



August 7, 2014

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Edward C. Starr, City Manager 

SUBJECT: WEEKLY REPORT: August 1-7, 2014

➤ **CITY MANAGER/ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DEPARTMENTS**

Last week, I met with Caltrans Deputy District Director (District 8) Stephen Pusey and members of his staff to discuss a variety of maintenance issues at Montclair Transcenter and I-10 Freeway on- and off-ramps in Montclair. Joining me in the meeting were Deputy City Manager Marilyn Staats, Public Works Director Michael Hudson, Community Development Director Steve Lustro, and Public Works Superintendent Xavier Mendez.

During the meeting, Deputy District Director Pusey and Montclair staff reached an understanding on the following issues:

Montclair Transcenter

- Trash and weeds. Caltrans agreed to work with Montclair to develop an agreement for the purpose of trash and weed maintenance. In the past decade, City staff repeatedly expressed its concern with the standard of maintenance at the Transcenter. Caltrans would react to City concerns by sending a maintenance crew to address immediate problems; however, long-term performance remained lacking, and users of the Transcenter continued to file complaints with the City.

In the Fiscal Year 2014-15 Budget, the City Council approved a part-time Maintenance Worker position with assigned responsibility for Transcenter trash and weed maintenance and the monthly cleaning of passenger waiting areas, including maintenance within Caltrans' right-of-way. A primary objective of last week's meeting was to address with Caltrans ongoing maintenance concerns and broach the issue of reimbursement. Deputy District Director Pusey agreed with the concept of reimbursement, within Caltrans' financial parameters. City staff anticipates a reimbursement agreement will be presented for City Council consideration in the near future.

- Irrigation. Caltrans agreed to reconnect irrigation to Transcenter parking lot planters for the purpose of tree irrigation. Irrigation of parking lot planters at the Transcenter has been a major concern over the life of the facility. Irrigation heads were capped off shortly after the Transcenter opened, allowing plants and ground cover to die off, and forcing trees into continuing states of stress. Two years ago, Caltrans removed nearly all dead vegetation from the planters and laid down wood chips; however, trees remain stressed due to lack of routine watering. Reconnecting irrigation to the planters for the purpose of watering trees should significantly improve the health, foliage, and canopies of Transcenter parking lot trees.
- Infrastructure. Caltrans agreed to evaluate the deteriorated condition of wrought iron fencing along the Transcenter perimeter and consider repair or replacement, as appropriate. City staff reported the wrought iron fencing surrounding the Transcenter was in disrepair, with nearly all bottom rails experiencing significant rust damage. Ironically, the only areas of the Transcenter that receive regular irrigation are the perimeter lines. At these locations, perimeter fencing has become oxidized from the reaction between irrigation spray and the improperly treated wrought iron fencing.
- Security. City staff advised it was evaluating current standards of performance by the firm providing contract security at the Transcenter and would explore alternative security programs.
- Parking Fees. City staff advised that several San Bernardino County communities are imposing, or considering imposing, parking fees at Metrolink-connected parking facilities, with fees presumably committed to facilities maintenance.

Deputy District Director Pusey indicated he was not aware of any internal Caltrans policy for or against the imposition of parking fees at the Transcenter, but would explore the issue with the Caltrans Director.

- Overnight Parking. City staff expressed concern with overnight parking/abandoned vehicles at the Transcenter. Overnight parking/abandoned vehicles relate directly to security and property maintenance. City staff and Caltrans representatives discussed authority for posting restricted parking signs and enforcement of parking restrictions. Caltrans acknowledged it was unlikely the California Highway Patrol would enforce parking restrictions at the Transcenter. Caltrans and City staff agreed to further explore parking restrictions at the Transcenter and determine the appropriate enforcing agency.
- Acquisition of Transcenter property. City staff revisited the issue of acquiring the Transcenter property from the State of California. Deputy District Director Pusey indicated he would discuss the issue with the Deputy District Director, Right-of-Way Division.

Maintenance of I-10 Freeway on- and off-ramps. City staff discussed issues related to dead vegetation; lack of irrigation; accumulating weeds, trash, and debris; graffiti; and schedule of maintenance. Deputy District Director Pusey indicated Caltrans has reorganized its local maintenance units, creating smaller maintenance response zones—an action that should provide improved maintenance of on- and off-ramps. Deputy District Director Pusey provided contact information for Caltrans maintenance personnel.

