



Memorandum

Friday, April 11, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Ben Harvey, City Manager

SUBJECT: Weekly Update

1. **Pre-Approved ADU Plans.** The Community Development Department is excited to announce the availability of Pre-Approved Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) plans online through the City of Ojai's website (<https://ojai.ca.gov/200/Community-Development>). The pre-approved one-bedroom ADU plans are available for the community at no cost. The pre-approved plans include three separate architectural styles including Ranch, Spanish, and Traditional. Equally important, the availability of these plans also address incentives identified within Housing Element Program No. 4. To get the process started, simply download the preferred plans together with an application and site plan (i.e. how the ADU fits on your site), and bring those documents to the Community Development Department located at City Hall. Interested community members may also contact the Community Development Department directly at 805-646-5581 x112 for more information.
2. **Arbor Day.** Mark your calendars for an Arbor Day ceremony @ Daly Ranch Park on Friday, April 25 @ 10:00 AM. A press-release, social media post, and details regarding the ceremony will be released in the next week or so.
3. **Nordhoff Pool.** As a follow-up to meetings convened with Ojai Unified School District (OUSD) Administration, we have received a request to potentially partner with OUSD to allow the soon-to-be-completed Nordhoff High School Pool (completion date estimated at September 2025) to be open to the public. We plan on taking the OUSD request to the Parks & Recreation Commission (once constituted) for their discussion and recommendations to return to the City Council. The gist of the OUSD partnership request is that the City provides the staffing for community pool hours, and receives funding to reimburse itself via entrance fees. Again, we plan on bringing the OUSD request before the Parks & Recreation Commission as a starting point – and ultimately, any potential decision/direction in this area would come from the City Council.

4. **Pixie Celebration.** This Saturday from 10 AM – 3 PM, the Ojai Pixie Tangerine Festival will take place at the Libbey Park Fountain Area. This event is hosted by the Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce, and will feature live music, vendors and lots of Pixies!



5. **Marathon.** This Sunday, the Mountains 2 Beach Marathon will begin at 6:10 AM on the east side of Ojai, heading through downtown, Meiners Oaks, Oak View and to the beach! Road closures will endure from approximately 2:00 AM – 8:00 AM. Please visit the links below for more information:

[Turn by Turn Full Marathon | Ventura CA | Mountains 2 Beach Marathon](#)

[Road Closure Information | Mountains 2 Beach | Ventura CA](#)



6. **Administrative Hearing Summary – Short-Term Rental Violations (STR 24-016).**

This past Friday, the City conducted an Administrative Hearing regarding Short-Term Rental Violations (Case No. STR 24-016) for the property located at 204 N. Canada Street, owned by Jennifer Seigal. The hearing was presided over by contracted Hearing Officer Alex Garcia. The City was represented by Matt Slentz of Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley. Testifying on behalf of the City were Community Development Director Lucas Seibert and Administrative Assistant II Bridget Mara. The property owner appealed Citation No. 24-016, which totaled \$34,837.00 which was paid in advance of the hearing in accordance with OMC §1-6.108. Following the presentation of evidence, the City determined that all but one of the cited violations were substantiated and recommended that the Hearing Officer authorize a partial reimbursement to the property owner in the amount of \$5,014.00. In response, the property owner requested a reimbursement totaling \$15,112.00 or, alternatively, that all associated fines be dismissed. The Hearing Officer will issue a written decision, which the City anticipates receiving within the next couple of weeks. We will advise you once we are aware of the Hearing Officer's decision.



Memorandum

Friday, April 18, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Ben Harvey, City Manager

SUBJECT: Weekly Update

1. **Cabrillo Development.** Recently, the Director of Real Estate for Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation (Cabrillo) provided an update to their financial progress for this project. Cabrillo a \$19-million dollar funding application to HCD through the Joe Serna, Jr. Farmworker Housing Grant Program for the Chaparral Place Project located at 320 Bryant Street. If awarded, this unding will help move the project forward on the following anticipated timeline:

- August 2025 – Anticipated Award Notification
- September 2025 – 4% Tax Credit Application Submission
- November 2025 – Expected Tax Credit Award
- May 2026 – Targeted Construction Start

As a reminder, the project's 50-unit affordable housing mix includes 41 low, 8 very-low, and 1 (managers unit) above-market rate units. Cabrillo's submittal would include 49 of the units dedicated for farmworker housing.

