

# **Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue veteran Chris Coates named as department's new battalion chief**

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Chief Dan Stefano announced on Thursday Jan. 3 that there is a new member of the department's command staff as Capt. Chris Coates has been promoted to become one of the city's three Fire Battalion Chiefs.

Coates has been a captain since 2003 and most recently served as the department's Administrative and Training Captain, where he maintained the duties of the Public Information Officer and Emergency Medical Services Manager as well as overseeing Training Program and Social Media Program Management.

"Chris is a respected fire service professional and leader who truly understands and embraces the value of building strong relationships, providing exceptional service, professional development, being authentic, and getting comfortable being uncomfortable," Chief Stefano said. "We look forward to his leadership contributions being elevated to a new level, as the expectations for him will continue to be raised, with my full confidence that he will rise to the occasion."

As the new Battalion Chief, Coates returns to the field and will oversee an entire shift of personnel, as well as becoming part of the department's executive management team and taking on additional administrative responsibilities. He will be based out of the city's new Fire Station No. 1. Captain Coates fills the position that became vacant with the recent retirement of Battalion Chief Kevin Diamond. His official start date will be January 21, 2019.

"First, I would like to thank Fire Chief Stefano for this

amazing opportunity,” Capt. Coates said. I’m honored and humbled and look forward to serving the city and community and fire family as battalion chief. Further, I am grateful for the relationships I’ve made with my city staff colleagues and value their expertise and experience. Working side-by-side with them has been so meaningful to my career and that will only expand in my new role. Finally, and most importantly, if it wasn’t for the unwavering support and love from my family, none of this would be possible.”

Coates has more than 23 years of experience in the fire service and started his career in 1996 as a Firefighter/Paramedic for the City of Escondido Fire Department and later worked for the City of Garden Grove before hiring on in Costa Mesa in 1998.

Coates has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Applied Studies from Brandman University, an Associate of Arts Degree from Santa Ana College, and recently finished his first year in the National Fire Academy’s Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program.

He has previously served as the President for the Orange County Fire Chiefs Training Officers Section and currently serves as the President for the California Fire Chiefs Training Officers – Southern Division, among several other honors and distinctions.

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**Street sweeping will be  
postponed during the**

# Christmas and New Year Holidays

Due to the observation of the Christmas and New Year Holidays, there will be no residential street sweeping beginning Monday, Dec. 24, 2018 through Tuesday, Jan 1, 2019.

Street sweeping will resume on Wednesday January 2, 2019

The street sweeping postponement coincides with the Costa Mesa Sanitary District, which also observes these holidays by pushing trash collection back one day.

This results in residential gutter lines being cluttered with trash cans making it impossible for street sweeper operators to do an efficient job. There should be no parking citations issued during this time. Parking enforcement should resume Monday, Jan. 7, 2019.

In lieu of sweeping streets, the following are a list of task that Clean Streets operators will be conducting next week.

- City wide alley street sweeping
- Sweeping of park parking lots and other city owned facilities
- Accident call outs and special request
- 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.

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# City and local biologists begin burrowing owl banding project at Fairview Park

The Costa Mesa Parks and Community Services Department has partnered with local biologists to launch a Burrowing Owl banding project that follows state protocols and contributes to a larger study of this important and charming, but declining bird species found at Fairview Park.

Observations at the park over the last few years indicated there was just one bird passing through in their migratory route this time of year. However, earlier this season, reports came into the City indicating that there were sightings of more than one bird at a time, using different locations in the park.

Because this is a species of concern throughout the western hemisphere, Fairview Park Administrator, Cynthia D'Agosta and the City's contract biologist, Barry Nerhus, investigated the possibility of becoming part of the statewide banding program to understand the park's role in helping to preserve the Burrowing Owl.

"This is an exciting time to undertake this project and it's by no means complete," D'Agosta said. "We are getting daily reports from park users of more owl sightings. The goal of this is to understand the population we have that use Fairview Park and whether they come back year after year."

