



The Los Al Loop



Your Source for Los Alamitos Community News.

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thelosalloop.org

Serve Los Al Shows Community Pride Through Service to Others



Volunteers of all ages coming together during the Serve Los Al community service event to lend a helping hand and washing windows for neighbors in need.

On Saturday, September 13, 2025, the Los Alamitos community came together for the 8th annual Serve Los Al event. Hosted by the City of Los Alamitos Recreation and Community Services Department, the citywide volunteer day brought more than 100 dedicated volunteers to serve local nonprofit groups, clean up parks, and assist senior residents to make a lasting impact across the community. The morning began at Oak Middle School Amphitheater, where volunteers gathered at 8:30 a.m. for an inspirational kickoff assembly. After checking in and receiving their Serve Los Al shirts, volunteers were welcomed with a complimentary breakfast featuring breakfast burritos from Nick's Deli before being sent off to their assigned community service projects. Volunteers were excited, committed, and ready to serve. From 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., volunteers dispersed out to more than a dozen active projects across the City, each designed to enhance the Serve Los Al's mission of strengthening community ties. From the beautification efforts at Laurel Park, Little Cottonwood Park, and Coyote Creek Trail to tidying up the Los Alamitos Museum

and helping senior residents, the projects reflected the City's commitment to improving the quality of life for all residents and visitors to the City. One group of volunteers helped with the We Care Pantry Power-Up project, cleaning and restocking shelves to ensure families in need have a dignified space to access essential nutritional items. Another team decorated grocery bags during the Summer Harvest—Food for Kids project, adding cheerful designs and uplifting messages that will brighten families' days during the holiday food distributions. Senior residents received direct support through projects like landscaping cleanups at various homes and window washing at Royal Oak Mobile Home Park. Cristi and Doug Barber, long-time residents of Los Alamitos, expressed their gratitude after volunteers refreshed their yard. They shared that coming home to a landscaped yard was a huge positive boost for them. They also mentioned that it reminded them of how much their Los Alamitos community truly cares about helping one another. While volunteers spread out across the City, the community also benefited from on-site health and wellness

resources at the Los Alamitos Community Center. The Lestonnac Free Clinic provided free vision and dental exams, including free glasses, while Lifestream Blood Bank stationed its blood mobile to collect donations. These services extended the impact of Serve Los Al beyond your typical service projects, providing residents with direct and immediate resources. Rooted in its partnerships, the success of Serve Los Al can be traced to its strong coalition of local nonprofits. The City has worked year-round with service organizations to ensure deep and personal connections. With over 100 volunteers participating in 2025, the highest turnout to date, Serve Los Al continues to grow as an annual tradition and testament of the community's commitment to each other. Residents of all ages joined in each bringing a wave of positive energy, compassion, and teamwork to the day's efforts. For more information about Serve Los Al or other events that the Los Alamitos Recreation and Community Services Department coordinates, please visit www.cityoflosalamitos.org/recreation or contact the department at (562) 430-1073.

Upcoming Events Calendar

City Meetings

- City Council Meeting
Date: November 17, 2025
Time: 6:00 PM
- Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Commission Meeting
Date: February 4, 2026
Time: 6:00 PM
- Planning Commission Meeting
Date: October 22, 2025
Time: 6:00 PM
- Traffic Commission Meeting
Date: November 12, 2025
Time: 6:00 PM

City Events

- Trunk or Treat
Date: October 25, 2025
Location: Little Cottonwood Park - 4000 Farquhar Ave.
Time: 5:00 PM to 7:30 PM
- Halloween Decorating Contest
Date: October 28, 2025
Location: City-wide
Time: 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
- Winter Wonderland
Date: December 6, 2025
Location: 10901 Pine St.
Time: 4:00 PM to 7:30 PM
- Holiday Decorating Contest
Date: December 10, 2025
Location: City-wide
Time: 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM

More events can be found on the City website: cityoflosalamitos.org

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The Los Alamitos Police Department Honors Staff and Community Members with Awards



From left to right: Detective Smith receiving Officer of the Year award, Randy Smith receiving Volunteer of the Year award, Nicole Saiz receiving Employee of the Year award, Kathi Moen receiving Dispatcher of the Year award, and Candace Casarez receiving Citizen of the Year award during the Los Alamitos September City Council meeting from Chief of Police Michael Claborn.

