



The Riviera Association

Fall 2025

www.rivieraassociation.org

P.O. Box 4235 • Santa Barbara, CA 93140-4235

Letter From Our President

Dear Neighbors,

The Riviera Association has been very active this year, and I'm excited to share how your association has been working for you! Together, we've enjoyed a sold-out Santa Barbara Bowl tour, a lively Spring Membership Meeting, our first Firewise gathering, and a fascinating geology walk—plus other neighborhood activities.

Santa Barbara Bowl Tour

In April, more than seventy of us enjoyed a magical evening at the Santa Barbara Bowl. We explored

behind the scenes, visited the artists' dressing rooms, learned about the many historic performances, and ended with a reception on stage. A special thank you to Rick Bowler and the Santa Barbara Bowl team for making the evening unforgettable.

Spring Membership Meeting

Our spring meeting welcomed more than 125 members. The event began with delicious food and drinks, followed by an informative panel representing the leadership of both Santa Barbara City and County firefighting teams who spoke on home hardening and fire preparedness. These meetings

are a wonderful way to connect, learn, preserve and strengthen our community.

Firewise Meeting

In July, we hosted our first Firewise event at Riviera Ridge School, led by Kate Furlong of the Santa Barbara Fire Safe Council. Many of us pledged to start Firewise neighborhoods—including me! Huge thanks to Kate and to Fire & Safety Committee Chair Julie Chapman for organizing this valuable event.

You're invited to an informational meeting on Firewise, including an update from the Riviera's Firewise community, on **Thursday, September 25, at 5:30 p.m. at the Riviera Ridge School.**

Geology Walk

Also in July, Santa Barbara City Council member and environmental geologist Kristen Sneddon led another geology walk, marking the one hundredth anniversary of the 1925 earthquake. Attendees explored local faults, rock samples, and local geologic history at a sold out event, enjoyed by all.

Looking Ahead

Please join us at our **Fall Membership Meeting on Sunday, October 12, from 4–6 p.m.** at the Riviera Ridge School. We'll hear from *Continued on page 4*

Riviera Association Fall General Meeting

Sunday, October 12, 4–6 p.m.

Riviera Ridge Campus, 2130 Mission Ridge Road

Shuttle service to/from Mission Ridge & Tremonto parking lots

- Engage with your neighbors while enjoying great food and drinks.
- Hear from our featured speakers, Jill Zachary and Holly Garcin of the Santa Barbara Parks & Rec Department; and Randy Rowse, Mayor of the City of Santa Barbara.
- You must be a paid member to attend; to join or renew, scan the QR code on page four or go to www.rivieraassociation.org.



Scan for the Fall Meeting

Firewise Community Efforts Take Off in the Riviera

The number of Firewise communities is taking off in the Riviera, with four new groups pending for a total of eight, according to Kate Furlong, program manager at Santa Barbara Firesafe Council. A Firewise community is a neighborhood that has been recognized by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) as taking proactive steps to reduce wildfire risk. This involves residents working together to make their homes and surroundings more resistant to wildfire through education, planning, and action. As few as

