

Candidates and ballot measure proponents have new sign ordinance to follow

As campaign season heats up and political signs are prominent throughout the city, residents may not be aware that the City Council adopted a new ordinance this year governing the placement of campaign signs.

Under the new ordinance, political campaign signs are now considered “non-commercial portable signs” in the City of Costa Mesa. Non-commercial portable signs are defined as: Any sign which can be moved from place to place which is not permanently affixed to the ground or to a building that is not used for commercial purposes.

Examples of non-commercial signs generally include, but are not limited to, signs that promote a political or religious viewpoint, and signs commenting on public officials(s) or matter(s) of public discourse.

Non-commercial portable signs may be displayed in Costa Mesa if they comply with Costa Mesa Municipal Code Section 13-123.

To learn more about **non-commercial portable signs** and **commercial portable signs**, **here is the link** to the Sign Code.

Below are answers to some Frequently Asked Questions about political signs and the new ordinance:

Q: When may non-commercial portable signs be posted?

A: In the six weeks before the upcoming Nov. 8 election, non-commercial portable signs may remain in the public parkways without any weekday restrictions. Non-commercial portable signs may also be placed on private

properties, subject to the same time frames as those placed in public parkways – including the six-week extension before the election. Commercial portable signs are still only allowed to be installed in the public rights-of-ways between 6 a.m. Friday and 6 p.m. Sunday.

Q: Where may the non-commercial portable signs be posted?

A: The signs may be posted on any landscaped parkway, or on private property with the consent of the property owner, lessee, or occupant.

Q: Where are non-commercial portable signs not allowed to be posted?

A: Signs may not be posted on: Utility poles; roadway signs; traffic control boxes; bus shelters; in tree wells; center median islands; overhanging a curb, sidewalk, or driveway or anywhere that obstructs visibility of pedestrian or vehicular traffic; within 15 feet of a fire hydrant, intersection of an alley, street, or highway; or within 15 feet of a driveway. Additionally, they may not be posted in front of public facilities such as libraries, schools, city hall, and parks and must be placed a minimum of 100 feet away from any polling place.

Q: What happens to non-commercial portable signs that are not legally posted?

A: City staff will remove signs posted in violation of the Municipal Code. Signs will be stored for 10 days and then can be disposed of unless the owner of the seized sign contacts the City's Code Enforcement Division within that 10-day period.

Q: When must non-commercial portable signs be removed?

A: Signs must be removed within 10 days after the election.

Q: How will a sign owner know whether the City or a vandal

removed a sign?

A: Signs removed by the City are tracked and stored as noted above. The owner can contact the Code Enforcement Division at 714-754-5623.

Q: What are the size limits for non-commercial portable signs?

A: In public rights-of-ways, signs may not exceed 5 square feet in area with a maximum height of 3 feet above grade. On private properties, non-commercial portable signs may not exceed 5 square feet in area with a maximum height of 6 feet above grade.

Q: Are there any restrictions regarding non-commercial banners?

A: Since the Sign Code is currently silent as regards to non-commercial banners, they are subject to the same requirements as a commercial banner except that no permit is required. They may be placed only on a building or freestanding sign; identification must be placed on signs; they may be installed up to 6 weeks before the applicable election; and they must be removed within 10 days after the election.

Q: Does the City require a security bond to be posted to ensure removal of non-commercial portable signs following the election?

A: No, the City does not require a security bond for non-commercial portable signs. However, the owner of the signs must affix their name, address, and telephone number on the sign prior to installation.

Maximum area permitted for:

- Residential zones: 0.5 square feet per dwelling unit/100 square feet maximum per site
- All other zones: 0.5 square feet per lineal foot of building frontage facing the street; minimum 25 square

feet per tenant with a maximum of 75 square feet per tenant.

If you have any further questions, please call Code Enforcement at 714-754-5623.

Santa Ana River Sand Management Project begins

The OC Public Works department has begun work on the Lower Santa Ana River Sand Management project. The project involves removing up to 840,000 cubic yards of accumulated sand in the lowest 3.5 miles of the Santa Ana River to maintain design flood protection. Beach compatible sand will be taken to various beaches within Orange County for beach nourishment. This is a reoccurring maintenance project that was last done by the Army Corps of Engineers in 2004/05.

This current maintenance effort began late August/early September this year and will take about six months to complete. As part of the 2004/05 maintenance work and this current work, the county's contractor needs to close off the east bike path between PCH and Victoria/Hamilton bridge to the public because the contractor will be using this reach of the bike path for access to adjacent staging areas and access to equipment within the river. The west side bike path/trail will remain open. The contractor will prepare and implement a bike/pedestrian detour plan.