Conservation concerns for this species differ by region, and they are also of conservation concern in Canada and Mexico where they nest. The State of California lists the Burrowing Owl as a species of special concern which protects the birds and their nests by California Fish and Game Code and the U. S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Strong local, state, federal and international interest in this species has facilitated significant conservation efforts to maintain or revive populations, including reintroduction programs, the use of artificial nest burrows, habitat protection programs, protective legislation, and a banding program for tracking migration.

In California, Imperial County is known as a Burrowing Owl hot spot; it is estimated that 70 percent of the state's population (or about 4,000 breeding pairs).and 50 percent of the U.S. population breeds in that county. Visual tracking this year by trained eyes, have observed that from Santa Barbara south, only 20 nesting pairs have been seen on the coast. The last and closest sighting to Fairview Park, was a few years back when a banded owl was caught at Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station as it was migrating from Washington state.

The City reached out to Pete Bloom, principal of Bloom Biological, Inc, (BBI) known as the state expert on numerous biological assessments and avian research projects, (including the Burrowing Owl), to implement the program. (BBI holds permits or memoranda of understanding for participating in the conservation and recovery of more than a dozen endangered, threatened species, or special-status species, in California and the western United States).

Over the last two weeks, Bloom and Nerhus have captured and banded two Burrowing Owls within Fairview Park. Based on the feathers, both owls have been determined to be a "hatch year bird" (meaning it was born spring of 2018).

Due to the age, their sex cannot be identified yet. They are believed to be wintering at Fairview Park, traveling as part of the migratory bird route possibly between Canada and Southern / Central Americas where the owls winter.

After banding, each owl was released into their highly used

burrow where they could hide and gather their composure.

Each owl now has a silver metal United States Geological Survey (USGS) Band that goes into the Cornell Bird Banding Lab database. We will be able to see where these two critters go, and whether or not they return to Fairview Park next season. We will also keep an eye out for more owls.

The public is always asked to keep dogs on leash in our parks, but this is even more critical during this migratory time. If you happen to observe a Burrowing Owl, please keep your distance and do not disturb. We want them to feel welcomed and comfortable in their habitats.

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## **Costa Mesa Police Sgt. Jimmy Brown receives City Manager Leadership Award**

Costa Mesa Police Sgt. James “Jimmy” Brown received the City Manager Leadership Award at the employee Meet and Greet event on Thursday Dec. 6.

“Costa Mesa is blessed to have dedicated and skilled members of our Police Department like Sgt. Brown who go above and beyond the call to protect residents and neighborhoods,” Acting City Manager Tammy Letourneau said. “He and his gang enforcement team are saving lives daily and for that we are truly grateful.”

Throughout 2018, Sgt. Brown has been assigned to the department’s Gang Enforcement Unit and he has led his team to consistently carry out innovative and proactive enforcement

and gang investigations. His team has aggressively collaborated with various outside agencies, such as State Parole and the Orange County Probation Department, with local and neighboring enforcement sweeps.

His team's hallmark has also been to be continuously available to augment or support efforts by CMPD's Patrol Division, SIU (Special Investigative Unit) and Detective Bureaus, as well as, on occasion, federal agencies such as ATF (Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms) and HSI (Homeland Security Investigations) Bureaus.

He also facilitated CMPD's full partnership with the Orange County District Attorney's Office's renowned OC GRIP (Gang Reduction and Intervention Partnership) program. OC GRIP serves to foster a collaborative, community-based approach to gang reduction and is unique from all other anti-gang efforts in the country.

To date, Brown's Gang Unit has made 660 arrests, with nearly one-half of those involving felony criminal violations. They have made over 2,800 gang contacts, served 70 search warrants, and seized over a dozen illegal firearms from gang members and gang associates. Brown also oversees the department's School Resource Officer program, which is based out of both Estancia and Costa Mesa High Schools.

Brown joined the Costa Mesa Family in July, 2005 as a Police Officer and worked in the Patrol Division until February of 2007 when he was assigned as a gang investigator, a role he maintained until January 2013.

