



The Riviera Association

October 2021 www.rivieraassociation.org P.O. Box 4235 • Santa Barbara, CA 93140-4235

President's Letter

Dear Members,

This year The Riviera Association, founded in 1930, is ninety-one years old. It is the oldest neighborhood association in Santa Barbara. There are approximately 2,000 homes within its boundaries, ranging roughly from the Santa Barbara city boundary to the north, Sycamore Canyon to the east, Mission Canyon to the west, and south to the lower edges of the Riviera.

The association's purpose, to paraphrase our bylaws, is to help maintain and enhance the distinctive character of the Riviera and the quality of life of our residents. The association works to educate members about ways in which we can collectively improve our neighborhoods, focusing on areas such as zoning, density, policing, roadways, utilities, traffic safety, fire protection, land use, view issues, and neighborhood preservation. While the association and its board of directors remain primarily focused on matters arising within its territory, we may also take positions on city or county wide matters that are likely to impact our members.

Our board is composed of up to fifteen volunteers. The term of office is three years, and all are eligible to serve two terms. Board members chair and participate on various committees focused on those areas mentioned in the bylaws. With approval of the board, any member of the association may serve on a committee. We invite association members interested in serving either on the board or on one of our various committees to contact us at www.rivieraassociation.org/contact-us.

Our volunteer association's ninety-one year track record of active service to the

Riviera community is a testimonial to the strength, quality and commitment of our membership.

In the spirit of informing and educating our membership, the association sponsored a lively ninety-minute discussion forum for the two City Council District 4 candidates, incumbent Kristen Sneddon and her challenger, Planning Commissioner Barrett Reed, on Sunday, September 19th. In case you missed the forum, you can view a video recording of the event on our site at www.rivieraassociation.org.

While we hoped for the opportunity to meet in person at the fall general meeting, we find once again that the Covid situation has not progressed to the point that we can comfortably do so. Following on the success of our virtual spring meeting, we plan to hold the fall meeting virtually as well. The fall meeting will be on Sunday, October 17th, from 4-5:30 p.m. Please save the date and watch your email for additional information and a link to the meeting.

As everyone is aware, the persistent drought conditions that we are experiencing have raised the omnipresent specter of wildfire. There are things we all should do to

prepare. Articles in this newsletter address this threat and some steps we can take to improve our safety. We have also added links to additional information resources at www.rivieraassociation.org/local-link.

It is also important that everyone register to receive emergency alerts. Please visit the www.readysbc.org website to sign up or use the link on our website. If they can't reach you, they can't alert you.

This is my last President's Letter, my term ending this December. Unfortunately, my term has coincided with the Covid-19 epidemic and despite the difficult times I am very proud of the board's accomplishments. I thank them for the support and friendship they have shown me during my time as president.

Please join or renew your membership so we can continue to make a difference in our community. You may use the enclosed registration card or use the secure payment link on our website at www.rivieraassociation.org/join-now.

Sincerely,

Michael Millhollan

President

Riviera Association Fall Virtual Meeting Sunday, October 17 • 4–5:30 p.m.

- Get an update on Riviera Association activities from President Michael Millhollan.
- Join in a game of Riviera Trivia and win prizes!
- Hear Chris Mailes, the new Santa Barbara City fire chief, and Mark vonTillow, wildlands fire specialist, discuss recent developments within the department and fire mitigation efforts. Ask questions via online chat.

Planning & Preparing for a Wildfire

As all-too-frequent headlines and our sometimes-smoky skies tell us, this year's fire season is well underway. Most of us in the Riviera live in high-risk fire zones, so it pays to plan ahead to ensure you and your family are prepared for a wildfire.

One of the most comprehensive local wildfire preparation guides may be found in the Wildland Fire section of the City of Santa Barbara website. Visit santabarbaraca.gov/gov/depts/fire/wildland, scroll down the page and click on the "Ready, Set, Go!" link. The guide covers steps to protect your home and property and provides checklists for what to do, what to take and how to evacuate in the event of an approaching fire.