Maintenance/Widening of I-10 Freeway to accommodate a high occupancy toll/express toll (HOT) lane, plus retention of the existing high occupancy vehicle (HOV) diamond/car pool lane. City staff discussed with Deputy District Director Pusey the likelihood that the I-10 Freeway through Montclair would be widened to accommodate a HOT lane—the project would include participation by Caltrans, San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), and the City of Montclair. Montclair’s participation would involve widening of Monte Vista Avenue at the I-10 Freeway. Deputy District Director Pusey responded that separate from any consideration for a HOT lane, Caltrans was planning a capital maintenance project the would repave the number 3 and 4 lanes from the Los Angeles County-San Bernardino County line to Redlands, starting in 2016. Caltrans assigns lane numbers from left to right, with the far left passing lane designated the number 1 lane; therefore, the number 3 and 4 lanes would be the lanes closest to freeway on- and off-ramps.

- Last week the Bureau of Labor Statistics released its latest jobs report and concluded the economy continues to show signs of overall improvement. The nation's total economic output, or Gross Domestic Product, increased at a 4 percent annual rate from April through June.

The economy's strong second-quarter growth shows the economic recovery has regained momentum after a brutal winter and could signal an end to the era of low interest rates.

It is a better-than-expected rebound from an alarming first quarter contraction and confirms experts' assumptions that the dismal performance in the economy in the first three months of the year was triggered in large part by severe weather across much of the nation. Bitter cold and heavy snow helped to cause the economy to contract at a 2.1 percent annual rate in the first quarter.

Although the 4 percent growth rate was impressive, marking just the third quarter since the end of the Great Recession of 2007 that the economy grew at that pace or higher, economists caution that continued growth would remain slow and steady. Still, economists expect growth to pick up in the second half of the year.

The economy was boosted this spring by a jump in consumer spending, which rose 2.5 percent, compared with 1.2 percent in the first quarter. Business investment surged 5.5 percent in the second quarter after a 1.6 percent increase the previous quarter. Exports rose 9.5 percent after decreasing 9.2 percent in the first quarter. Economists state that about a third of the growth came from consumers and businesses catching up for activity lost in the first quarter due to severe weather.

Overall, the economy has expanded at slightly less than 1 percent during the first half of the year. The labor market continues to improve, with 209,000 non-farm jobs added in June, marking the first time since 1997 the economy has added more than 200,000 jobs in six straight months.

The improving economic picture has increased pressure on the Federal Reserve to dial back even more on its monetary policies.

After a two-day meeting last week, the Federal Reserve issued a statement that it would continue to trim its bond-buying stimulus program. But the central bank left its key short-term interest rate near zero and gave no indication that it would change course any time soon.

Economists are not expecting an interest rate increase until well into next year. But with the economy having snapped back from the winter downturn, and inflation moving higher toward the Federal Reserve's 2 percent target, there are indications policymakers are feeling more pressure to act sooner.

In past months, Federal Reserve officials have expressed concern that inflation is running too low, but more recently, consumer prices have edged higher.

The Federal Reserve statement made it clear most policymakers are still tilting toward doing more to help workers than halt inflation.

- This year, South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) continued its successful effort to replace old, air polluting, gasoline-powered lawn mowers with brand new, clean, highly efficient, rechargeable electric models. This follows the milestone set in 2013, when the agency's Lawnmower Exchange Program replaced its 50,000th mower.

Residents throughout SCAQMD's region brought their gasoline-powered mowers to one of four separate events held in Long Beach, Pasadena, Riverside, and Anaheim during May and June. Participants' old mowers were scrapped in exchange for the discounted purchase of brand-new, cordless, rechargeable electric mowers. This year, residents were given the opportunity to select between five efficient models with a savings of up to 75 percent, depending on the make and model selected. At the four exchange events, nearly 2,400 mowers were exchanged.

Exchanging a mower is easy and convenient. Upon payment, attendants take the old mowers, drain them of hazardous fluids, and then send the mowers to a metal recycling facility. Customers never have to leave the comfort of their vehicles as attendants replace the old mowers with brand new, boxed electric models.

