Forces within the State of California.

Prior to working for CMFR, Heunemann worked at Mission Viejo Hospital and Balboa Naval Hospital in the NICU, as a Respiratory Therapist.

California Transportation Commissioners Visit Costa Mesa

Statewide transportation policy and funding commissioners visited the City of Costa Mesa on Feb. 26 to tour Newport Boulevard.

The California Transportation Commission is responsible for programming and allocating funds for the construction of highway, passenger rail, transit and active transportation improvements throughout California.

Three commissioners, Chair Clarissa Reyes Falcon, Lee Ann Eager, and Dr. Adonia Lugo joined Council Member Arlis Reynolds, City Manager Cecilia Gallardo-Daly, Assistant City Manager Alma Reyes, City staff, and Caltrans for a discussion at the Norma Hertzog Community Center.

Also attending were representatives from State Senator Steven Choi's office, and Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris.



The group then walked to Newport Boulevard to discuss safety

for people walking along and across the Caltrans-managed roadway.

City staff organized the tour to continue collaboration with our state partners to address important needs for our community.

Costa Mesa Residents Sought to Serve on City Committees

The Costa Mesa City Council is currently seeking residents to serve on the following City Committees:

Animal Services Committee: The Committee meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. except for August and December and provides advice and recommendations to the City Council on animal services issues and to promote pet licensing, assist with planning and execution of animal-related events. The City is recruiting for four members (Appointments by Mayor John Stephens, Council Member Jeff Pettis, Council Member Loren Gameros, and Council Member Mike Buley), each for a term expiration of April 2028 and one member (Appointment by Council Member Andrea Marr) with a term expiration of April 2027. For further information, contact Animal Services Coordinator Jessica Torrejon at (714) 754-5128 or visit www.costamesaca.gov/ASC.

Active Transportation Committee: The Committee meets on the first Wednesday of the month and helps plan and implement an Active Transportation network for the City by improving bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout the City, and also assists with the review, update and implementation of the city's Active Transportation Plan. The City is recruiting for

six members (Appointments by Mayor Stephens, Council Member Gameros, Council Member Buley, Council Member Pettis, and the Council Liaison), each for a term expiration of April 2028. For further information, contact Active Transportation Coordinator Brett Atencio Thomas at (714) 754-5275 or visit www.costamesaca.gov/ATC.

Finance and Pension Advisory Committee: The Committee meets on the second Wednesday of the month and provides advice to the City Council on issues related to significant financial matters and advises annually on the adoption of the City's budget, the allocation of any budget surpluses, and the City's investment performance and policies. The City is recruiting for one member (Appointment by Council Member Pettis) for a term expiration of April 2028. Applicants shall have pension knowledge or shall be residents or individuals that conduct business within the City and have a background that includes experience in securities trading, financial planning, banking, auditing, accounting, or a closely related and relevant field. For further information, contact Executive Assistant Dina Wild at (714) 754-5243 or visit www.costamesaca.gov/FIPAC.

Housing and Public Service Grants Committee: The committee meets twice a year and helps to promote understanding of the community development process and activities funded by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Additionally, the committee rates and ranks applications for CDBG public service grants, ultimately developing funding recommendations for City Council recommendations. The City is recruiting for four members (Appointments by Mayor Stephens, Council Member Pettis, Council Member Gameros, and Council Member Buley), each for a term expiration of April 2028. For further information, contact Grant Administrator Nancy Sa at (714) 754-5678 or visit www.costamesaca.gov/HPSGC.

Mobile Home Park Advisory Committee: The committee meets quarterly and addresses issues that will help improve the

quality of life in mobile home parks and review matters concerning mobile home parks in the City. The City is recruiting for two (members; one Mobile Home Park Resident and one Independent Citizen At-large (Appointments by Council Member Pettis and Council Member Buley), each for a term expiration of April 2028. For further information, contact Grant Administrator Nancy Sa at (714) 754-5678 or visit www.costamesaca.gov/MHPAC.

Application Process – Residents who are interested in getting involved in local government are encouraged to complete a Committee Application Form from the City Clerk’s Office or from the City’s website (www.costamesaca.gov/apply). The completed application may be submitted online; mailed to Costa Mesa City Clerk at Post Office Box 1200, Costa Mesa, California, 92628-1200; emailed to cityclerk@costamesaca.gov; or hand-delivered to the City Clerk’s Office at City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa. The deadline is 5 p.m., Thursday, March 26, 2026. The appointments are tentatively scheduled for the April 7, 2026 City Council meeting.

MEDIA CONTACT

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Workshops on housing and mixed use development to take place the week of March 2

The City of Costa Mesa invites residents, businesses, and community organizations to participate in community workshops

that will consider new opportunities for housing and mixed-use development.