The Los Alamitos Police Department recognized six individuals for their exceptional service and dedication to public safety during the September City Council meeting. The awards, which highlight excellence in law enforcement, dispatch, civilian support, and community partnership, were presented to individuals whose contributions went above and beyond the call of duty.

Detective Smith was named Officer of the Year for his outstanding investigative work and unwavering commitment to the department's mission. Detective Smith led several complex cases, including an attempted murder investigation and an elder abuse case. He helped prevent a second fraudulent transaction of \$35,000 by coordinating a controlled phone call and surveillance operation that led to the suspect's arrest.

Randy Smith was honored as Volunteer of the Year for his consistent and enthusiastic support of department activities. Smith has contributed to patrol checks, school foot patrols, special events, and even took on the role of Santa Claus during the department's annual toy drive.

At this year's Los Alamitos Police Department Awards, a unique family connection took center stage. Detective Smith and his father, Randy Smith, were both honored for their outstanding contributions to the community. In lighthearted fashion, Chief Michael Claborn joked about the possibility of "collusion" in the voting process that recognized both father and son.

Beneath the humor, however, was a deeper message: the Smith family embodies a rare, generational commitment to public service.

Together, they represent the values of dedication, professionalism, and honor that keep Los Alamitos safe. Their recognition is a testament not only to individual achievement, but also to the enduring impact of families who devote themselves to protecting and serving the community.

Nicole Saiz received the Employee of the Year award for her dual role as training manager and community events specialist. Saiz was recognized for her leadership in improving training systems, ensuring compliance, and coordinating public outreach events with precision and grace.

Kathi Moen, a veteran dispatcher with over 30 years of service, was named Dispatcher of the Year. Moen plays a critical role in managing the dispatch schedule and serves as the tactical dispatch supervisor for SWAT. Her ability to adapt to staffing challenges and maintain operational excellence was praised by department leaders.

The Citizen of the Year award was presented to Candace Casares, a local property manager, who played a key role in assisting police during a critical incident in October 2024. When officers responded to a serious situation in the parking garage of her apartment complex, Casares returned to work after hours to assist in reviewing surveillance footage. She continued to assist detectives in the days that followed, providing detailed information and demonstrating a strong commitment to community safety.

The Chief's Award was presented to Sarkis Manoukian for his exceptional contributions to the city and community. Manoukian, the longtime owner

of Norm's Automotive, was remembered as a pillar of the city who built lasting relationships with members of the police department and residents alike. Manoukian's shop, a fixture in the community for nearly 40 years, served not only city vehicles but also the personal cars of many department members. Manoukian's sudden passing left a deep void in the community. City officials and police personnel gathered to express their condolences to his family and to celebrate his life and legacy.

The Los Alamitos Police Department Awards serve not only as a recognition of excellence, but also as a heart-

felt expression of gratitude to the men and women who dedicate themselves to keeping the community safe. These honors highlight the unwavering professionalism, courage, and commitment of officers and staff who consistently go above and beyond the call of duty.

Each award is a reminder that behind every badge is an individual devoted to protecting lives, building trust, and ensuring that Los Alamitos remains a safe and welcoming place for all. Through their service, these recipients embody the Department's core mission: safeguarding the community with integrity, compassion, and pride.

Los Alamitos Improves Cost Recovery

The Los Alamitos City Council has approved an update to the City's Master Fee Schedule, a move aimed at ensuring that residents and businesses continue to receive high-quality services while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

The update follows the completion of a comprehensive Cost Recovery Study, which reviewed fees across multiple City departments. The study calculated the actual cost of providing services and compared those costs to existing fees. By adjusting fees to more closely reflect the true cost of delivery, the City is ensuring fairness and protecting its general fund for community-wide priorities.

