



FIG · GARDEN
HOME · OWNERS
ASSOCIATION

FALL NEWSLETTER 2016

www.oldfig.org

Annual Fig Garden Dinner

Sunday, October 2

Fig Garden Swim and Racquet Club

4722 N. Maroa Ave.

at 5:30 pm; dinner served at 6 pm

RSVP with check by Monday, Sept. 26

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Dan Gallagher

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Like most of us who live in Old Fig and the surrounding areas, I can often be found at Fig Garden Village. Whether it be to walk the dog up to La Boulangerie, or one of the many other stores and eateries found there, or stopping in on the way home from work to pick something up. Our family likes to shop at "our" local center. I say "our" because, though people from all over the Valley go out of their way to shop at Fig Garden Village, it really feels like it belongs to our neighborhood. And in a way it does. It is often the place we see our neighbors while shopping, or where we meet for dinner or coffee. There are many things that make Fig Garden special, and the Village is an important factor. The health of our neighborhood is directly influenced by the businesses that surround us. Old Fig Garden has a symbiotic relationship with the Village that bears our name, but Fig Garden Village is not the only business that makes this part of Fresno so special. Gazebo Gardens, Ampersand, and Kuppa Joy, all found to the south of Fig Garden, are also unique and important to our neighborhood. It's crucial that we support all these business, but I'd also like to make a case for supporting and frequenting the businesses found on Blackstone and Shaw when we can.

It has been said by many that Fig Garden is one of the most important factors in keeping Central Fresno from decaying. Our urban forest, unique, historical and well-kept homes with large lots all make this a desirable place to live. However, some of the neighborhoods that surround us have challenges that often influence us. Certainly, the businesses along Shaw and along Blackstone affect our neighborhood. That's why the Home Owners Association has been working with the Better Blackstone Association, an organization started by Fresno Metro Ministries.

Better Blackstone is an emerging

association of diverse people and organizations who are committed to seeing new investment and revitalization of the Blackstone corridor. They are working to make Blackstone a success-ful place for expanding and starting businesses, while also promoting safe and clean neighborhoods. The energy surrounding this group and the movement to improve Blackstone is very promising. There is a new owner of Manchester Center who has plans for major reinvestment. Construction has started on the Bus Rapid Transit system, and the Better Blackstone Association is helping to connect business owners with available resources. Maybe you've seen some of Better Blackstone's events advertised in the Fresno Bee or on the E-mail alert system. They recently held a Community Fair at the Vineyard Farmer's Market, and have also recently received a grant to help with their effort to create a diverse Foodie movement along the corridor and surrounding areas.

We need to support this group and its efforts to transform Fresno. One way to do that is to attend some of the events and seminars they sponsor. You can also go to their website and join the Better Blackstone Group, or help them with their Foodie movement by taking their on-line food survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/whatscookingfresno.

Often our most effective way to help local businesses prosper is to frequent them. The power we have as consumers is an important tool in supporting our neighbors and keeping our neighborhood prosperous.

So, while it may be a no-brainer to ask you to continue shopping at Fig Garden Village, I do hope you'll also shop at the other local businesses when you can. Sometimes we drive farther North to shop, even though we have businesses close by that offer the same products or services. Our support will have a direct effect on the businesses we frequent, and that, in turn, will positively affect the areas around us.

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 5796 , Fresno, California 93755 · www.oldfig.org · September 2016

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Fig Garden Annual Dinner

This year our ever-popular, annual neighborhood event will have an Oktoberfest theme. It will be held on Sunday, October 2, at 5:30 p.m. at the Fig Garden Swim and Racquet Club. Sarah Sigg-Hewitt, Special Events Director, along with Debra Petersen, Catering Director, help make this a delightful event with wonderful food. Following with this year's "Oktoberfest" theme, the evening will begin with no-host cocktails and hearty appetizers for the social hour. A few German beer selections will be offered for those interested. Wine will be served at the tables for dinner.

