



## City Manager Message



Greetings,

We continue working hard on projects that will positively shape our community. With a busy September ahead of us, I am happy to share many updates.

With steady progress, the Gaylord Pacific Resort & Convention Center project on our Chula Vista Bayfront is on track for its grand opening in May 2025. Don't miss the latest [drone footage](#) that showcases the incredible progress being made.

Just a year ago, we were breaking ground on Millenia, and now the shell of the building is done with the first and second floors getting windows installed. You can view the [live progress](#). It's an exciting time for this development.

We also continue to make progress on the University Now Initiative in partnership with Southwestern College. Having completed the workforce and academic needs assessment, as well as research on various university and governance models, we are now focused on finalizing a white paper for our state legislators. The white paper will outline funding and policy recommendations to support the development of a four-year, accredited university that will expand access to higher education for Chula Vista and the entire region.

I want to take a moment to recognize our Conservation team for their hard work on improving energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gases, and seeking grant funding for these efforts. Last week, Chula Vista was awarded a \$10 million energy grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, making us the only local government in Southern California to receive this honor. With this funding, we can help owners of large buildings improve energy efficiency. Be sure to read more about this exciting grant award.

This month, we're inviting the community to participate in Clear the Shelters! On Saturday, September 7, Chula Vista Animal Services will waive all adoption fees as part of NBCUniversal Local's nationwide campaign. This is a wonderful opportunity to visit the Chula Vista Animal Care Facility, where you can meet and adopt one of the 200 animals available. Each adoptable pet has received over \$1,000 in medical care, including vaccines, microchipping, and spaying or neutering. Check out the adoptable pets [here](#).

September 15 marks the start of National Hispanic Heritage Month, a time to celebrate the achievements, diverse cultures, and contributions of the Hispanic community. Chula Vista's vibrancy and uniqueness are deeply rooted in diversity, and this year, the biggest "El Grito" celebration in honor of Mexican Independence Day will be celebrated at Memorial Park on Sunday, September 15 at 4 pm.

In this edition, we are also launching a new feature called, Paths to Self-Sufficiency, in which we highlight advances the City is making when it comes to homelessness. For example, a recent City-led effort found significant progress made in the number of people who have moved from our streets into transitional shelters. Thank you to our Housing and Homeless Services Department and Homeless Outreach Team!

Enjoy this month's edition. Please [contact me](#) if you have any questions or comments.

~Maria V. Kachadoorian, City Manager



## City Expands Community Shuttle Service to All Adults

Local, state, and private sector leaders gathered at Chula Vista City Hall last month to announce an expansion of the City's Community Shuttle program to all adults in the City's Northwest area. Adults 18 to 54 years old are now invited to ride the Chula Vista Community Shuttle for just \$2 per trip, with those 55 years and older continuing to ride for free. Children may ride with an adult.



Riders can request door-to-door service via the [Circuit app](#) or by calling (646) 504-3733. The [service area](#) runs approximately from the Sweetwater River to the north, to the Bayfront to the west, to 805/Hilltop Drive to the east and L Street to the south. The shuttle operates Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Chula Vista Mayor John McCann encouraged community members to take advantage of the Community Shuttle's invaluable services. "It's important that community members use this wonderful amenity," McCann said. "This shuttle service expansion will be instrumental in the City's

innovative future, benefiting community members and our local economy."

Chula Vista Director of Housing and Homeless Services Stacey Kurz said the rideshare opportunities are a wonderful convenience for many people. "With the expansion, the Chula Vista Community Shuttle further builds on that opportunity by offering free, and now greatly discounted rides, for those needing to shop, attend doctor's visits or even enjoy a day on the town," said Kurz, whose department oversees the program.

The City also announced the launch of a marketing campaign at the news conference to inform the public of the greatly discounted service. From highlighting thriving

restaurants on downtown Third Avenue to grocery shopping options and healthcare visits, the City hopes to encourage more people to use the door-to-door service.