It was in that role that he developed expertise in gangs with five other gang Investigators, working alongside the Orange County District Attorney's Tri-Agency Resource Gang Enforcement unit.

In addition to his work with gangs, Brown is an Arrest and Control Tactics Instructor, and a negotiator on the

department's Crisis Negotiations and Peer Support Team. He has remained actively involved in both roles, and currently serves as one of two Arrest and Control Tactics Supervisors who oversee the department's 10-person ACT instructor team.

He has also worked as a Field Training Officer in the Patrol Division and as a patrol sergeant.

In addition to honoring Brown, Letourneau welcomed several new employees and congratulated others for promotions and retirements.

In Development Services, Ann Le is a new Intern working in the Planning Division and Ariana Miller is a new Permit Processing Specialist working in our Building Division. Ariana is currently enrolled at Cal State Northridge and is working towards a Bachelor's degree in Accounting.

In Parks & Community Services, Christian Becerra is a new Recreation Leader III assigned to the Senior Center. Assigned to the ROCKS program are Victoria Albers a new Recreation Leader II, Louis Garcia a new Recreation Leader I, Sheila Gonzalez a new Recreation Leader I and Bryan Sanchez a new Recreation Leader II.

Also announced was Amir Adalan is a new Lifeguard, assigned to the Downtown Recreation Center.

Bryan is also a graduate of Estancia High School (Go Eagles!), and is currently enrolled at Irvine

Zar Ni Heim is a new Intern working in the Public Services Department in the Transportation Division.

Those receiving promotions include: Jessica Ochoa who has been promoted to a Recreation Leader III assigned to our Balearic Center, and Jose Gutierrez and Emilio Soto who have both been promoted to Construction Inspector in Public Services.



Letourneau also recognized Associate Engineer Larry Dreiman who is retiring after 19 years with the city and Costa Mesa Fire Battalion Chief Kevin Diamond who started his career with Costa Mesa in 1989.

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## **Jury unanimously agrees with city and dismisses challenge to sober living ordinance**

The City of Costa Mesa won a complete and resounding victory in federal court on Friday Dec. 7 as a jury unanimously agreed the city's sober living ordinance is not discriminatory and does not violate the Fair Housing Act and dismissed a lawsuit filed by Yellowstone Women's First Step House, Inc. and two other entities against the City.

The verdict means the City can continue to enforce its ordinance, which regulates sober living home operators, including limiting the number of residents to six or fewer and maintaining a 650-foot buffer between non-licensed sober living homes.

Costa Mesa Mayor Katrina Foley was thrilled with Friday's victory.

"The City Council had the courage to stand up to those in the sober living home industry who profiteered from exploiting vulnerable people," Foley said. "I'm glad the jury understood that the city's lawful motivation was to protect recovery residents and preserve our neighborhoods. They rejected the sober living home industry's unreasonable position that ANY regulation no matter how reasonable was discrimination. They

went so far as to say that even regulations preventing sex offenders and felons from managing a house were too onerous and discriminating. That's just unreasonable. The recovery residents and the community of Costa Mesa all won today."

The City of Costa Mesa was represented by lead trial attorney Jennifer Keller of Keller/Anderle LLP.

"The Costa Mesa City Council stood tall and refused to be intimidated by the Plaintiffs," Keller said. "The victory today is a victory not just for the people of Costa Mesa and those in recovery homes, but also for every city in California."

The City's law, passed in 2014, was written to balance the rights of all citizens – including residents of group homes – to live in and enjoy Costa Mesa's single family neighborhoods.

The City implemented the law to protect the entire community from operators of unlicensed facilities which exposed residents to dangerous conditions and created public nuisance concerns.

Yellowstone, another sober living home and an industry trade group brought the suit in the Central District of California in 2014. Numerous city employees and officials, including former Mayor Jim Righeimer, and former Assistant City Manager Rick Francis, testified before the eight-person jury.

They spoke about the need for the law and discussed the City's efforts to help those rendered homeless after being kicked out of sober living homes, including many people recovering from drug and alcohol addiction who had been enticed to come to Costa Mesa from out of state.