2. **Walking Tour of Downtown Ojai Public Art.** Under the “Arts, Culture and Recreation Funding” proposed draft City Council Goal (which is coming before the City Council on the 4/22/25 City Council meeting – look for an additional item on this topic, below), is a corresponding proposed draft tactic to “Expand promotion of existing "Walking Tour of Downtown Ojai Public Art" using Social Media and other means. Towards moving this tactic forward, the Parks and Recreation Department is excited to offer this summer a special senior excursion that combines the charm of the Ojai Trolley with the beauty of our local public art scene. Registered guests can hop on and enjoy a guided art tour through downtown. The tour includes a special stop at Firestick Pottery, where each guest will receive materials to create their own artistic masterpiece inspired by the public art seen along the way. For details, check out the **Summer 2025 Activity Guide** or visit [Downtown Tour | Ojai, CA](#) for stop locations.

3. **Paving project/traffic congestion issues.** There was significant traffic congestion on Wednesday afternoon in the downtown corridor for a short period of time. The issue was caused by the City's contractor, and a subsequent debriefing/course-correction between the City and the contractor has occurred to avoid a repeat of the congestion in the future. Paving in the downtown area is widespread on an aggressive schedule in order to complete the work in advance of next week's tennis tournament (The Ojai, of course). The City's social media posts now include a link to the paving schedule to help residents and visitors become better aware of the areas that might be best avoided, if possible, to help mitigate traffic congestion.
4. **Zoom Outage.** On Wednesday April 17, 2025, Zoom experienced a near-global outage of its teleconferencing software. The peak of the problem occurred at 1:15 PM, with 55,000 reports of Zoom being unreachable. Early on, the hacking group Dark Storm was taking credit for the outage. However, Zoom later reported that the outage was instead caused by a communication error resulting in GoDaddy mistakenly shutting down the Zoom.us domain. City staff became aware of the Zoom outage in the early afternoon on Wednesday. The Planning Commission meeting was posted with the option for the public to participate remotely via Zoom. Had the issue not been resolved, the meeting would've continued without the option for virtual participation since all members participated in person. The City would've noticed the public through social media and the City's LinkServ to attend the meeting in person. Fortunately, the issue was resolved within a few hours, and we were able to hold the Planning Commission meeting as planned. This incident reiterates that giving the public the option to participate in our noticed meetings via teleconferencing software comes with the risk of the public not always having virtual access to the meeting.
5. **New Woman's Restroom in Kent Hall.** This week saw the painting of the walls and the installation of the flooring in the new woman's restroom in Kent Hall (just off the Council Chamber). In the coming week our contractor will be finishing the trim and installing both the electrical and plumbing fixtures. The new restroom will have two toilets, one standard-sized stall and one ADA-size stall. There will also be a new water cooler installed in the hallway between the restroom and the Council Chamber. The water cooler will be wall-mounted, ADA accessible, and will have both a water bottle filling station and a bubbler (standard drinking fountain faucet). The new woman's restroom and the water cooler installation are anticipated to be completed during the week of April 21. Once the restroom is complete, we will start scheduling the remodel of the existing restrooms in Kent Hall.
6. **City Council Goals.** Please take a look at the [spreadsheet of proposed Goals/Tactics](#) in advance of Tuesday's meeting. I am happy to discuss any of the tactics (some are tactics previously proposed by the City Council have been refined; some are new tactics suggested by City staff for City Council consideration). I thought it might be easier with a draft which could be edited (or thrown out, if the City Council likes), rather than just picking up from where the City Council left off the last time this was discussed.



Memorandum

Saturday, April 26, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Ben Harvey, City Manager

SUBJECT: Weekly Update

1. **Tiny Home Workshop & Open House.** Experience a recently-approved and placed tiny home up close. First, enjoy a presentation by our Community Development Department at Kent Hall on Saturday, May 3 from 10am-11am. Then, take a short trip to 207 N Montgomery for an open house, where a tiny home is located and available to experience. City staff, as well as a Venture Homes representative (manufacturer of tiny homes) will be available to answer questions related to this tiny home unit between 11am-3pm both on Saturday, May 3 and Sunday, May 4. Further questions may be directed to the Community Development Department at 805-646-5581, or via email to Lucas.Seibert@ojai.ca.gov. This event was advertised in today's edition of *The Ojai Valley News*, and will be posted on the City's social media channels next week.
2. **Paving project update.** The street slurry and crack seal portion of the City's paving project will begin on May 5. This treatment is different from a grind and pave effort, and will be more messy for a couple of days after application. However, it provides a great result that extends the life of streets at a much-reduced cost. Permanent speed humps have now been installed on Drown Ave., however they remain unstriped (for now). Striping will occur when the striping crew arrives to stripe the other streets, thus avoiding additional mobilization costs. The humps that have been installed on Drown Ave. are a slight modification to the County of Ventura Standards (3 across, rather than 4). Drown Ave. is not wide enough to accommodate all 4, and it's important to allow enough space so that fire trucks and other emergency vehicles may straddle the center hump.
3. **City Council Goals.** Please look for a forthcoming email from Carl Alameda, expected to be sent out later tonight, which will allow you to review your progress on the goals & tactics, and provide us with your (individual) direction as to which you'd like to keep, and which you'd prefer to abandon. Instructions regarding this will be contained within the forthcoming email from Carl. Thanks for your continued interest and effort towards this important task.