"By keeping our fees current and transparent, we're making sure Los Alamitos can continue delivering the level of service our community deserves," said City Manager Chet Simmons. "This is one of the ways we sustain the high quality of life that makes Los Al 'The Best City Ever.'" The Cost Recovery Study was launched in 2022 and examined services across Administration, Development Services, Police, and Recreation & Community Services. City staff reviewed documentation on how long services take, what staff requirements are involved, and what resources are required to determine actual City costs.

Under California law, cities may only charge fees up to the "reasonable cost" of providing a service (Propositions 218 and 26). Fees set above that threshold are considered taxes, requiring voter approval. The study emphasized that fees for services ben-

efiting individuals—such as building permits, plan checks, or police data requests—should recover close to 100% of costs. By contrast, services that provide broader public benefits, like recreation programs, may justifiably remain subsidized by the City's general fund.

For example, analysis showed that Public Works fees currently recover only about 49% of costs. Adjustments recommended in the study would bring those fees closer to full recovery. Similarly, Building Division fees averaged around 72% cost recovery, with adjustments recommended to improve sustainability.

Officials noted that recreation programs will continue to receive subsidies, recognizing their role in enhancing community well-being. "Not every fee should recover 100%," the staff report explained. "Some programs—particularly in recreation—are a shared community benefit, and we intentionally bear some of the costs as a City."

The updated fees will be reflected in the City's Fiscal Year 2025–26 Mid-Year Budget Review. Staff emphasized that the changes will strengthen financial sustainability while preserving access to important services.

The cost recovery initiated by this study reflects the efforts of staff to be fiscally responsible with the community's taxes and also provides the largest community benefit by subsidizing the City's recreation programs. Los Alamitos will continue to find ways to provide the largest benefit to the community with the least fiscal impact to remain "The Best City Ever."



Sarkis Manoukian's family receiving the Chief's Award from the Chief of Police Michael Claborn in his stead.

Los Alamitos completes Labourdette Park, Moves to Revitalize Soroptimist Park Next



The Labourdette family joining the celebration of the park opening with the residents of Los Alamitos.

The City of Los Alamitos continues to strengthen its commitment to enhancing quality of life for residents through the revitalization of parks and open spaces. On Monday, September 15, 2025, community members gathered to celebrate two milestone events that represent both the preservation of tradition and the promise of the future: the grand reopening of Labourdette Park and the groundbreaking for a reimagined Soroptimist Park.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony at Labourdette Park took place, signifying the opening of the newly remodeled park. For more than 25 years, the park has served as a gathering place for families, children, and community groups. Now, following the renovation project that began in February 2025, the park has been transformed into a modern, inclusive space designed to meet the needs of today's residents.

The upgrades include a new all-inclusive playground with equipment designed for children of all abilities, Americans with Disability Act (ADA)-compliant pathways to ensure accessibility, and fresh outdoor exercise stations for adults looking to stay active. Modern picnic-style benches now provide comfortable seating for park visitors, complemented by refreshed landscaping that creates an inviting setting for gatherings.

The Labourdette family joined residents and city officials in celebrating the re-opening. Their presence was a reminder of the park's legacy and the deep connection it holds within the community. Labourdette Park has always been a special place for families and this renovation ensures it will continue to bring people together.

Later, attention shifted to Soroptimist Park where shovels hit the ground

to mark the start of an exciting new project. Funded by the City's General Fund and a Proposition 68 grant, the redevelopment of Soroptimist Park reflects Los Alamitos' proactive approach to investing in public spaces that encourage health, wellness, and community pride.

The project will introduce a sleek new playground designed to engage children of all ages, modern rubberized surfacing to replace outdated wood chips, and upgraded ADA-accessible pathways. Plans also include fresh landscaping and irrigation to improve sustainability and visual appeal. Together, these features will transform Soroptimist Park into a safe, engaging, and inclusive destination for families and individuals alike.