Several neighbors of poorly run recovery homes testified about the way these facilities mistreated recovering addicts and the impacts they had on the community.

Nancy Clark, who has operated a highly respected recovery program in Costa Mesa for 28 years, also spoke on behalf of the City. Her testimony made clear that high quality recovery programs have always been welcome in Costa Mesa, and that such programs should embrace the City's regulation efforts as beneficial to people in recovery as well as the entire community.

After a four-week trial before the Honorable James Selna, the jury deliberated for half a day on Friday before returning the verdict on all counts for the City of Costa Mesa.

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## **Notice of Recruitment for Positions on the Parks and Recreation, Planning and Senior Commissions**

The Costa Mesa City Council is currently seeking interested individuals from the community to serve on the Parks and Recreation, Planning, and Senior Commissions.

**Parks and Recreation Commission** – The Commission meets on the fourth Thursday of each month and assists the City Council and various City departments with issues related to parks, parkways, recreation programs, and community services. The appointed terms of three commissioners will expire February 2019. The city is currently recruiting for those seats with a term expiration of February 2023. Applicants must be registered voters in the City. For further information, please contact Executive Secretary Allison Burch at (714) 754-5009.

Planning Commission – The Commission meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month and advises on planning, land use, and development matters.

The Commission has the authority to review: 1) regulations pertaining to the future growth, development, and beautification of the City with respect to public and private projects; 2) consistency with municipal plans to ensure that future growth and development do not impede upon sanitation, public utilities, and transportation facilities; 3) the location and design of proposed buildings, structures or works; and, 4) the design and improvement of proposed subdivisions of land.

The Commission is the final decision-making body for certain discretionary land use approvals such as design review, conditional use permits, and land divisions. The Commission also functions as an advisory body to the City Council for Zoning and General Plan amendments. The appointed terms of three commissioners will expire February 2019. We are currently recruiting for those seats with a term expiration of February 2023.

Applicants must be registered voters in the City. For further information, please contact Administrative Secretary Julie Colgan at (714) 754-5612.

Senior Commission: The Commission meets on the second Tuesday of every other month and functions as an advisory body to the City Council on issues related to the Costa Mesa Senior Center, senior programs and services within the community. The appointed terms of four commissioners will expire February 2019. The city is currently recruiting for those seats with a term expiration of February 2023. For further information, please contact Executive Secretary Allison Burch at (714) 754-5009.

Application Process – Residents who are interested in getting

involved in local government are encouraged to complete a Commission Application Form from the City Clerk's Office or from the City's website ([www.costamesaca.gov/apply](http://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; faxed to (714) 754-4942; emailed to [cityclerk@costamesaca.gov](mailto: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., Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019. Appointments are tentatively scheduled for the Feb. 5, 2019 City Council meeting.

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## **Costa Mesa makes history with first directly elected woman mayor and new council members by district**

A new Costa Mesa City Council was sworn in Tuesday, Dec. 4.

This brought with it several firsts; Mayor Katrina Foley as the first directly elected mayor, and the first council members to be elected to represent distinct council districts—Andrea Marr, Manuel Chavez and Arlis Reynolds.

In addition, the formation of this City Council brings with it a majority of women (Foley, Genis, Marr and Reynolds), the first Latino/a council members (Chavez, Marr and Reynolds) and the youngest person to hold office in Costa Mesa (Chavez).

"I am extremely honored to serve as the city's first directly

elected woman mayor,” Foley said. “I look forward to working alongside my fellow council members—especially our newly elected members that bring such diversity, youth and excitement to the dais. We know residents elected us to ensure that they can live, work and thrive in our great City of Costa Mesa. We will do that through a spirit of collaboration and civility, while prioritizing public safety, neighborhood improvement and community services for our youth, families and seniors.”



In November of 2016, Costa Mesa voters adopted Measure EE, which created six councilmember districts and a directly elected mayor. This year, Council Districts 3 (Marr), 4 (Chavez) and 5 (Reynolds) were on the ballot.