4. **Cabin Village Project/Dignity Moves.** Due to tariff uncertainty coming out of Washington, D.C. and the corresponding increases in building material costs, as well as concerns regarding the anticipated project construction timeline and budget constraints, the City has pivoted in its cabin village project construction approach with DignityMoves. Today, I asked DignityMoves to switch from a stick construction/cob materials approach to a modular construction approach, while retaining the Hacienda-style design characteristics. Doing this will allow the City to build a cabin village project within the constraints of the Encampment Resolution Fund (ERF) grant award, at a timeline the City can accept, with the project look and feel previously vetted by the Planning Commission and City Council. Staff is targeting the May 27th meeting for City Council consideration of the development management agreement between DignityMoves and the City.
5. **Ojai Outlook – Spring Edition.** We are working with Tripepi Smith, our City newsletter and social media consultants, to finish the Spring Edition of the Ojai Outlook. We anticipate completing our review and sign-off such that residents may expect to see the newsletter in their U.S. mailboxes by May 12. We'll inform you if there are any unanticipated delays in making this date.
6. **Mayor Gilman – OOO.** Those looking for Mayor Gilman this coming week will be out of luck, as he will be chaperoning a backpacking/camping trip in the Los Padres National Forest with a group of 9th grade students. He will NOT have connectivity this coming week from Monday, 4/28 through Friday, 5/2. In his absence, if we need to do so, we will lean on Mayor Pro Tem Lang (heads up, Rachel!). If any of you have upcoming scheduled absences you would like for your colleagues to be made aware of, I am happy to share that information here within my Weekly Update.



Memorandum

Friday, May 2, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Ben Harvey, City Manager

SUBJECT: Weekly Update

1. **City Finances and a Public Notice.** In today's edition of *The Ojai Valley News* you may have seen a City public notice regarding the summary and statistics from the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Financial Transactions Report. This notice is required under Gov't Code Section 40804. The notice summarizes the information that was provided to the State Controller's Office about the City of Ojai. For the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2024, the City General Fund spent \$13.0 million and had \$5.4 million in unprogrammed fund balance in the bank. The General Fund is the fund with the least restrictions; it pays for most City staffing, the Sheriff Department law enforcement contract, Parks and Recreation programming and Community Development services, among other functions. Overall, the City governmental funds made \$4.8 million. The other governmental funds have restrictions on their expenses based on their revenue sources.

The City proprietary (business related) funds lost \$194,000. The City's proprietary funds are the transit and cemetery funds, so it's expected that they would not break even. The City public notice also provides information regarding the Gann Limit. Although the City is allowed to collect as much as \$15.6 million in taxes, the City only levied \$11.8 million. Since the City's tax related sources are mostly set at the State level (Property Tax, Sales Tax), with only a portion coming from our own tax setting (Transient Occupancy Tax/Bed Tax and Business licenses are an example), we will always probably be a bit short of the allowed amount.

Of course, we'll be discussing City finances much more as we head into the budget process within the next few weeks.

2. **City Attorney Office Update.** To reduce City legal expenses while matching the City Council's expectations for support, the City Attorney's Office is now meeting with the City Manager on a biweekly basis to review the status of legal expenses for the month and receive direction on what projects need legal support, which are rightly staff work, or need City Council direction to move forward. In addition, the City Attorney's Office is implementing new systems to better manage expenditures, including a requirement

that Directors approve staff requests for legal assistance before they are submitted. Emails will also be sent regarding the status of Two Council Member Requests and whether direction from the full City Council is needed to proceed. Please reach out to Taylor or Matt directly if you have any questions here.