City staff emphasize that these two projects are part of a larger strategy to revitalize parks across Los Alamitos. In recent years, parks have become central to community life, offering residents places to gather, exercise, and connect. By investing in modern amenities and accessibility, the City is ensuring that its parks remain vibrant and welcoming spaces.

Every improvement the City makes is about more than just a playground or a pathway; it's about creating opportunities for connection, health, and joy. These parks reflect the City's vision of Los Alamitos as a community where quality of life is at the forefront. With the reopening of Labourdette Park and the groundbreaking at Soroptimist Park, Los Alamitos is demonstrating that thoughtful investment in parks is an investment in the quality of life. Together, these projects represent not only upgrades to physical spaces but also a renewed commitment to the heart of the community.



The Soroptimist Park groundbreaking dirt and shovels symbolizing the beginning of the park renovation.

Los Alamitos Invests with CDBG Funding

The City of Los Alamitos continues to enhance quality of life for residents through its participation in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, a federal funding source that supports projects in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. Each year, Los Alamitos receives approximately \$350,000 in CDBG funds, which are directed toward infrastructure improvements, accessibility upgrades, and park renovation projects.

CDBG funds are administered locally through the Orange County Urban County Program, which is made up of 13 smaller cities with populations under 50,000. These cities apply competitively for funding each year, identifying projects that meet federal eligibility requirements. In Los Alamitos, the focus has been on neighborhoods with significant numbers of low, very low, and extremely low-income households, as well as projects that benefit seniors and provide Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility.

While the program allows for use in areas such as housing or social services, the City focuses on road and park improvements, which provide broad benefits to the community. In particular, CDBG funds have been a critical resource for maintaining and upgrading local roads. Without the additional funding, the City would only have the capacity to repair one single road each year. With the combined support of CDBG funds and local tax revenues, the number of streets improved annually has increased. This accelerated pace ensures that road conditions are addressed more consistently, improving safety and mobility for residents citywide.

CDBG funding has also allowed Los Alamitos to make significant progress with ADA accessibility. The City has installed ADA-compliant ramps at nearly all crosswalks, creating safer

pathways for seniors and residents with mobility challenges. These improvements are updated regularly to meet current standards, ensuring that infrastructure remains accessible and inclusive. In addition to benefiting those with disabilities, ADA upgrades enhance overall pedestrian safety and usability throughout the city.

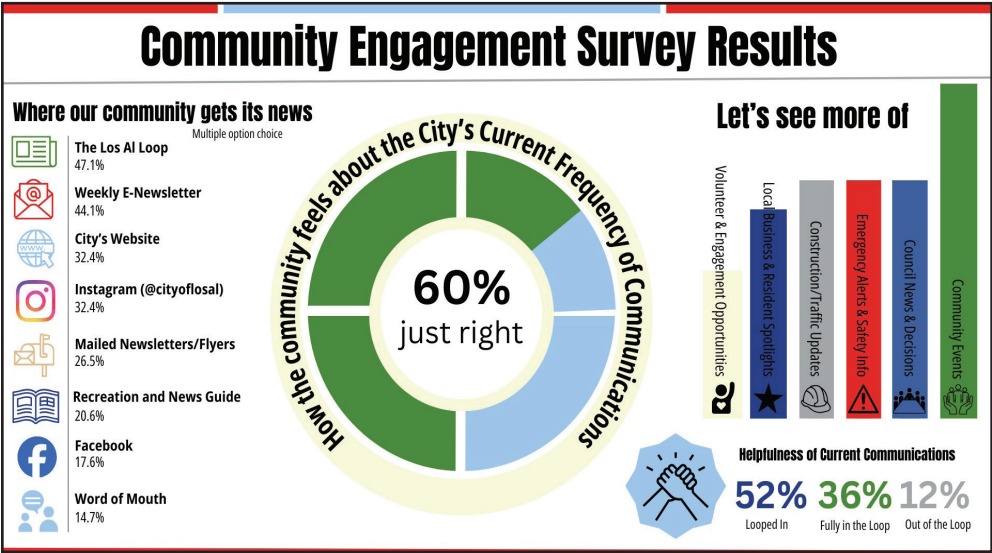
Recent projects supported through the program include ADA enhancements at Sterns Park and Labourdette Park, improvements along Bloomfield Street from Farquhar Avenue to Katella Avenue, and pavement rehabilitation on Maple Street in Midtown. These efforts show how targeted investments can revitalize transportation corridors and recreational areas, creating a safer, more welcoming environment for families, seniors and youth. The next project to receive CDBG funding will be repairs to Reagan Street.