The City launched the shuttle service in 2022 to create a cleaner, more sustainable community. The shuttle service operates an all-electric powered fleet, including ADA-accessible vehicles.

About 50,000 riders have taken advantage of the program over the past two years, with an average of 2,500 riders each month. With the expansion to those younger than 55 years of age, the City hopes to generate enough revenue to continue operations well beyond the expiration of grant funding.

The program is funded by a \$1 million grant from the local nonprofit Community Congregational Development Corp. and a \$1.5 million grant from [Clean Mobility Options](#) (CMO).

CMO is part of [California Climate Investments](#), a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment — particularly in underserved communities. It is also part of California Energy Commission's Clean Transportation Program, which is investing more than \$1 billion to accelerate the deployment of zero-emission transportation infrastructure and support in-state manufacturing and workforce training and development.

Circuit is a 100% electric, on-demand first- and last-mile microtransit service that helps riders connect to transit and make short-distance trips in their community. Circuit's goal is to make short-range transportation easier, greener, cheaper, and more accessible, and has operated locally in San Diego since 2016.



## City Receives \$10 Million Energy Efficiency Grant

The City of Chula Vista has been awarded a \$10 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to help owners of multifamily, commercial, and industrial buildings improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gases.



Chula Vista is one of just 19 state and local governments across the U.S., and the only local government in Southern California, to earn the grant. Some funding will be used to develop educational tool kits and resources to assist building owners in implementing low-to-no-cost upgrades.

“Chula Vista has long been a leader in the climate planning world, developing the first Climate Action Plan in the region in 2000,” said City Manager Maria V. Kachadoorian. “With this funding, we can do even more to improve our environment by increasing

energy efficiency in our largest buildings.”

The funding, to be provided over the next nine years, will focus on improving the performance of the City’s 750 multifamily, commercial, and industrial buildings 20,000 square feet or larger. Many older multifamily buildings in Chula Vista were not built with adequate insulation or air conditioning and occupants have experienced rising exposure to extreme heat in recent years, causing potential public health threats. The focus on better-performing buildings is designed to help alleviate many of those issues.

Chula Vista Environmental Sustainability Manager Coleen Wisniewski said the Department of Energy funding is critical to the City’s efforts to help building owners and the community successfully comply with the City’s three-year-old [Building Energy Saving Ordinance](#). The grant will help Wisniewski’s team develop tools, resources, and training.

“Ultimately, this will also improve our building stock so that over time people who want to buy or lease will look for more energy efficient buildings,” said Wisniewski, who will oversee the grant.

While the funding cannot be used to purchase direct building upgrades such as insulation or HVAC systems, it will go towards energy audits, retro-commissioning and energy data verification for buildings that qualify. Additionally, the City will develop a toolkit of educational materials, summaries of low-to-no-cost upgrade measures and a database of local, state, and federal funding resources for owners. The funding will enable the City to hire additional employees in the Office of Sustainability to provide technical assistance, measure compliance and ordinance enforcement.

The Department of Energy grants are funded by the Inflation Reduction Act and were awarded to state and local governments to advance traditional and innovative building energy codes, resulting in more resilient, efficient, and better buildings.

Chula Vista has long been at the forefront of climate planning. City initiatives have included the adoption of water conservation and energy efficiency ordinances, efforts to electrify the City fleet and the installation of over 140 electric vehicle chargers. The City began working with the U.S. Department of Energy more than 10 years ago as a participant in the [Better Buildings Challenge](#) and the [Better Climate Challenge](#). The City also joined the [White House Building Performance Standards Coalition](#) as an inaugural member in January 2022.



## Recognizing City Employees: City of Chula Vista Park Rangers

Chula Vista Park Rangers are known for maintaining the ecological balance of the City's parks. But the division does much more than the public may know.