Lighter, quieter, and easier to run than their gasoline-powered counterparts, electric mowers operate emission free. Conversely, one gasoline-powered mower can have the same yearly air pollution impacts as a car driven over 22,000 miles.

Registration for SCAQMD's 2015 Lawn Mower Exchange Program begins next spring. Visit aqmd.gov or call 1-888-425-6247 for updates and information.

- Over the course of July, the U.S. Congress struggled to approve a \$10.9 billion, 8-month transportation funding bill that would avoid bankruptcy to the federal Highway Trust Fund (HTF) and avoid steep reductions in the flow of transportation dollars to states. In mid-July, the full House passed the extension, followed by a last-minute vote by the full Senate last Thursday. President Obama signed the legislation into law over the weekend.

The bill, criticized for its failure to address transit projects, calls for a temporary extension of current transportation funding levels through May 31, 2015. The effort replenished the Department of Transportation's depleted Highway Trust Fund, which was headed for an August 2014 bankruptcy deadline.

The traditional HTF funding source for transportation projects has been revenue collected from the 18.4 cents per gallon federal gas tax—providing an estimated \$34 billion in annual funding for highways, streets and roads, bridges, and mass transit projects. The tax, however, has struggled to keep pace with infrastructure expenses in recent years due to a number of factors:

1. Introduction of fuel-efficient and electric vehicles
2. Fewer drivers on the road due to increased gasoline prices
3. Sluggish economic recovery from the recession
4. Expansion of transit systems, coupled with a rise in transit users.

The federal government's current transportation funding level is about \$50 billion per year, leaving a \$16 billion annual gap between the funding level and federal gas tax revenue (\$34 billion).

The decline in federal gas tax revenues may be one significant reason why some transportation agencies elect to support traditional street and highway infrastructure improvement programs over transit projects. Expansion of transit systems and the creation of transit districts, coupled with a rise in transit users who abandon their vehicles in favor of public transit, means fewer federal gas tax dollars for traditional transportation projects.

As Congress struggled with transportation funding, the Department of Transportation (DOT) warned that bankruptcy in the HTF would result in states taking a 28 percent cut in transportation funding and the loss of approximately 700,000 jobs. DOT anticipated cutting back on payments to state and local governments on August 1, 2014, unless Congress reached an infrastructure funding deal.

The final version of the bill draws on funding generated from pension smoothing (a budget maneuver which allows companies to contribute less to their pension plans). This tactic raises revenue for the federal government because companies lose out on tax deductions that come with pension contributions, extending expiring custom duties and transferring funds from the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust (LUST) Fund. The legislation also reauthorizes collection of the federal gas tax, which was scheduled to expire in September 2014.

Transportation advocates, as well as a few lawmakers, have pushed for an increase in the gas tax to help pay for infrastructure funding—it was last increased in 1993. Congress has been reluctant to ask drivers to pay more in the middle of an election year. The White House also said it opposed such a hike.

Questions remain on how transportation programs will be funded in the future. The League of California Cities is urging Congress to:

1. Adopt a long-term transportation authorization plan that provides a stable and reliable revenue stream
2. Ensure funding is available to support current and future federal, state, and local transportation priorities; and identify new funding streams capable of supporting transportation needs
3. Make reconstruction and preservation of the existing system a high-priority for expenditures, and target funds for maintenance to local agencies charged to administer the system.

In passing the short-term fix, lawmakers kicked to the next Congress harder questions about how to fashion long-term legislation to pay for mass transit systems and repairs to bridges and highways.

- Following the State of Emergency declared by Governor Brown in January due to the state's drought, SCAQMD approved a plan to address drought conditions while maintaining air quality. The plan, adopted on June 6, seeks to ensure businesses will continue to operate without further increasing water shortages resulting from the draught.

Application of water is one of the predominant measures used to control fugitive dust in the South Coast Air Basin and Coachella Valley. SCAQMD's Draught Management and Water Conservation Plan consists of promoting water-sparing alternatives, such as paving unpaved roadways and using vacuum sweepers instead of water to remove dust from paved roadways.