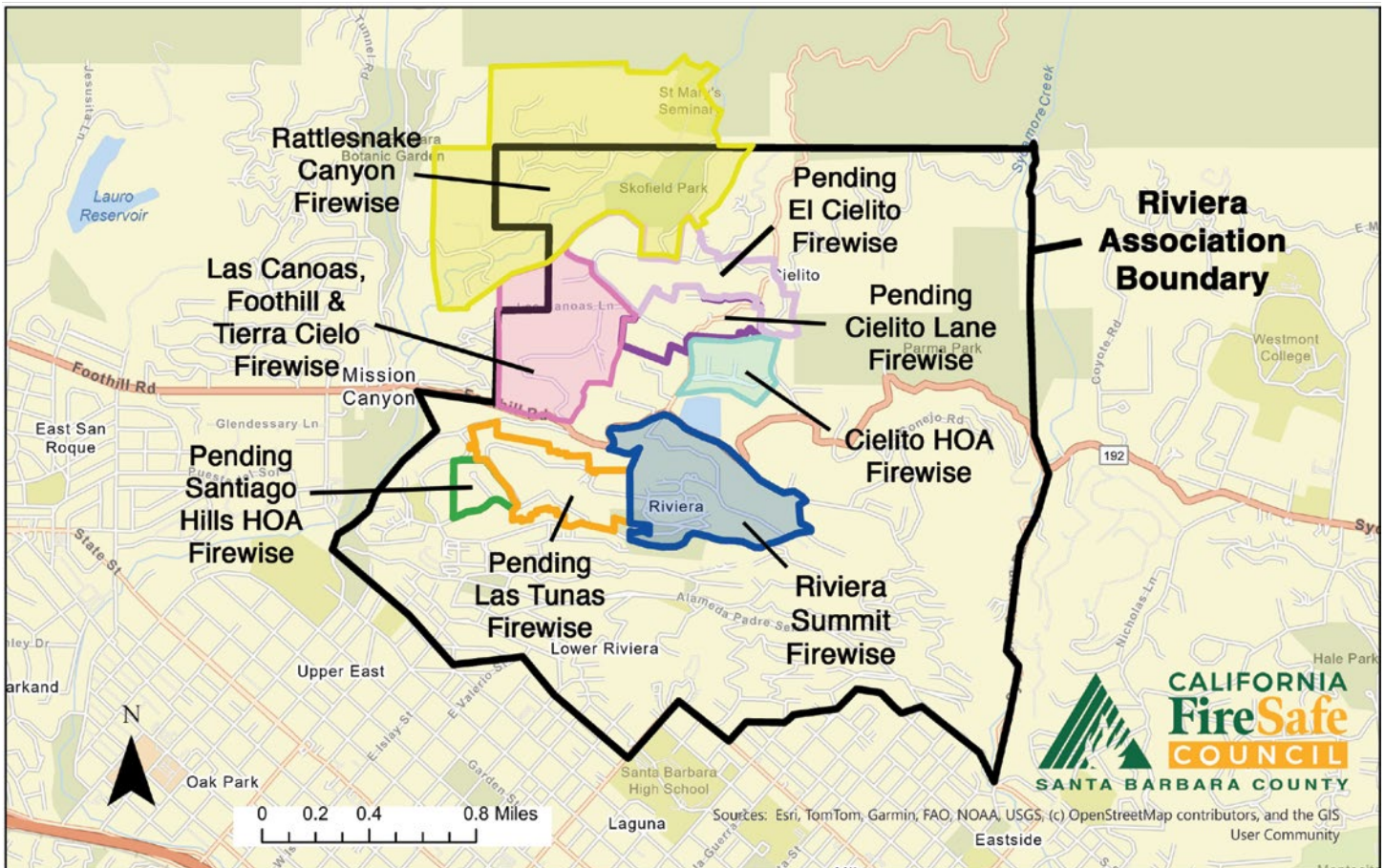
eight homes are required to create a community.

An informational meeting on Firewise was held at the Riviera Ridge School on Wednesday, July 9, with more than twenty-five Riviera neighbors attending. Program Manager Kate Furlong shared information about the program, describing how she works with neighbors to help them understand how to harden their homes against fire. Because fire often spreads from house to house through airborne embers, she emphasized the importance of installing vents with 1/8 inch metal screens to replace the 1/4

inch screens found in many houses today. A helpful article on vents may be found at wildfirepartners.org/screening-vents. Furlong also discussed the free home evaluation that the city offers residents. Residents can sign up through the City Fire Department's website or through the Santa Barbara Firesafe Council at sbfiresafecouncil.org/evaluation.

Another informational meeting on Firewise and an update from the Riviera's Firewise community will be held on **Thursday, September 25, at 5:30 p.m. at the Riviera Ridge School.**

Firewise Boundaries in The Riviera Association as of 8/13/25



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The Lasting Design Influences of Riviera Builder Alex D'Alfonso

The Riviera has some of the most charming and varied architecture in Santa Barbara, which adds to the visual appeal of our special neighborhood. Many homes reflect the quintessential Spanish Colonial Style, with red rooftops and white stucco walls. One of the designers and builders we have to thank for this charming architecture on the Riviera and throughout our town is Alex D'Alfonso. He built hundreds of homes, mainly on the lower Riviera below APS, and many buildings throughout Santa Barbara.

D'Alfonso was born in Apulia, Italy in 1889, and left there at the age of fifteen. In 1915 he moved to Santa Barbara, where he began working as a carpenter at Flying A Studios. In 1920, D'Alfonso started his own contracting and building company, drawing the plans for all the homes he built using his own crew. D'Alfonso preferred architectural designs inspired by his Italian Mediterranean background, which he skillfully blended with the



This D'Alfonso home shows his frequent use of a tile roof, local stone, and a large fixed and casement windows on either side to allow for Riviera views.

Spanish Colonial Revival style that was particularly popular during the 1920s. He soon gained recognition for his quality houses and designs. His solidly built homes could withstand multiple earthquakes with minimal damage.