"The Park Rangers' dedication to maintaining the safety, health, and beauty of Chula Vista's parks ensures our community remains accessible and enjoyable for all residents," said Chula Vista Park Ranger Program Manager Sam Alzubaidi. "Not only do we protect the local environment and ecosystem in Chula Vista, but we foster a sense of connection within our community."



The Chula Vista Park Rangers have been a division within the City government since 2013. Alzubaidi has been instrumental in leading the development of the division, as well as programming that benefits City safety.

Ranger duties include a range of responsibilities aimed at ensuring the safety, cleanliness, and overall operation of the park facilities and biodiversity. Daily duties include enforcing specific regulations, assisting visitors, conducting patrols for security, and maintaining park amenities. The Rangers are also involved in cleaning park restrooms, replacing supplies, removing trash and graffiti, issuing parking citations, and upholding

reservation agreements. Rangers work throughout the park hours from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. each day, as well as before and after the parks are open to the public.

Chula Vista Park Rangers also collaborate with local law enforcement and community engagement initiatives to ensure public safety. Rangers are also an integral part of the City's Homeless Outreach Team, an initiative that Alzubaidi helped spearhead to aid unhoused individuals in Chula Vista. In 2014, Alzubaidi established Operation Pride, an initiative focused on enhancing the cleanliness of parks in the City. Rangers work to collect misplaced shopping carts, clean up various open spaces including sewers, parks, streets, and other areas. They also collaborate with different City departments to achieve these goals.



The Rangers also recently launched a new Junior Ranger Program. Open to youth ages 5 to 15 years old, the program is aimed at fostering interest in local nature conservation, and environmental education. Junior Rangers participate in various activities such as nature hikes, wildlife observation, and conservation projects. Rangers ensure that the City remains accessible and safe to the community, and they play a crucial role in preserving the beauty of the City.

"Building up the Chula Vista Park Ranger division has been an immense privilege," said Alzubaidi. "Helping to preserve Chula Vista's legacy and educate on local biodiversity is what inspires myself and my team to come to work every day."

Interested in joining the team? Learn more by visiting the [Chula Vista Park Rangers job postings online](#).



## Highlighting Small Businesses: Wepa Commercial Cleaning

Wepa Commercial Cleaning provided essential janitorial and disinfecting services throughout Chula Vista, as well as San Diego and Los Angeles counties, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wepa Commercial Cleaning is a leader in providing disinfecting and sanitizing services; janitorial services; carpet cleaning; concrete cleaning; post-construction cleaning; stripping and waxing; marble restoration; window washing; pressure washing; and professional cleaning for commercial, office and health care facilities.

The company's president Francisco Rivera received a 2024 Small Business Person of the Year recognition by the U.S. Small Business Administration. Rivera's journey from military service to entrepreneurship is a testament to resilience, dedication, and a commitment to community. A 16-year veteran of the United States Navy, Rivera served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Working alongside elite forces such as Navy SEALs, Army Rangers, and the Secret Service, his military service was marked by courage and selflessness—traits that he imbues in the team at Wepa.



*Photo Courtesy Wepa Commercial Cleaners*

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rivera demonstrated his commitment to protecting others. During the pandemic, Rivera and his team disinfected 20 Chula Vista homes at no cost to residents. These acts of kindness brought peace-of-mind to many families during a time of unprecedented uncertainty. Additionally, Wepa Commercial Cleaning has donated over \$15,000 worth of services to the nonprofit Veterans Village of San Diego, ensuring that those who have served our country receive the support they need. Meanwhile, The Wepa Group, his small business development and marketing

consulting firm, has become a vital resource for other businesses, particularly those owned by veterans and minorities.

Rivera's story is one of service, first to his country, and now to his community. His dedication to improving the lives of others sets a powerful example, whether through his military service, his business ventures, or his charitable work.

For more information, visit [Wepa Commercial Cleaning's website](#).

If you would like to be considered for a small business feature in a future City newsletter, please complete the [submission form](#).