The plan will also help facilitate the permitting and use of certain equipment required to address emergency drought conditions. Water shortages can lead to an increased chance of wildfires, smoke exposure, and particulate matter levels, which not only impact air quality, but also threaten the health of the region's population.

The plan is effective immediately and also includes water conservation measures that will be implemented at SCAQMD headquarters. Please visit aqmd.gov to review all measures included in the plan.

➤ **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

- At its meeting Monday night, the City Council approved a staff-initiated ordinance requiring all new retail establishments in Montclair that provide shopping carts for their customers to install active or passive cart containment systems within the lease space or on the property they occupy.

Cart containment systems can take many forms. The most basic form of cart containment is where retailers attach a vertical pole to each shopping cart preventing their removal outside of the tenant space into the parking lot. This method is currently used by Ross Dress for Less and Fallas. The other common form of cart containment, which allows customers the ability to take shopping carts out of the store and into the parking lot, is an electronic system that consists of embedding a loop sensor around the perimeter of the parking lot and installing one locking wheel mechanism on each shopping cart. If a customer attempts to move a cart beyond the parking lot perimeter, the wheel mechanism locks, thus making removal of the cart from the premises difficult, if not impossible. This type of cart containment system is currently in use at Target, CVS Pharmacy, and Dollar General. The 99¢ Only Store will be installing such a system in its parking lot before year's end.

Not only does the ordinance require new retailers to install cart containment systems, it also mandates that existing retailers without cart containment systems comply with the ordinance no later than January 1, 2016.

Staff hopes the ordinance will help curtail shopping cart theft, saving retailers thousands of dollars per year and keeping abandoned carts out of the City's neighborhoods.

- The 18,000 square-foot Montclair Shoppes retail project on the east side of Central Avenue across from Costco appears to be moving forward. The developer contacted staff last week to indicate deals have been executed with six national or regional businesses, including three quick-serve restaurants and a popular beverage purveyor.

Staff anticipates meeting with the project proponents in the next few weeks to ascertain the expected timeframe for formal plan submittal.

➤ **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

- On August 3, Montclair Fire Department was contacted by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Service (OES) for assistance with the Eiler Fire in McArthur, a small ranching community located northeast of Redding in Shasta County. Captain Sergio Mejia, Engineer Steve Ward, and Firefighter Mike Matheson have been dispatched to assist.

Wet weather and high humidity in the area have assisted firefighters to gain more control; containment has grown to 35 percent.

- On July 31, Assembly Member Freddie Rodriguez, Chair of the Assembly Select Committee on Local Emergency Preparedness, held an informational hearing on "Petroleum Transportation by Rail and First Responder Preparedness—Training and Equipment."

Held in the Montclair City Hall Council Chambers, Fire Battalion Chief David Pohl, who is also a Hazardous Materials Specialist, represented the Fire Department at the hearing. Testimony was also received from many Hazardous Material Response and Fire agencies from various levels of government throughout the State of California, the California Association of Professional Firefighters, and representatives from BNSF and Union Pacific railways.

The intent of this hearing was to assess how well first responders are prepared to handle spills of hazardous materials, including crude oil, and what the state can do to help emergency crews protect California and its citizens from oil-by-rail accidents. Assembly Member Rodriguez stated he wants to make sure first responders are adequately prepared with training and equipment in order to immediately protect not only their own safety and lives, but all others who may be in harm's way from such a spill.

- At Monday's City Council meeting, Steve Jackson was introduced as the newly promoted Deputy Fire Chief (he was assigned to the acting position of Deputy Fire Chief in June 2013). Steve began his career as a Firefighter in 1990, and has steadily moved up the ranks to Fire Engineer, Captain, and Division Chief.

Several members of Steve's immediate family and co-workers were present for the introduction.

Please join me in offering congratulations to Steve on his new appointment!



Steve with his wife and 3 of 4 sons (l to r) - Kyle, Tyler, Steve, Michelle and Troy

Steve with his wife Michelle and mother-in-law Sue Henry



Steve with his step-father Bob Sorrells



➤ **HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

- The City's Annual All Employee Summer Bar-B-Que is set for Tuesday, August 12 from noon to 1:30 p.m. in the Senior Center. Lunch will include hamburgers, sausages, hot dogs, side dishes, and a special dessert.