A bike detour plan sign will be installed at various locations along the Santa Ana River east levee. The metal sign will be

installed at both ends of the closure and three locations upstream for advance notification to trail users. The county will post this detour map on the OC Parks website and OC Public Works website to inform the public of the upcoming closure. This sign is in addition to the DETOUR and TRAIL CLOSURE signs installed at both ends of the closure.

Costa Mesa Police nab transient accused of robbing 74-year-old woman

Costa Mesa Police arrested a 24-year-old transient who is accused of a strong-arm robbery against a 74-year-old woman who had just withdrawn money from the ATM machine outside of Bank of America at 2701 Harbor Boulevard.

Police said Simon Yousif grabbed the woman's wallet and during the ensuing struggle to retain her wallet, the victim fell to the ground and sustained a broken hip.

Per witnesses, the suspect fled east across Harbor Boulevard and a description of the suspect was broadcast to responding police officers.

Officers searched a nearby apartment complex at 2700 Peterson Place and spoke with bystanders standing outside. Those bystanders alerted the officers that they saw a suspicious male running east through the apartment complex toward Orange Coast College.

Officers responded and saw a male, later identified as Yousif, attempting to hide behind a tree on the south side of Adams

Avenue west of Pinecreek Drive.

The male attempted to flee from officers and was subsequently detained. The victim's property, including cash, government identification, and social security card, was located in the suspect's possession.

Officers were unable to locate the victim's wallet or debit card.

The suspect was identified by a witness and placed under arrest for strong-arm robbery. The victim was taken to a local area hospital for treatment.

Yousif was later taken to the Orange County Jail on \$50,000 bail.

Costa Mesa residents Can Now Look Up Road Conditions on Interactive Map

The city of Costa Mesa has launched an online interactive Road Condition Map for residents and commuters to lookup road conditions and future streets rehab schedules on City streets.

[Click here](#) for the map and a tutorial on how to use it.

The Road Condition Map application shows streets in different colors based on 2015-2016 road condition PCI (Pavement Condition Index).

The results rated from Very Good (blue) to Very Poor (red).

Commuters can highlight the street and click to see details on

the road condition and future rehab schedule for that specific street segment they selected.

This application is created by city staff members from the Public Services Department and Information Technology Department.

Road condition information and future rehab schedule are part of the city's over all Capital Improvement Projects (CIP).

All information will be updated annually or sooner when there is an update.

THINK Together Founder Randy Barth receives Mayor's Award

Costa Mesa Mayor Steve Mensinger presented the Mayor's Award to Randy Barth, the founder of THINK Together's Shalimar Learning Center on Costa Mesa's Westside, which for 22 years has helped tutor and teach young students in this low income neighborhood.

"You made such a huge impact on so many people," Mayor Mensinger said as he presented the award at the City Council meeting Tuesday Sept. 20. "We are grateful as a city to have people like you who make a difference. You are a true community partner and we are proud to have you in Costa Mesa."

THINK Together, the largest nonprofit after school program in the state, began on Shalimar Drive back in 1994 in response to a gang shooting in the neighborhood where some of the local moms asked for a safe place for their kids to study afterschool.

Working with community moms, Catholic priest Jerome Karcher and members of the St. Andrews Presybyterian Church, Barth was able to secure a room in an apartment complex and THINK Together was born.

Today THINK Together serves several hundred thousand children in after school programs in Orange, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties as well as children in the Bay Area near San Jose. Barth announced Tuesday that his organization is beginning a capital campaign to build a new community center on Shalimar Drive.

“We appreciate the city’s partnership through the years,” Barth said. “It wasn’t an easy project to get off the ground, but it’s been, we think, mutually beneficial. We thank you for your leadership and support.”

Construction to Begin on New Sewer Main at Harbor/Wilson intersection

Beginning Monday Sept. 26, Costa Mesa Sanitary District will conduct mostly night operations to install a new pressure sewer main (force main) from the west side of the Harbor/Wilson intersection to the east side of the intersection to increase reliability and life expectancy of the sanitary sewer system. The force main is a critical component of the infrastructure and the method of construction

is the least disruptive of the available options for installation.

The project will last approximately four weeks and the majority of the work will be performed during night time hours in order to minimize disruptions. Sewer service will not be interrupted during the project, however, traffic impacts will occur and residents and businesses are encouraged to use the pre-arranged detours. The District and its contractor will attempt to minimize inconveniences and complete the work in an efficient and expedient manner. The District apologizes in advance for any noise and inconveniences that may occur.

City reports budget surplus of more than \$11 million from last fiscal year

A combination of sound fiscal policy and a thriving retail environment, along with expenditures lower than anticipated for a variety of factors, has resulted in a significant budget surplus of an estimated \$11 million for the City of Costa Mesa.

At the end of the last fiscal year on June 30, 2016, the city's revenues totaled more than \$122.5 million while expenditures were \$111.4 million. That surplus represents 9 percent of the total revenues.