For business assistance, please refer to our website at [chulavistaca.gov/businesses](http://chulavistaca.gov/businesses) and be sure to refer to the award-winning [Business Resource Guide](#) for additional information on available resources to assist your business.



## Spotlighting Community Partners: Chula Vista Firefighter's Foundation

Established by dedicated members of the Chula Vista Fire Department, the Chula Vista Firefighter's Foundation is a nonprofit focused on providing disaster relief during times of crisis, increasing awareness of fire and water safety practices, and improving quality of life through comprehensive programming.

"The Chula Vista Firefighter's Foundation is a heart-centered, service-before-self nonprofit," said Foundation President Sean Lowery, who is also a Chula Vista Fire Department Battalion Chief. "The foundation is unique in the sense that we allocate our funds solely for direct disaster relief and education within Chula Vista."



According to Lowery, former Chula Vista Fire Department Captain Gary Keller established the foundation in 2004 after seeing a need for a nonprofit arm of the Chula Vista Fire Department and International Association of Firefighters Local 2180. At the helm of the all-volunteer led foundation's impactful work are the people who support it. Lowery says the majority of the City's firefighters are active or have been active as foundation volunteers.

The foundation's Board of Directors is comprised of Chula Vista Fire Department personnel and local business leaders who meet year-round to plan fundraisers and events, oversee the organization, and appropriately allocate donations.

All funding received goes directly to those in need through daily community assistance and annual events to provide aid. Educational programming also focuses on public safety and awareness.

The foundation provides disaster relief through grocery store vouchers and other types of gift cards to local families in need. The families are referred by fire personnel. Annual community service events include Christmas in October, which provides home improvements repairs at no cost or obligation to low-income homeowners in Chula Vista.



The foundation also organizes an Annual Easter Egg Hunt and a Pancake Breakfast. Ongoing educational programming also includes:

- Classes in CPR, First Aid, and swimming
- The Water Safety Initiative, a partnership launched with the Chula Vista Recreation Department to provide awareness on the importance of water safety
- The Roger Haley Memorial scholarship for aspiring public service professionals

The foundation “is not for firefighters,” said Lowery. “It is firefighters who are for our community.”

For more information or to help, visit the [Chula Vista Firefighter's Foundation website](#).



## Paths to Self-Sufficiency: Count Shows Many Moving from Streets to Shelters

A City-led independent homeless count (CVCount 2024) conducted last month showed significant progress in the number of people who have moved from the streets into transitional shelters. The City's Homeless Outreach Team held an annual count of homeless individuals on August 13, identifying a total of 780 homeless individuals. Of those, 189 were either living in the City's shelter, the Chula Vista Village at Otay, or in other transitional shelters operated by partner agencies. Last year, far fewer – 132 – were sheltered in transitional facilities, of the total 786 homeless individuals counted.



represented by individuals in vehicles.

The City began conducting the CVCount during the COVID-19 pandemic. The count is organized in addition to the Regional Point in Time count, which is part of a national effort to track unsheltered individuals.

For more information, visit the Housing and Homeless Services Department's [webpage on how the City is addressing homelessness](#).

# COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Keeping the community connected to information, programs, and services.



## City Budget: Measure A Update

On June 5, 2018, Chula Vista voters approved Measure A, which authorized a half-cent sales tax to address critical public safety needs. The sales tax allows the Chula Vista Fire and Police Departments to provide faster responses to 9-1-1 emergency calls, increase neighborhood patrols, reduce gang and drug-related crimes, and address homelessness.

Collection of the sales tax began on October 2, 2018, allowing the Chula Fire Department to add a total of 52 sworn and one civilian positions. The Chula Vista Police Department has also brought on a total of 41 sworn and 26 civilian positions.

Quarterly Measure A Citizens' Oversight Committee meetings are held the second Thursday in January, April, July and October at 6 p.m. Members of the public are invited to attend the meetings, which are held in the Police Department's Community Room, located at 315 Fourth Avenue. More information can be found on the [Measure A Citizens' Oversight Committee webpage](#).