One of the most important steps to protect your home is to remove flammable vegetation to create defensible space. Riviera Association members Carole and Dr. David Thomasco, MFT wrote to say that the bamboo they see growing on many Riviera properties is actually a dangerous fire hazard, especially when it is dried out or dies. Fire experts recommend removing bamboo growing within thirty feet of your home or fifteen feet of a driveway.

Check out the video at sbfiresafecouncil.org/get-ready to learn more about how to create defensible space and harden your home against a wildfire.



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Communicating in Case of a Wildfire or Other Emergency

Did you know that the Riviera Association helps to sponsor a volunteer-run, emergency communications network for our local community? Chaired by Jim Knight, the Riviera Emergency Communications Group is dedicated to keeping the Riviera community informed in the event of a wildfire, earthquake, or other natural disaster. Such events are capable of causing prolonged and widespread power and cell network outages, and disabling landline phone and mobile voice/text communications at a time when needed most.

The Emergency Communications Group relies on volunteers equipped with small walkie-talkie type, two-way radios. Based on a partnership with the Santa Barbara Amateur Radio Club (SBARC), the emergency radio system benefits from the use of a repeater located high above the city, which significantly enhances signal strength and range. The system enables handheld radio communications between neighborhoods across the Riviera and beyond.

A quick example illustrates the system's potential benefits: Imagine a wildfire closing in on your neighborhood, and as a result of power and cell network outages, you have no means to communicate with remote family members, neighbors, or friends. Fortunately, you're able to turn to your local neighborhood volunteer with the Riviera Emergency Communications Group, who informs you the direction from which



Riviera Association radio network components (from left): emergency radio receivers, handheld radios, and a repeater and antenna, which link the radios together.

the fire is approaching and the best route for a safe evacuation. Now imagine that you return to your home following the disaster, but power and normal communication capabilities remain out. That same volunteer may have information about where to find shelter, supplies, and disaster relief services.

In addition to keeping residents informed as a natural disaster unfolds, the emergency communications network also enables volunteers to pass along real-time information to local fire departments and other agencies so they can respond more quickly and with greater precision to fires and other emergencies as they occur.

Additional **volunteers are needed** to ensure that the emergency radio network spans all Riviera neighborhoods! To volunteer, you don't need any experience using handheld radios. For only a modest time commitment each month, you can potentially help make the difference between life and death in a wildfire or other emergency. To participate, please contact Jim Knight at jjknight3@cox.net.

Recap of District 4 Candidates Forum

Kristen Sneddon and Barrett Reed, candidates for Santa Barbara City Council's District 4 seat, took turns answering our questions in a lively forum on September 19. Hosted and moderated by the Riviera Association, the virtual event attracted several dozen attendees and featured some verbal sparring between the candidates on topics

such as downtown revitalization, affordable housing, solutions for the homeless, and fire prevention and safety. The forum provided a focused view on key issues and the different strategies candidates would take to address them. In case you missed the forum, check out the video recording on our website, rivieraassociation.org.

ADUs on the Riviera—A Brief Introduction

You may have considered building an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) on your property for the purpose of expanding living space, housing an in-law or other family member, or bringing in rental income. Given the evolving regulations surrounding this special category of housing, we thought it might be worth taking a fresh look at ADUs, including the different types, where they're allowed, and what it takes to apply for and build one on the Riviera.

What is an ADU? Most commonly, it's a self-contained additional housing unit with a kitchen, bathroom, and a place to sleep. ADUs can be free-standing structures, attached to the primary residence, or built on top of a garage. They may also be created by converting interior space or an existing garage or other accessory building.

In the past four and a half years, hundreds of ADUs have been permitted and built or are under construction in Santa Barbara; roughly two-thirds are conversions of existing interior space, garages, or other accessory structures. A recent ADU webinar attracted nearly 250 Santa Barbara registrants, demonstrating the significant ongoing interest in ADUs.

ADUs must satisfy current building code standards, in addition to specific size, height, and feature restrictions. There are additional standards and provisions for ADUs in the coastal zone and high-risk

Did You Know?