Invited guests include County Supervisor Andreas Borgeas and staff, Sheriff Margaret Mims and staff, Fresno State President Joseph Castro and Mrs. Mary Castro, as well as Police Protection District deputies, CHP officers, and others who help our neighborhood during the year. There will be informal presentations from our elected officials and opportunities to ask questions on topics of neighborhood concerns. The cost for the dinner is \$40 each for FGHOA members, and \$50 each for non-members. Reservations with your check payable to Fig Garden Home Owners Association (FGHOA) are needed **by Monday, September 26.**

What We're Working On

By Dan Gallagher

I was recently speaking with one of our new neighbors who was surprised to find out there was a homeowners association for our neighborhood. I think many people new to Old Fig are surprised to find this out and may not see the value of our Association. We are different from the homeowners associations that some people have experienced in condos or other PUDs. Our Association is voluntary and our main focus is protecting the integrity of our historical neighborhood, helping keep it healthy and vibrant.

So when someone asks me what they get for their \$60 a year membership fee, I explain that we get an organization

that works to connect neighbors together, and connect the neighborhood to the county, since we are a county island. We do this by keeping in close contact not only with each other but also with County Supervisor Andreas Borgeas, as well as county staff. This relationship is very important and has been very successful over the years at promoting Old Fig's needs and helping it continue as one of Fresno's best neighborhoods.

The following are some of the issues the Home Owners Association has worked on over the past few months:

Ashlan Avenue: We have been working closely with Supervisor Borgeas to implement some of the proposals called for in the Fig Garden Transportation Study. Traffic calming through our neighborhood is the major goal of this plan, with Ashlan being top priority. We've made great strides towards our goal, and hope to present actual solutions soon. We want to thank the Supervisor Borgeas, his office, as well as County staff for their great efforts.

Better Blackstone Association: We continue to support and attend the events and meetings sponsored by Better Blackstone. The health of our neighborhood is dependent on those around us.

Fig Garden Village: There were some changes being proposed by the owners of Fig Garden Village. A Fresno City Council District 2 Planning meeting was held where a number of concerned neighbors, as well as members of our Board, voiced oppositions to these proposed changes. Many of us objected to the aesthetic/architectural changes being proposed to the Village, not wanting to see further eroding of the Village's historic design. We were successful in getting the City Planning Commission to ask the owners of the Village to alter their plans so that they would be more in keeping with the original design of the center. The Village Management team found a way to keep their new tenants while also keeping the feel we all know and love.

Bike Trails: We are working with Caltrans, the City and the County to try to get the sections of the Herndon Canal that run through our neighborhood included in the City's Bicycle Master plan. This is connected to our Transportation Grant, and it would be great to see improvements to the canal that runs through our neighborhood.

Christmas Tree Lane: As usual, Dean Alexander is taking the lead to coordinate the annual Christmas Tree Lane event with the Association and all those who live on the Lane and participate in this wonderful tradition.

Anti-scavenging ordinance: We continue to work with County Supervisor Borgeas to find a way to have an ordinance passed to keep scavengers out of our trash containers.

Tree Plan: We are working with a team to continue the tree plan for the streets throughout the neighborhood. The original plan, done when Fig Garden was initially developed, does not include all streets. We're working to identify species that will continue our urban forest but are also able to withstand our dry years.

Christmas Tree Lane

Christmas Tree Lane will be celebrating its 94th season this year. Our opening night will be Saturday, December 3rd. The Lane will be open through Christmas Day, December 25th. Our 2016 walk nights are Saturday, December 3rd and Tuesday, December 13th. Let's mark our calendars and enjoy another magical season.

Fig Garden Police Protection District

As indicated in our Spring Newsletter, the Fig Garden Police Protection District Commissioners as well as our neighbors are concerned about vehicles speeding through our neighborhood. After installing the two speed radar feedback signs along Ashlan Avenue, we saw initially some reduction of traffic speed. However, now the speed limit on Ashlan has been increased to 35 mph. A significant portion of the motorists exceed that limit. Within the next year, the Fig Garden Police Protection District will undertake significant efforts in limiting speeding along Ashlan. To that end it has elected Dean Alexander—one of the Fig Garden Police Protection District Commissioners—as Chief of Police for the Fig Garden Police Protection District. In this capacity he will negotiate with California Highway Patrol and the Fresno County Sheriff's Office to provide additional traffic monitoring along Ashlan and to issue tickets for speeding motorists. If required, the Fig Garden Police Protection District will subcontract with additional law enforcement agencies to monitor traffic flow and to issue speeding tickets. This additional law enforcement and performing traffic calming improvements along Ashlan should help alleviate speeding and produce traffic calming.