This event is sponsored each year by the City Council and the City Manager's Department in appreciation of each employee's service.

The traditional slideshow of pictures taken throughout the past year will be shown at the luncheon.

An event flyer is included on Page 16.

➤ **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

- On Monday, Mayor Paul Eaton and Chief of Police Mike deMoet represented the City of Montclair at the Chaffey Joint Union High School District Kick-Off event held at Gardiner W. Spring Auditorium at Chaffey High School. The event was attended by elected officials from areas within the District and over 2,000 CJUHSD teachers and employees.

Superintendent Mathew Holton discussed the District's achievements from the previous school year and summarized what to look forward to for the new school year. Special guest speaker, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, recognized the District's exceptional achievements in education over the last several years.

To show support for the efforts of the CHUHSD staff members, elected officials, city leaders, public safety employees, and students all took part in the filming of a video entitled "RE2PECT." The video can be seen on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFw8GiSYh4>).

- On July 31, Detective Raul Perez accommodated a request from the Office of Senator Norma Torres to speak at a Senior Scam Stopper seminar at Briarwood Manor. Other speakers included representatives from the U.S. Postal Service and the State Department of Insurance.

Detective Perez discussed fraudulent methods used by criminals who target the senior community; and preventative measures seniors, their families, and caregivers can take to reduce the risk of becoming fraud victims.

- National Night Out (NNO) on Tuesday offered the Montclair Police Department the opportunity to continue its community relations efforts by promoting crime prevention, police-community partnerships, and neighborhood camaraderie.

Held at the Target parking lot, Police Department personnel prepared for NNO by setting up booths, equipment, and informational handouts. City Hall officials in attendance included Mayor Pro Tem Bill Ruh, Council Members Carolyn Raft and John Dutrey, Deputy City Manager Marilyn Staats, Personnel Officer Gary Charleston, and myself. Local officials included Senator Norma Torres, Assembly Member Freddie Rodriguez, Supervisor Gary Ovitt, and representatives from the Office of Congresswoman Gloria Negrete McLeod.

National Night Out began in 1984 as an effort to promote civic engagement and community coordination with local police departments. National Night Out represents the kind of spirit, energy, and determination that helps make neighborhoods a safer place year-round.

We appreciate the following Police Department personnel for assisting with this event: Chief Mike deMoet; Lieutenants Jason Reed and Brandon Kumanski; Sergeant Steve Griffin; Officers Kris Kelley, Nick Lopez, and Javier Aguilar; Reserve Officers Randy Ortiz and Joe Kuskie; and Police Cadet Candace Martinez.

Thanks also go to Fire Captain Brian Brambila, Fire Engineer Ben Garcia, and Firefighter/Paramedic Stan Boehm for their participation.



Pictured from left are: Reserve Officer Randy Ortiz, Senator Norma Torres, and Officer Nick Lopez



From left are: Officer Nick Lopez, Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez, and Officer Javier Aguilar



Chief Mike deMoet received a certificate from Senator Torres in recognition of the Police Department's leadership in organizing National Night Out. Also pictured is Council Member John Dutrey.