D'Alfonso houses first appeared on the lower Riviera in the mid-1920s, distinguished by expansive fixed windows flanked by horizontal casement windows on either side. Examples include the home at 1086 Garcia Road and his own residence and office at 1710 Mira Vista Avenue, which is a designated city landmark.

The lower Riviera below APS consisted primarily of middle- and working-class housing. Many of the houses built in that area were modest-sized craftsman or interpretations of the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

The Mediterranean style suited the lower Riviera's steep terrain, irregular streets, and stonework. D'Alfonso

was one of the first developers to adapt his homes to the local topography and environment, designing his buildings to follow the terrain, incorporate trees and boulders, and use local stone materials.

Diana Lane and Diana Road, located above Ortega and De la Guerra streets, together feature thirty-four D'Alfonso homes designed in the Mediterranean style. The homes have terra cotta roofs, smooth white stucco walls, and horizontal divided lights, and the roads are lined with native Santa Barbara sandstone retaining walls. The houses originally sold for \$12,500 to \$15,000—my how times have changed.

Alex D'Alfonso later shifted to the modern 1930s style, embracing Art Deco and Streamline Moderne influences. One of his commercial buildings, constructed in 1939, is the Live Oak Dairy at the intersection of Milpas and Canon Perdido Streets, known by locals as Bossies. Someday Bossy the cow, which originally adorned the roof of the building, will return! When driving down Milpas, note the mixed-use building at 631-635 North Milpas. This design housed four commercial storefronts and a second-floor *Continued on next page*



Another D'Alfonso home built with his trademark windows, tile roof, and local stone.

office for his contracting firm. Note the tile work on the entrance and the balcony railings.

Another builder from Italy was my grandfather, John Prola. John and his wife Eugenia came to Santa Barbara around 1890. The local Italian community encouraged friends and relatives to come to this beautiful city located by the sea and encircled by mountains. The area resembled their hometowns near the Swiss Alps. They saved their money as grandpa worked as a gardener and grandma worked at the lemon packing house on Cesar Chavez. They purchased four lots on East Street and Medio Road and built three homes. The homes mirror the Mediterranean style with tile roofs, stucco walls and large windows taking in the views of the city.



Diana Washburn

A home built by John Prola has both Italian and Mediterranean influences.

Today I am blessed to live in the house on Medio Road. Since grandpa was Italian, every house he built included a wine cellar. My home has a six-foot wine vat and barrels, but little wine. I bet that D'Alfonso and grandpa shared a glass or two of wine in this cellar. After all these years, the cellar still has that musty smell of fermented grapes.

Alex D'Alfonso passed away in 1991 at the age of 101. His legacy lives on through the Spanish Colonial Revival influences of the many structures he designed and built, helping to give the Riviera and our city their unique style.
—Diana Prola-Washburn,
Riviera Board Member

New Association Membership Process

We're excited to share some great news—The Riviera Association has moved from manual membership management to a brand-new automated system! This change will make life easier for everyone and help us stay better connected as a community.

With the new system, billing and renewals are taken care of automatically. No more worrying about filling out cards and missing deadlines—you'll get helpful reminders right on time. Even better, you can log in anytime to update your own contact information and set up recurring credit card payments, so our records are always accurate and your membership stays current without the back-and-forth emails or cumbersome membership cards.

The system also makes registering for events a breeze—you'll be able to sign up and pay online in just a few clicks using

Eventbrite, which we started using for the spring meeting this year. You'll also receive notifications about other upcoming events, so you won't miss a chance to join the fun.

This upgrade means less time spent on paperwork and more time enjoying the events and gatherings that make The Riviera Association so special. We can't wait for you to give it a try and see how simple it is to stay connected and involved!

If you're a current member you should have received an email from our new system earlier this month, if you have any questions please contact us at membership@rivieraassociation.org. Scan the QR code above to renew or sign up. —Bill Phelps



Continued from page 1

Letter from the President, cont.

Jill Zachary and Holly Garcin (Parks & Recreation) on reimagining Franceschi House, as well as Mayor Randy Rowse. As always, the first hour will be a social with light refreshments, followed by our association meeting with guest speakers and neighborhood updates.

Riviera Association Survey

One of our board's top goals this year is to complete a neighborhood survey to better

understand how our association can best meet your needs. If you have not done so already, please check your email and take a few minutes to share your input so we can better meet the needs of our community.

Thank you for being part of the Riviera Association! I look forward to seeing you at our fall membership meeting and around the neighborhood!

Warmly,

Peg Phelps

Peg Phelps
President, Riviera Association