ADUs actually originated in the early twentieth century as a common feature in single-family housing. Modern-day interest in ADUs picked up in the 1990s with the advent of urban design movements. More recently, in an effort to increase the availability of affordable housing in California, the state legislature passed a series of laws to encourage the development of ADUs in both single-family and multi-family neighborhoods. The laws establish statewide regulations for ADUs and require cities and municipalities to ministerially approve building permits for ADUs as long as basic guidelines are met.

fire areas, in which most Riviera neighborhoods are located.

Let's look briefly at the different types of ADUs you might want to create or build, depending on your situation:

Junior ADU (JADU) Contained within the walls of a single-family dwelling on an owner-occupied property, JADUs are limited to 500 square feet and require a separate outside entry and efficiency kitchen, along with their own bathroom or one that is shared with the primary residence. This is the simplest and generally least expensive type of ADU.

Standard ADU This is a larger ADU (up to 850 to 1,200 square feet if detached) that may be a separate structure, attached to the primary residence, or located within it. Only one standard ADU may be built on a lot. This

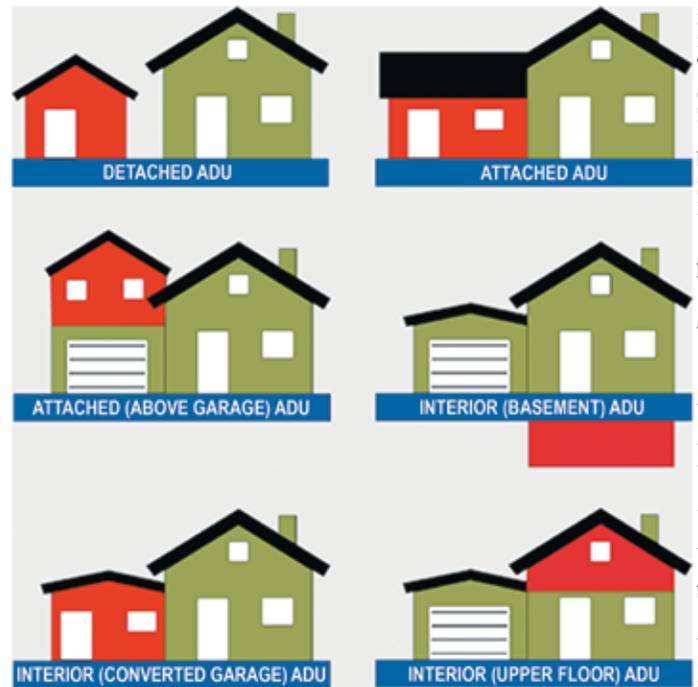
type of ADU is not allowed in the Foothill or Extreme Foothill fire hazard areas, which encompass most of the Riviera.

Special ADU This is a specific type of smaller ADU or JADU with more restrictive size and height limitations. Generally, more than one special ADU may be built on a lot, and they are allowed in all fire hazard zones, making them particularly suitable for properties on the Riviera.

If you own a single-unit residential lot in a high-risk fire zone on the Riviera, you may have an opportunity to construct both a detached Special ADU and a Junior ADU on your property. Based on a recent change in state law designed to encourage more housing, Special ADUs will be allowed through the end of 2024 on properties not occupied by the owner, but if you also want to add a Junior ADU, you'll need to live on the property. To promote fire safety, any

new ADU construction in fire hazard areas must strictly comply with fire codes, defensible space requirements and parking regulations (e.g. prohibiting tandem parking).

To apply for an ADU, visit the ADU section of the City of Santa Barbara website at santabarbaraca.gov/services/planning/accessory_dwelling_units. In terms of timeline, city staff estimates that



American Planning Association, image adapted from AARP, The ABCs of ADUs

the planning, application submission, and review/approval process will typically take between three and twelve months, and construction up to another six to twelve months. Permit and building costs vary significantly depending on the type of ADU. If you decide to move forward, we wish you success in developing an ADU that meets all of your needs.