## Community News

### Good to Know

**Don't forget to register to vote!** November's General Election is around the corner, on November 5, 2024. The California Secretary of State reports that the last day to register to vote is October 21, 2024. Check your voter registration or register to vote on the [California Secretary of State Online Voter Registration webpage](#).

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It's been six months since the Chula Vista Police Department (CVPD) partnered with Flock Safety, an automated license plate recognition surveillance company, to begin installing a **network of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) cameras**. To provide an update, all cameras have now been installed and CVPD staff have all been trained, from officers in the field to investigators working cases. The system focuses on and catalogs images of license plates, not people.

Since the camera implementation, CVPD has arrested 38 auto thieves and recovered 57 stolen vehicles. CVPD has also had success in several criminal investigations, including violent felony cases.

The purchase and installation of these ALPR cameras was funded by a California Board of State and Community Corrections Organized Retail Theft grant, which CVPD received in October 2023. For more information, visit the [City's ALPR webpage](#).

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**The Climate Action Plan (CAP) update summer workshops are complete!** The Chula Vista Office of Sustainability appreciates the feedback from community members, ranging from those who want more trees, public transit, and education and outreach, to those who prefer less artificial turf. What climate action do you want to see? Even though the workshops are done, the public can still get involved. Learn about how the City wants to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by watching a recorded version of the [workshop presentation](#), reviewing the [CAP Update Summary](#), or viewing the [workshop posters](#). Feedback on climate action priorities may also be provided through the [online survey](#). The survey will be open through the end of September 2024. After compiling community feedback, staff plan to take an updated Climate Action Plan to the Sustainability Commission and then City Council in early 2025. If you have any questions, please contact [cdowns@chulavistaca.gov](mailto:cdowns@chulavistaca.gov).

## Things to Do

You're invited to the **11th Annual Evening with Heroes Reception and Dinner**

Board of Directors and Chief Kennedy cordially invite you:

# California Dreamin' 2024

## EVENING WITH HEROES

COCKTAIL RECEPTION & LUAU DINNER

**Saturday, September 14 \* 4 - 8 pm**  
Chula Vista Elite Athlete Training Center / Easton Archery

**EXPERIENCE THE EXCITEMENT!**

- Interactive Experiences with CVPD Officers
- Dynamic Demos by SWAT and K9s
- Mystery Wine Vault
- 200+ Auction Items - and more!

Emcee: Kimberly Hunt, ABC-10 News Anchor  
Auctioneer: Clint Bell

**Purchase Tickets**  
at <https://cbo.io/tickets/wh-24116>  
\$200/person - Casual Hawaiian Attire

QUESTIONS: (619) 691-5221 or [info@chulavistapolicefoundation.org](mailto:info@chulavistapolicefoundation.org)

**ELITE DIAMOND SPONSORS**

- Community Foundation
- Cushman
- Bob & Sue Sutherland

**PLATINUM BADGE SPONSORS**

- Ramin Pourteymour
- SEVEN MILE
- Stephen & Mary Birch Foundation

from 4 to 8 p.m. on Saturday, September 14, hosted by the Chula Vista Police Foundation! At this fundraising event, to be held at the Chula Vista Elite Athlete Training Center, guests can enjoy a cocktail reception with an open bar, a reserved seating luau dinner, and an engaging program. The experience will include interactive exhibits with Chula Vista Police Department officers, a wine vault, and silent and live auctions. Purchase your tickets now, limited seating is available! Visit [the event ticketing webpage](#) to reserve your seat.

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Get ready to run! The **Chula Vista Champions 5K Run** will take place Saturday, September 14 at the Chula Vista Elite Athlete Training Center, 2800 Olympic Parkway. Registration is currently \$15 per person for ages 4 -16 and \$25 for ages 17 and up. Children three and under are free. Registration includes entry, a t-shirt, and a race medal. For more details and to register, visit the [Chula Vista Parks and Recreation webpage](#). The event is offered in partnership with the Elite Athlete Training Center, Friends of Chula Vista Parks and Recreation, and the Chula Vista Recreation Department.