Districts, 1, 2 and 6 will be up for election in November of 2020. Council Members Sandy Genis, John Stephens and Allan Mansoor still have two years left on their terms.

Foley served as Mayor in 2016-2017, and has been on the City Council for 10 years. She was first elected in 2004 and served through 2010, when she was elected to the Newport Mesa Unified School District Board of Trustees. She served on the school board until 2014, and then ran successfully for the council in 2014. That term expired in November of 2018.

As the first directly elected mayor, she will serve a two-year term that will expire in 2020.

Foley is an employment law attorney and business owner. She graduated from Seattle University School of Law and UCLA as an English major with Women's Studies emphasis.

For more information click Mayor Foley's webpage [here](#).

Prior to being elected to City Council District 3, Marr served on the city's Cultural Art Committee, where she helped spearhead a number of different community art projects and events. She also previously served on the Bikeway and Walkability Committee where she focused on cyclist and pedestrian safety.

Marr is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy of which she was nominated to attend by Vice President Al Gore. During her time at the Academy, she held multiple leadership positions and competed with the Academy Karate team. She was recognized for her leadership by the Naval Academy Superintendent and graduated with a degree in Aerospace Engineering.

Marr also holds an M.S. in Engineering Management from Old Dominion University where her coursework focused on the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building program. She was a 2013 recipient of the White House Champion of Change award for her work in energy as a veteran.

She is a licensed professional engineer in the state of Washington and is a Director at Willdan Group, a publicly traded energy solutions company.

For more information click Council Member Marr's webpage [here](#).

At the age of 23, District 4 Council Member Chavez is likely the youngest person to serve on the Costa Mesa City Council.

Chavez grew up on the Westside of Costa Mesa and attended local public schools through high school. While a student at Estancia High School, he became heavily involved with the Save Our Youth program (SOY).

After graduating from Estancia High School, Chavez attended UC Irvine where he studied Political Science and became very involved with both the UCI College Democrat Club, where he was elected President his senior year, and the Orange County Young Democrats.

For more information click Council Member Chavez's webpage [here](#).

District 5 Council Member Reynolds served as Vice Chair of Costa Mesa's Parks and Recreation Commission and as Commission liaison to the Fairview Park Steering Committee.

Reynolds grew up in the Freedom Homes neighborhood of Westside Costa Mesa where she attended local schools. After graduating from Estancia High School, she went on to attend Massachusetts Institute of Technology where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering. She is currently a member of the Executive MBA Program at the UCI Paul Merage School of Business. She works as a consultant in the clean-energy industry, specializing in evaluation of energy efficiency and clean energy projects and technologies.

For more information click Council Member Reynolds' webpage [here](#).



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## **With rainstorm coming, sandbags will be available at City Hall**

With inclement weather expected to hit Costa Mesa and Orange County over the coming days, the city will provide residents with sand bags in the rear parking lot of City Hall, located at 77 Fair Drive.

It is a self-service location, and the number of sandbags is limited to 15 per household.

Additionally, Maintenance Services staff will be patrolling potential flooding spots to make sure catch basins are clear of debris and operational throughout the city.

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## **Community Improvement team help transform house**

A residential property in Costa Mesa had an extensive code enforcement and police calls for service history and had become a neighborhood nuisance.

The city's Community Improvement Division used a health and safety receivership approach, and now the property meets city

standards and has improved the surrounding neighborhood.

Code Enforcement uses several methods and tools to gain compliance. One method Code Enforcement may use is a Health and Safety receivership. This tool is a legal process through which the title to a piece of real property is temporarily taken from the owner and placed with a court-appointed officer, receiver. Actions taken by the court appointed receiver are as followed but not limited to:

- Taking full and complete control of the property
- Obtaining cost estimates for necessary repairs/rehabilitation
- Managing and paying expenses of operating the substandard building
- Entering into contracts with contractors to perform necessary repairs
- Collecting rents and income from substandard building and using such rents to pay for repairs
- Borrowing funds to pay for repairs and much more



The receivership method is used for cases where severe substandard conditions exist at a property and where the owner has a history of noncompliance with a local enforcement agency's orders to abate.