3. **Museum Roof Maintenance.** The Community Development Department is in the process of approving a building permit for the historic Ojai Valley Museum Chapel roof. The roofing permit issued would maintain the underlayment roofing paper which protects the building from water leaks. The work includes removing the existing two-piece mission roof tiles, inspecting the wood deck (replace as needed), replacing the underlayment, installing new flashing, and reinstalling the original roof tiles. This work is concurrent with our continuing effort to maintain the City's existing building stock.

Once approved by Planning, Public Works would then include this in their upcoming CIP schedule, which will be coming before the City Council shortly for review/approval.

4. **Ventura County Behavioral Health Contract Start.** April Munoz the City's newly contracted Intensive Service Coordinator from Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH), officially began her role with the City yesterday. Wasting no time, April joined the Backpack Medicine Team as they conducted outreach and wellness checks with all participants at Ojai Tent Town (OTT). April is part of the VCBH Rapid Integrated Support and Engagement (RISE) program, which is uniquely equipped to deliver specialized, field-based case management for individuals with significant mental health and social support needs who are not yet connected to ongoing care. April will be based out of the Ojai Sheriff's Station, ensuring she is well-positioned to coordinate support services across the City. Please see below for a photo of the County Backpack Medicine Team with VCBH representatives (April is in the front row center) during their field visit to OTT yesterday.



5. **City Council Goals and Tactics – A Reminder, Please Vote!** The City Council has proposed tactics for Goals 1-7. Tactics for Goals 8 and 9 have not yet been discussed. Pursuant to City Council direction provided at the April 22nd meeting, the next step in this process is for the City Council to individually vote on the tactics proposed thus far. In the spreadsheet provided to you all via email by Carl Alameda, please mark an "X" in the column under your name for each tactic you support (X in the column is a "Yes", and a blank column is "Not Interested"). Specifically, we ask that you:

- a. Vote on the tactics for Goals 6 and 7 that were brainstormed during your last meeting; and
- b. Review and vote on the staff-proposed tactics for Goals 8 and 9.

Please submit your responses to Carl by 5:00 PM this coming Monday, May 5, 2025, so we can move forward with compiling and finalizing the strategic document.

You may complete this process in one of three ways:

- a. Mark up the attached document emailed to you (came from Carl Alameda on 4/25/2025); or
- b. Visit City Hall, where you will find a hardcopy in your City Council mailbox, if you wish to markup manually; or
- c. Call Carl at 805-220-0480, if you want to verbalize your selection to him.

6. **Development Management Agreement/DignityMoves for Cabin Village Project.**

We are working to finalize the draft development management agreement (DMA) with DignityMoves for the cabin village project. City staff has reached mutual agreement with DignityMoves' leadership for a total DignityMoves project development expenditure (all costs - soft and hard costs, development fee, developer contingency, etc.) of \$9.5M. With this limitation on DignityMoves, City staff in return is proposing to allow DignityMoves the flexibility to determine project construction methods (stick construction, modular construction, a hybrid of the two, etc.), so long as the project design characteristics remain consistent with the project proposal that was vetted by the Planning Commission and reviewed by the City Council. Flexibility for construction methods will ensure DignityMoves is able to meet the project cost cap of \$9.5M, while delivering a finished result to the City in a reasonable timeframe. At this point, DignityMoves remains interested in a cob construction method (stick construction) for the project, but they are vetting the feasibility of deploying this with their general contractor, and other construction experts. A detailed budget will be delivered to the City within ninety (90) days of anticipated approval of the development management agreement at the May 27, 2025 City Council meeting.

7. **Another City Fleet Electric Vehicle.** On Tuesday, the City took delivery of a new Ford F-150 Lightning. This all-electric truck will be utilized by our Public Works Department, and marks another step forward in expanding the City's electric fleet and supporting the City's climate mitigation efforts.
8. **Upcoming Arrival of Recently Purchased Trolleys.** The City's recently purchased, low-mileage propane-fueled trolleys are scheduled to arrive this coming Monday, May 5. These trolleys will help stabilize current Route A operations and enable more reliable service. Once the trolleys are road-tested, painted, and fully serviced, the City will begin the process of hiring additional drivers, with the ultimate goal of restoring the Ojai Trolley Route B to service. We will continue to keep you posted as to our progress in this area.
9. **Kent Hall Restrooms Now Complete.** The construction of the new women's restroom in Kent Hall (just off the Council Chamber) is completed. This new restroom will be available for use during the May 13 City Council meeting. Up next we will be remodeling the "old" woman's restroom, converting it into an all-gender ADA accessible restroom. City Staff is currently working with the contractor on finalizing the plans and scheduling this stage of the remodel. Demolition of the old woman's restroom is expected to begin shortly.