Through interactive exhibits, participants will explore how local regulations can shape the built environment.

These activities are part of the City's Neighborhoods Where We All Belong initiative to implement Housing Element programs, allow optional housing potential on "Measure K" properties, and increase new housing and mixed-use development opportunities in specific parts of the community.

Public input gathered at the following events will help the City refine draft strategies for regulating new residential and mixed-use buildings. All three workshops will present the same information and include Spanish interpretation.

Simply attend the event that is the most convenient for your schedule. The in-person workshops will include free snacks, refreshments, and children's activities. Please join this important conversation about the future of housing in Costa Mesa.

Monday, March 2

6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Norma Hertzog Community Center
1845 Park Avenue, Costa Mesa

Thursday, March 5

6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Virtual Workshop (Zoom)

Join virtually from: www.CostaMesaNeighborhoods.com

Saturday, March 7

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Costa Mesa Senior Center
695 W. 19th Street, Costa Mesa

For more information about the Neighborhoods Where We All

Belong effort, visit www.CostaMesaNeighborhoods.com.

City launches new Active Development Map

The City has launched a new public, online GIS tool called the Active Development Map, designed to give the public real-time insight into what's happening across the community.

The map allows anyone to view active development projects throughout the City, from new businesses and tenant improvements to major development projects.

The map also provides building, planning, geological, and assessor information for every property within the City of Costa Mesa.

The tool can be found on the Economic and Development Services homepage [here](#).

This is a powerful planning tool. Whether tracking nearby construction, identifying growth areas, or understanding how public investments may impact customers and operations, the map helps residents and business owners stay informed and proactive.

By centralizing development activity in one easy-to-navigate map, the City is promoting transparency, coordination, and smarter decision-making for the local business community.

Meet the Fire Marshal at upcoming CERT Kickoff

On Feb. 24, from 6-8 p.m., Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue will host a special community meeting titled “Meet the Marshal.”

Everyone in the community is welcome—whether you’re a CERT member or simply curious—this is a great chance to connect, learn and strengthen our local preparedness.

The evening will include an opportunity to meet and chat with Costa Mesa’s new Fire Marshal Ryan Bohr and hear from guest speaker Interim Fire Chief Jason Pyle. We’ll also share what’s ahead for the revamped and revitalized 2026 Costa Mesa CERT program.

Discussion will focus on the refreshed training, stronger connections across the program and more opportunities to learn, reconnect, and serve.

We’ll wrap up with practical home-safety and preparedness tips you can use right away—like how to safely shut off utilities, building a simple home plan and practicing EDITH (Exit Drills In The Home) with your household.

We hope to see you there and hope you will be part of the conversation.



Public Works team installs traffic calming measures on Del Mar Avenue

The Public Works Department recently installed a new engineering treatment on Del Mar Avenue between Orange Avenue and Santa Ana Avenue to help mitigate concerns about motorist speeding activity.

The improvements included highly reflective plastic posts installed along edge between the vehicle travel lanes and

parking shoulder.

The new posts serve to visually narrow the roadway and encourage appropriate driving behavior.

Demonstrating cross-department coordination, Public Works staff collaborated closely with Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue staff to refine the engineering layout to serve overlapping goals of strengthening the public's safety and improving quality of life.

City staff will evaluate the outcomes of this solution to measure benefits and consider use elsewhere in the City. The Public Works Department remains committed to developing innovative and collaborative solutions that enhance mobility and safety for all road users.

City awarded Bicycle Friendly Community status by the League of American Bicyclists

The City of Costa Mesa was recently awarded a Bicycle Friendly Community Award from the national League of American Bicyclists, recognizing the many safety and mobility improvements made since adoption of the 2018 Active Transportation Plan.

The prestigious Bicycle Friendly America program sets the standard for how communities build and benchmark progress toward making bicycling better, helping raise standards for safety, equity, and accessibility.

Receipt of the Bronze level award is the long-term result of

resolve of local leaders, residents, advocates, planners, educators, and City staff to make Costa Mesa safer and more supportive for people who ride bicycles.

Key milestones since execution of the Active Transportation Plan include the implementation of a bicycle wayfinding project; the implementation of a bicycle safety education program; a citywide bike parking program; and major bicycle facility upgrades to Adams Avenue, Arlington Drive, Bristol Street, Merrimac Way, Placentia Avenue, and West 19th Street.

City temporarily transitions operations of Tennis Center to Agape Tennis Academy

The Parks & Community Services Department announced that as of this Sunday, Feb. 15, the operations of the Costa Mesa Tennis Center will temporarily transition to Agape Tennis Academy.

The city will solicit RFP's to find a permanent operator of the Tennis Center in the coming months.

For more information please visit our website [here](#)