Each year, project priorities are carefully evaluated to ensure CDBG funds are used efficiently and in compliance with program requirements. The results are visible across the community: smoother roads, improved parks, and greater accessibility. These improvements strengthen neighborhoods, support public safety, and create lasting value for residents.

As Los Alamitos continues to keep pace with road maintenance and infrastructure needs, the CDBG program will remain an essential tool in achieving those goals. By leveraging federal funding alongside local resources, the City can stretch its budget further and deliver meaningful improvements more quickly.

The CDBG program plays a quiet but vital role in Los Alamitos. Through steady investment in infrastructure and accessibility, the City is building a stronger foundation for the future while ensuring that today's residents experience tangible improvements that can be used now.

Los Al Community Engagement Results



The City of Los Alamitos recently concluded a six-week Citizen Engagement Survey to better understand how residents receive City news. Nearly half of respondents said they rely on The Los Al Loop, followed closely by the weekly e-newsletter, with social media and the City website also ranking high. Most participants expressed satisfaction with the City's current communication efforts, praising the frequency and quality of updates. Residents requested more information on community events, emergency alerts, and City Council news. Officials say the results will guide future outreach strategies to keep Los Alamitos residents informed, engaged, and connected.

Los Alamitos City Council Adopts Updated Handbook for Boards and Commissions

The Los Alamitos City Council has adopted a revised Boards, Commissions, and Committees Policy Handbook, aiming to streamline operations and provide clearer guidance for the city’s appointed bodies.

Commissions provide a volunteer opportunity for the community to give back in a way that directly affects their neighbors. As commissioners, these volunteers provide input and feedback to staff, which directly affects what items and initiatives end up in front of the City Council. This work not only helps staff gain insight into what the community desires, but it also helps to improve transparency within local government.

The Council approved Resolution No. 2025-27 during its September 15th regular meeting, formally adopting the updated handbook. The document is designed to complement Title 2 of the Los Alamitos Municipal Code and serve as a practical resource for commissioners and committee members. Originally created in April 2016, the handbook was intended to guide the city’s appointed bodies, including the Planning Commission, Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Commission, Personnel Appeals Commission, and Traffic Commission. However, changes in commission membership and the dissolution of certain committees prompted the need for a comprehensive update.

City staff presented the revised handbook to the Council on August 18, 2025, incorporating feedback from that meeting into the final version.

Among the most notable changes is the formalization of regular meeting schedules for each commission. Meetings will now begin at 6 p.m., an hour earlier than the previous 7 p.m.

start time, and will be held in the City Council Chamber at 3191 Katella Avenue.

The updated schedule is as follows:
Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Commission: First Wednesday of even-numbered months

Traffic Commission: Second Wednesday of every month

Planning Commission: Fourth Wednesday of every month

Personnel Appeals Commission: As needed

Another addition is the inclusion of the Limited Printing Policy, which was first adopted in August 2024 in the City Council Member Handbook. The policy aims to reduce paper waste and improve operational efficiency.

The handbook also outlines a formal process for requesting additional information. Commissioners must direct all inquiries to their designated city liaison, who will coordinate with the appropriate department.

In response to council feedback, the updated handbook includes new guidelines governing interactions between City Council members and commissioners. These additions are intended to mirror standards set in the City Council Handbook and ensure consistent communication protocols across all levels of city governance.

City officials believe the revised handbook will enhance the effectiveness of the city’s commissions and improve the overall experience for appointed members.