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Chula Vista Parks and Recreation is offering several **exciting upcoming events and activities!** Enjoy Movie in the Moonlight at 6 p.m. Friday, September 17, at Orange Park, 1475 Fourth Avenue. This month's movie will be "Paw Patrol!" Schedules of Fall 2024 camps and classes offered by Chula Vista Parks and Recreation are also available: [Fall 2024 classes](#) and [Fall 2024 camp classes](#).

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The City's Office of Sustainability plans to host a **NatureScape Workshop from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, October 5** at the Chula Vista Civic Center Branch Library, 365 F Street. This free workshop will include presentations from the experts on how to foster a water-conserving garden and home landscape and how to plant correctly for your site. The event will also cover the benefits of pollinating plants, and will offer information tables, and other available resources and water rebates. Light refreshments, raffle prizes, and gifts with yard care topics in mind will also be available. Workshop attendees will receive a free, drought-tolerant plant. Register for the workshop on the [NatureScape registration webpage](#).



## Neighborhood Beautification

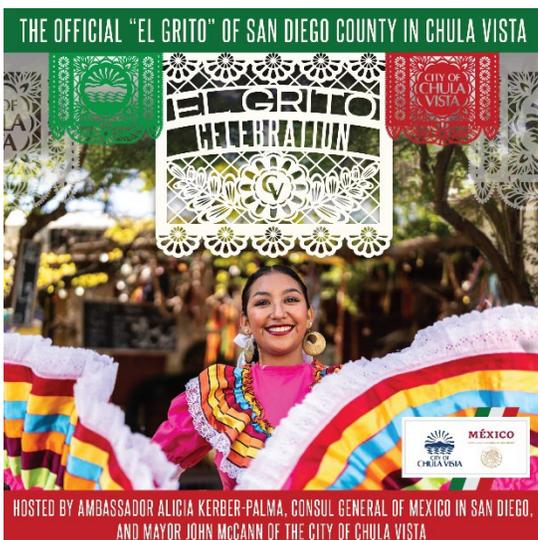
**OPERATION PRIDE** continues monthly cleanups. From August 1 to 28, in conjunction with Alpha Project and McAlister (Work for Hope), the team collected 22,920 pounds of trash and 85 shopping carts in Chula Vista. Alpha Project: Take Back the Streets collected 23,800 pounds of trash. McAlister (Work for Hope) has started painting Rohr Park again. Areas of Harborside Park and Rice Canyon were completed. Chula Vista Rangers are continuing to enforce and keep parks clean and safe for the public. Thank you for your continued efforts.



## Meetings/Events

The **Chula Vista City Council** is scheduled to meet on **Tuesday, September 10, Tuesday, September 17, and Tuesday, September 24 at 5 p.m.** Members of the public are invited to provide e-comments on any agenda item. Please [click here](#) for more information on City Council meetings. A Spanish-language video stream is available and interpretation services for Spanish speakers are provided at each City Council meeting. Members of the public can watch the meeting [via livestream](#). Chula Vista City Council meetings are video recorded and aired live on Cox Cable channel 24 (only in Chula Vista). Recorded meetings are also archived on the City's website.

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Mark your calendars for **El Grito** on **Sunday, September 15, from 4 to 8 p.m.!** Join Chula Vista Mayor John McCann and Ambassador Alicia Kerber-Palma from the Consul General of Mexico in San Diego's office to celebrate Mexican Independence Day! The family-friendly event will be held at Memorial Park, 373 Park Way, Chula Vista, at the Memorial Bowl Amphitheater. Enjoy traditional Mexican live entertainment, performances, food, and beverages. El Grito ceremony will be delivered by Ambassador Kerber-Palma at 7:30 p.m. and will be aired live on [XEWTV Canal 12](#). Please visit the [El Grito website](#) for more information.