“We have made concerted efforts to keep our spending under control while still providing great customer service to our residents by rebuilding our older infrastructure, investing in new capital improvement projects and hiring top-level staffing

in city departments,” said Mayor Steve Mensinger.

The mayor called this a proud moment for the City of Costa Mesa.

“A significant amount of hard work, difficult decisions and favorable business conditions have resulted in this environment for success,” he said. “Many people deserve thanks for their contributions, especially my fellow council colleagues, commissioners, city staff, the business community and Costa Mesa residents.”

Indeed, the City Council now has the opportunity to determine where to allocate the surplus money and could follow its established policy of using surplus funds to increase reserves, reduce pension debt and increase expenditures on capital projects.

The process for the last two years has been for staff to bring a recommendation to the City Council’s Financial Advisory Committee around November or December and the City Council review the Committee’s recommendation as part of the council’s Mid-Year Budget Review in February.

Based on the City Council’s policy and based on prior budget discussions, staff will likely recommend that the committee increase the general fund reserves by \$2.66 million, which will immediately allow the city to reach the Council’s \$55 million reserve goal.

The council can also recommend a number of measures, including paying down pension debt and other debt obligations as well as funding projects and enhancing various community priorities.

Costa Mesa police join the fight to combat human trafficking in county

Speaking to a crowd of about 150 spectators in front of City Hall, Police Chief Rob Sharpnack announced that Costa Mesa will join other law enforcement and social services agencies in the Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force to crack down on sex trade criminals who are leaving a wake of young victims throughout the county.

“It’s truly an honor for the Costa Mesa Police Department to join this effort,” Chief Sharpnack said as he urged members of the public to report incidents of human trafficking that they may witness through the National Hotline number at 1-888-3737-888. “You can be the one to help a victim find safety and new hope.”

Sharpnack announced that human trafficking is on the increase in Orange County and Costa Mesa Police will assign one full-time officer to the human trafficking detail.

“It’s the second largest criminal enterprise in the world and it is the fastest growing,” Chief Sharpnack said.

<https://youtu.be/xEoN2Rc4ZLI>

Chief Sharpnack was joined by Mayor Steve Mensinger, Anaheim Police Deputy Chief Julian Harvey, Director of Victim Assistance Programs for Community Services Programs Lita Mercado and District Attorney Tony Rackaukus at a press conference in front of City Hall on Friday morning Sept. 9.

Also in attendance were Councilmembers Katrina Foley and Jim Righheimer and many law enforcement personnel from throughout the county.

“Costa Mesa will do everything in our power to combat human trafficking in our city, as well as support this important regional effort” Mayor Mensinger said.

Mercado’s group, the Community Services Programs based in Santa Ana, cofounded the task force in 2004, which consists of law enforcement personnel from Anaheim, Costa Mesa, Santa Ana, Irvine, the California Highway Patrol, the OC Sheriff, the FBI, Homeland Security, the U.S. Attorney and OC District Attorney office.

Since 2004, the task force has worked to identify the origin of the victims and how they wound up being part of this tragic trend. Only a little more than 20 percent come from Orange County, though much of the trafficking occurs here with the pimps using Beach and Harbor Boulevards as major corridors.

The task force aided and provided assistance to 580 sex and labor trafficking victims.

In addition the task force not only goes after the pimps who brutalize these young victims and exploit them as sex slaves, but also those who pay to have sex with them.

“We now have the purchasers of sex in our sights,” Anaheim Deputy Chief Harvey said. “We will be looking for you and you will go to jail.”

District Attorney Rackauckus also noted there was an uptick in violence against those kept captive and he provided gruesome details of some of the injuries these young women, and in some cases children, receive. He said that his office has experienced more and more gang members, many from the Fresno area, taking part in these illegal activities and he vowed to put the perpetrators behind bars.

“We are working to get them the longest sentences possible so we can put them out of business,” he said.

Click [here](#) for more information and links to data on the OC Human Trafficking Task Force website. And click [here](#) for more information on Community Service Programs.

Local Streets and Bus Benches Get a Power Wash

Maintenance Division staff, in coordination with CleanStreets, recently performed pressure washing on 19th Street to clean up areas that were becoming increasingly dirty and unhealthful. And in recent weeks, the city has also worked Clear Channel to clean up some of the bus benches and shelters throughout the city, which had also become health hazards.

For the early morning pressure washing, City workers picked up all the debris left from the homeless prior to washing. Also, using two graffiti trucks, CleanStreets accomplished quite a bit in two hours prior to the start of rush hour.



They pressure washed the soup kitchen area, which was extremely filthy and covered in gum, and then pressure washed the entire length of west bound 19th from Meyer to Pomona, which included The Tower.