Other situations a receivership may be used are when emergency circumstances are discovered by staff that may pose an immediate threat to health and safety of the community.

For more information visit the Community Improvement Division webpage [here](#).

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## **Court sides with Costa Mesa, issues preliminary injunction to stop needle exchange program**

The Superior Court for the County of San Diego has issued a preliminary injunction against the Orange County Needle Exchange Program and the California Department of Public Health to effectively stop those agencies from operating a mobile needle exchange program in Costa Mesa and other cities in the county.

"We are pleased the court agreed with the city's position regarding the public health hazard the needle exchange would have posed to Costa Mesa," said Mayor Sandra Genis. "This ruling is a victory to all who work, live and play in this city and fortifies our commitment to the highest level of public safety."

Last August, the State Department of Public Health granted the Orange County Needle Exchange Program the right to distribute needles in Costa Mesa on 17th Street, from the intersection of Whittier Avenue westward to the Armstrong Petroleum Plant. The State also granted the group the right to operate needle exchange programs in the Cities of Orange, Anaheim and Santa Ana.

In response to those approvals, the Costa Mesa City Council voted unanimously to pursue legal action and joined Anaheim, Orange and the County of Orange to seek a preliminary and permanent restraining order/ injunction and to put a halt to the operation of the approved mobile needle exchange program.

“The City of Costa Mesa vigorously fought to ensure the safety of its citizens by not having needles distributed with no accounting for the dangerous needle waste,” said Mayor-Elect Katrina Foley.

The court’s ruling this week preliminarily enjoins the Orange County Needle Exchange Program and the State from conducting their needle exchange program in Orange County,

though the court did not rule out the possibility that the Orange County Needle Exchange Program could apply to operate a different exchange in Orange County at a later date.

The Orange County Needle Exchange Program had previously operated a needle exchange program at the Santa Ana Civic Center but that operation was terminated down by government officials who revoked OCNEP’s permit after a massive increase in needle litter that posed a threat to public safety. Several people were pricked by discarded needles, including members of the Santa Ana Police Department. The City of Costa Mesa received written and photographic evidence of the needle litter.

Prior to the State’s approval of the needle exchange program, the Costa Mesa Police Department and the City Attorney’s

Office submitted evidence and statements to State officials that chronicled the substantial risks to public health the program presents to the Costa Mesa community and asked that the application be denied.

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## **City launches new website for businesses to find best locations in Costa Mesa**

Do you want to relocate your business to Costa Mesa? Are you ready to make that step from home business to a brick and mortar location? Is your business doing so well you need to transition to a larger space but do not want to leave the fantastic atmosphere and amenities of Costa Mesa?

The city has developed a new and improved webpage to help with site selection. Using the webpage's tools, you can search for properties for sale or tenant spaces/buildings for lease within the city. Using these tools, you will be able to filter by property type, price range, square-footage, agent name, and any other keyword of your choosing.

City staff believes the webpage will be a great tool to help our entire business community, to find the perfect location for their business.

Click [here](#) to find the webpage. It resides within the Economic Development section of the city website.

To provide feedback, please contact Dan Inloes at [daniel.inloes@costamesaca.gov](mailto:daniel.inloes@costamesaca.gov) or at 714.754.5088 with any comments or suggestions.

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# Street sweeping cancelled for Thanksgiving holiday

Due to the observation of the Thanksgiving holiday on Thursday, Nov. 22, there will be no residential street sweeping Thursday, Nov. 22 and Friday Nov. 23.

This coincides with the Costa Mesa Sanitary District, which also observes this holiday by pushing trash collection back one day.

This results in residential gutter lines being cluttered with trash cans making it impossible for street sweeper operators to do an efficient job. There should be no parking citations issued during this time.

Street sweeping will resume back to normal schedule the week of Nov. 26.

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