The City’s quality of life improves due to the efforts of the Commissions. If you would like to know more about the commissions and how to apply, please visit: <https://cityoflosalamitos.org/161/Boards-Commissions-Committee>.

Los Alamitos Police Department Promotes Safety With Traffic Enforcement



Officer Cruz providing traffic enforcement next to one of the schools within the City of Los Alamitos.

Safety is the absolute highest priority of the Los Alamitos Police Department, which employs a variety of strategies to protect residents and visitors. These include motorcycle officers, routine patrols, and the use of red-light cameras. Los Alamitos is the only city in Orange County that utilizes photo enforcement to enhance traffic safety, while multiple jurisdictions in Los Angeles County also use this safety measure. The City of Los Alamitos introduced photo enforcement in 2005 at the intersection of Los Alamitos Boulevard and Katella Avenue. The program was launched in response to fatal collisions and resident concerns. Since its installation, the red-light camera has helped improve motorist safety and allowed police officers to dedicate more time to higher-priority calls for service. From Fiscal Year 2015–2016 through Fiscal Year 2024–2025, general traffic enforcement generated approximately \$7,254,950 in revenue. During the same period, the city spent \$5,472,293 on traffic safety initiatives, including officer and staff salaries, equipment, and software needs. This figure also includes support staff and attorney fees, reflecting the many facets of the legal and enforcement system. A portion of the remaining funds, along with other revenue sources such as Measure Y sales tax, supports police services and public safety programs. On average, traffic enforcement revenue amounted to about \$178,265 per year, which is less than the cost of employing a single police officer. It is important to note that, while these figures demonstrate the contribution of traffic enforcement funds, they do not rep-

resent the total funding for police services, and historical allocations over the past ten years may have varied. While revenues outweigh expenditures, City officials emphasize that safety, not profit, is the guiding principle. Traffic enforcement prevents serious collisions while ensuring drivers are held accountable for dangerous behavior on the road. “Every service provided by the City comes at a cost,” stated City Manager Chet Simmons. “Our mission is always the safety and well-being of our residents and visitors.” The Los Alamitos Police Department is recognized as one of the most responsive agencies in Orange County, with call response times among the fastest in the region. Officials attribute part of this efficiency to the traffic safety camera, which monitors one of the county’s busiest intersections and frees officers to respond quickly to emergencies for residents and surrounding communities. Beyond Los Alamitos, the department also supports the Orange County Sheriff’s Department in the unincorporated community of Rossmoor, and provides assistance to the neighboring cities of Seal Beach and Cypress. Guided by its motto, “Every Hour, Every Day,” the department remains committed to protecting the community with professionalism and care. The Los Alamitos Police Department is dedicated to the safety and well-being of its residents and visitors. This may include traffic enforcement or other safety measures. For more information on Los Alamitos Police Department, visit cityoflosalamitos.org/158/Police-Department.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are currently looking for residents to apply for open positions on our City’s Commissions. Applications are now being accepted!

Commissioners Needed For:

- Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Commission
- Traffic Commission

Commissioners are appointed for a term of three years (with the exception of Personnel Appeals Commission is appointed for a four year term). To qualify, you must be a registered voter in the City.

COMMISSIONER’S ROLE:

- Attend monthly meetings
- Provide valuable feedback on City programs and policies
- Engage with the community

APPLICATION DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 12, 2025

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Eleanor Granflor, Deputy City Clerk (562) 431-3538 ext. 221
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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 5:00-7:30 PM
LITTLE COTTONWOOD PARK
4000 FARQUHAR AVE, LOS ALAMITOS

Los Alamitos annual Trunk-or-Treat event brings Halloween fun to the heart of the community in a safe, family-friendly environment. The City and community partners transform Little Cottonwood Park into a festive space where decorated car trunks become candy stations for children. The event is supported by Recreation & Community Services, with costs partially offset through vendor fees and sponsorships, while the City subsidizes the remainder to keep the tradition free and accessible for all. It’s one more way Los Alamitos provides exceptional programs that strengthen community spirit, cementing its reputation as “The Best City Ever.”