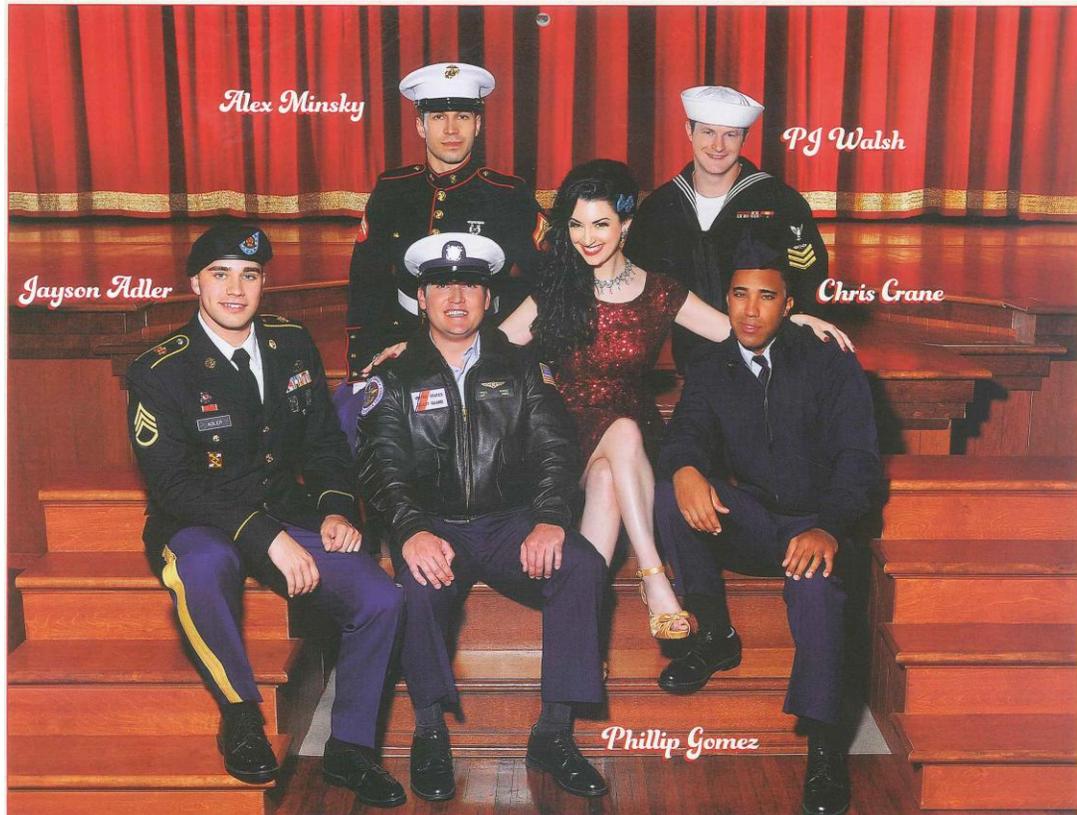
➤ **PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

- Several weeks ago, the City was approached by Gina Elise, President and Founder of Pin-Ups For Vets, about using the caboose at Freedom Plaza as a location for a photo shoot. The photo shoot took place last week with assistance from Facilities and Grounds Superintendent Mike McGehee.

Funds raised through Pin-Ups For Vets go toward improving healthcare for veterans, the purchase of equipment and program expansion at VA hospitals, and quality of life improvement for ill veterans across the United States. Elise travels to military hospitals to deliver calendars, posters, and t-shirts to wounded vets, soldiers, airmen, marines, and seamen at their bedsides, and to personally thank them for their service to our country.

A major fundraiser is the annual production of a calendar reminiscent of the pin-up calendars produced in the 1940s. Locations for photo shoots are selected with backdrops that hearken back to vintage-style themes. Certainly our caboose fits that requirement.

Pictures taken at the caboose are not yet available, but the photo below of Ms. Elise surrounded by representatives of the various military branches is an example of photos contained in the calendars.



"The school is the last expenditure upon which America should be willing to economize." ~ Franklin D. Roosevelt

AUGUST 2014

		
11	Planning Commission Meeting Council Chambers	7:00 p.m.
12	City Manager's Staff Meeting City Hall Conference Room	9:00 a.m.
12	Annual Montclair Summer Barbecue Montclair Senior Center	Noon - 1:30 p.m.
13	Por La Vida Graduation Council Chambers	4:00 p.m.
13	Oversight Board Meeting Council Chambers	6:00 p.m.
18	Code Enforcement Committee Meeting City Hall Conference Room	6:00 p.m.
18	City Council Meeting Council Chambers	7:00 p.m.
21	Safety Committee Meeting City Hall Conference Room	9:00 a.m.
21	Public Works Committee Meeting City Hall Conference Room	2:00 p.m.
25	Planning Commission Meeting Council Chambers	7:00 p.m.
26	City Manager's Staff Meeting City Hall Conference Room	9:00 a.m.

IN APPRECIATION OF YOUR SERVICE
THE CITY COUNCIL & CITY MANAGER
INVITE ALL EMPLOYEES TO ATTEND
THE ANNUAL MONTCLAIR
SUMMER BAR-B-QUE

Menu to include hamburgers, hot dogs,
sausages, side dishes and dessert

Tuesday, August 12, 2014

12 noon - 1:30 p.m.

in the Senior Center