They then pressure washed the east bound sidewalk from the Senior Center all the way to McDonald's. Most of the wash water was directed into the adjacent City shrub planters, with the sweeper picking up any water that went into the street in the areas without landscape. While the city did its best with the steam cleaner, it was only able to remove small amounts of the gum that had accumulated.

Everything was completed in two hours. Residents with street sweeping requests are encouraged to call 714-327-7471 or the Street Sweeping Hotline (Parking Enforcement): 714-754-5290.

Residents' concerns regarding country club construction addressed

At a recent City Council meeting, Charlene Kass, a resident of The Master's Circle in Eastside Costa Mesa, alerted the city about construction related issues she and her neighbors were experiencing from the construction taking place at the Santa Ana Country Club.

Kass said the residents of her neighborhood were dealing with dust, dirt on the roadways, a large dead tree that they felt should be removed and other construction related concerns.

Members of the Development Services team reached out to the Joseph Wagner, general manager of the country club to address the issue.

Wagner met with Kass, gave her a tour of the course and an update on the construction, which is now complete.

He reported to Development Services that the issues have been resolved and that Ms. Kass was glad to see the tree that appeared dead was now growing leaves and it will be saved.

CMPD snares seven offenders in probation compliance

operation

Officers from the Costa Mesa Police Department and members of the Orange County Probation Department arrested seven offenders on Thursday Aug. 25 for outstanding arrest warrants, violations of probation, and/or new criminal law violations.

The two agencies conducted the compliance checks on offenders who are subject to Post-Release Community Supervision as well as subjects with probation gang terms. These checks were designed to locate and audit the activity of local criminal offenders residing within Costa Mesa who are under the supervision of the Orange County Probation Department. Officers attempted 19 residential home checks of offenders and contacted 33 offenders, 10 of which were classified as PRCS/Probation offenders living in Costa Mesa.

Summary of those arrested (names withheld):

Male, 15 years old, Costa Mesa

Location of arrest: 1800 block of Park Drive

Supervision status: None

Charges: Armed Robbery (warrant obtained/served on Costa Mesa open case)

Female, 33 years old, Costa Mesa

Location of arrest: 3000 block of Fillmore Way

Supervision: Probation – PRCS

Charges: Probation Violation

Male, 49 years old, Costa Mesa

Location of arrest: 300 block of Princeton Street

Supervision: Mandatory Supervision

Charges: Probation Violation

Male, 40 years old, Costa Mesa

Location of arrest: 500 block of Traverse Street

Supervision: None

Charges: Misdemeanor Warrant arrest

Female, 28 years old, of Mission Viejo

Location of arrest: 700 block of Wilson Street

Supervision: None

Charges: Possession of Paraphernalia

Male, 54 years old, of Costa Mesa

Location of arrest: 700 block of Wilson Street

Supervision: None

Charges: Possession of Paraphernalia

Male, 48 years old, Costa Mesa

Location of arrest: 700 block of Wilson Street

Supervision: None

Charges: Misdemeanor Arrest Warrant

The Costa Mesa Police Department will continue to collaborate with the Orange County Probation Department to conduct similar, future compliance checks of PRCS offenders living in the Costa Mesa community.

Chief Sharpnack welcomes newest officer to the department at swearing-in ceremony

Police Chief Rob Sharpnack on Monday Aug. 29 welcomed Nicholas Dempkowski to the force, the latest police officer to leave another department and join Costa Mesa's men and women in blue.

"This is yet another bright spot for Costa Mesa PD," Sharpnack said as he introduced officer Dempkowski. "Nick is going to be a great addition to our department. He is committed to public service and law enforcement and we are glad to have him aboard."

Attending the swearing in ceremony were Mayor Steve Mensinger and City CEO Tom Hatch as well as several staff members from the Police and Fire Departments and City Hall.

Dempkowski comes to Costa Mesa by way of Fullerton, where he joined that force in 2013 and trained as a K9 officer.

Prior to that, he worked as a reserve officer for the Long Beach Police Department after graduating from the Fullerton College Police Academy. He also has a background in off-road racing.

In addition to Officer Dempkowski, Sharpnack introduced new academy graduate Cory Montgomery as well as three new hires

for Communications/Dispatch division, Erin Cedillo, Nydia Robles and Jennifer Rosenberg.

He also congratulated several police officers for the great restraint they showed during an incident on Friday night, where a man armed with a knife was trying to commit suicide-by-cop. The man was detained safely, despite making threatening gestures toward police.

Sharpnack noted this is a particularly proud time for him as he rebuilds the department with the best and the brightest and bulks up staffing in speciality areas like detectives and community policing.

He thanked the efforts of recruiters such as Sgt. Jerry Hildeman and training assistant Jody Gonzalez for their efforts in bringing in top talent and he commended his officers for doing great work, even in the lean times.

“We have not dropped our service levels at all,” Sharpnack said. “We continue to provide a high level of service to the residents of Costa Mesa.”