Correction: Leslie Ervin informed us of an error in a photo caption in the Spring 2021 newsletter, mistakenly labeled “Trolley Turnaround.” Contrary to folklore, and as documented in the book *Mule Car and Trolley: The Story of the Santa Barbara Street Railway*, there was no trolley turnaround at the intersection of Dover, Lasuen, and Paterna roads. The last trolley stop was at Orpet Park, near the intersection of APS and Lasuen. We thank Leslie for setting the record straight.

The Clarence A. Black Estate

As I walked along Mission Ridge Road with my dog Oliver, I passed by a very impressive stone wall that is weathered and solid. I wondered, who built this wall and when was it built? I decided to do a little research and find out. Thanks to Walker A. Tompkins*, the late Santa Barbara historian, and Kathryn Masson's book *The California House*** , I learned that the wall was built for capitalist Clarence A. Black back in 1914. Black was one of the founders of the Cadillac Motor Company. He not only had the stone walls built but also his home, which he called El Cerrito (small hill). El Cerrito was the first large estate house in the Mission Ridge area.

In 1913 Black hired architects Russell Ray and Winsor Soule to create a home in the Mission Revival style. Mr. Black also hired the Scottish Stonemason Peter Poole and his multi-ethnic crew of English, Italian, and Mexican masons to build the stone walls surrounding his estate, along with the stone foundation of the house, the garden and patio walls, the entrance gateposts and miles of retaining walls. The home sat on an extensively landscaped 13-acre tract at 2130 Mission

Ridge Road. Scattered among the gardens were statues, gargoyles, and plaques.

Black later sold the estate to socialite and millionairess Hilda Boldt Weber. She added a pool house, a golf course, and a forest of Monterey cypress. The pool house included a built-in bar, private rooms, lovely views of the pool and mountains, and a secret underground tunnel that leads to the home. If only those stone walls could talk. In 1941 Boldt Weber offered the estate to President Roosevelt and staff as a summer White House, and FDR would have accepted had it not been for the attack on Pearl Harbor. Two years later she conveyed the estate to the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, who operated it until 1972 as the Marymount School for Girls. In 1972 the school was sold to an independent board of trustees. Marymount School recently changed its name to The Riviera Ridge School and currently is a non-denominational, coeducational independent school, junior kindergarten through eighth grade, and one of the



Riviera's proudest assets.

The many boulders scattered across the Riviera hillsides were viewed as an impediment to development but later proved beneficial for the construction of walls, terraces, gateways, steps, culverts, and stone masonry structures. In fact, the first Riviera development was called Rockland.

On a side note, El Cerrito is also one of the properties where squatters Randy Quaid and his girlfriend Evi enjoyed a short but luxurious stay. But that is another story for another time. —*Diana Washburn*

*Tompkins, *Santa Barbara Neighborhoods*

**Masson, *The California House*

Your Voices Were Heard

Thanks to all who participated in our recent survey, which garnered a total of 142

responses. Your opinions and insights on key Riviera and city-wide issues helped to

shape the questions we asked at the District 4 candidates forum in September. We plan

to pass along your thoughts and suggestions to city leaders to help ensure that the Riviera has an impactful voice in decision making at city hall.

The chart at the left shows your ranking of some of the most critical local issues facing us today. If you would like to see a summary of the survey results, please check out the report on our website, rivieraassociation.org.

Highest Priority Issues (up to 3)

Choices	Percentage	Count
Revitalizing downtown	59.86%	85
Improving and adequately funding fire safety and prevention	49.30%	70
Building more affordable housing for our city's workforce	41.55%	59
Providing shelter and services for the homeless	40.85%	58
Improving our main water and sewer infrastructure	38.03%	54
Repairing/repaving roads	28.17%	40
Better maintaining and enhancing city parks	19.01%	27
Other		
Expanding downtown market-rate housing	7.75%	11
Repairing/updating Mission Canyon Bridge	5.63%	8
	Total Entries	142
	<i>Unanswered</i>	<i>1</i>