Fig Garden Electronic Neighborhood Watch

If you would like to receive email notifications about crime events in this area, send your email address to **FigGardenWatch@gmail.com**. You will receive time sensitive neighborhood crime alerts and monthly crime statistics compiled by the deputies on duty in the Fig Garden Police Protection District.

From Fresno County Supervisor, Andreas Borgeas

Dear Fig Garden Friends,

It is an honor to serve as your representative on the Fresno County Board of Supervisors. Together with Sandra Seely and Michelle Asadoorian, we endeavor to provide the very best constituent services to the Fig Garden community. Our highest priority is public safety, and Ashlan indeed presents many challenges to the welfare of those who drive along the corridor and live in Fig Garden. As your Supervisor, I am acutely aware of these challenges and our office has made this issue a top priority, undertaking all necessary steps for real solutions to these longstanding challenges.

For the past several months we have been working diligently with the Fig Garden Home Owners Association and County staff in exploring ways to find legally permissible methods to calm traffic along the Ashlan corridor. For example, on August 8th we hosted a meeting with representatives from the FGHOA during which County Staff helped us examine potential traffic mitigation options. We suspect that speed along Ashlan is really a symptom of the greater underlying problem of enhanced traffic. Therefore, within the confines of the vehicle code and other relevant laws, we are examining the merits of traffic calming features and a point of safe pedestrian crossing across Ashlan.

County Staff recognizes Ashlan as a longstanding issue that has arisen from increased urban growth and planning decisions dating back decades. So last fall I asked staff how we could improve speed policy between the City and County. Frequently driving the area myself, I questioned the sporadic variations of speed limits between Blackstone and Palm. In response the Department of Public Works has completed two initial traffic studies to help us better understand the Ashlan dynamic. This vital information is helping us work through the best alternatives moving forward. Ultimately, our goal is to improve public safety by slowing traffic along Ashlan in ways that are code compliant, legally defensible and maintain the integrity of the Fig Garden community.

Helpful in this process is the Old Fig Garden Transportation Study. You may have already noticed the presence of surveyors conducting studies along the roadway. We anticipate the results of this work to provide the foundation for bringing life to the Study. Meanwhile, we will continue to work with the FGHOA as we develop next steps. Over the next few months we will work on building a comprehensive plan. We will not move forward until we gather stakeholder input along with a comprehensive review by the County's Public Works and legal teams. This fall we anticipate hosting an all FGHOA meeting where we will present a plan for your review and comment.

As always, please feel free to contact me, Chief of Staff Sandra Seely or Constituent Relations Manager Michelle Asadoorian by phone at 600-2000 or by email at district2@co.fresno.ca.us with any questions or concerns. We look forward to our continued partnership on all issues related to Fig Garden.

Warm regards,

Andreas Borgeas



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Annual Dinner

Sunday, October 2nd, 2016
at the Fig Garden Swim and Racquet Club
4722 North Maroa Ave

Appetizers and no-host bar at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m.

Fall Mixed Salad
Cider Brined Pork Roast
with Apple Cranberry Chutney
Apple Onion Potato Gratin
Roasted Root Vegetables
Rolls and Butter

Dessert: Homemade Apple Strudel
with Cinnamon Whipped Cream
wine provided at the tables

FGHOA Members \$ 40 per person
Non-members \$50

RSVP (with check) by Monday, September 26

Casual attire. Child care is not provided.

By Barbara Steck

As a refresher: In 2012, the Fig Garden Home Owners Association, Caltrans, Fresno County, City of Fresno, and the Fresno Council of Governments sponsored the preparation of a transportation study for our area to enhance and protect the unique nature of Old Fig Garden. The FGHOA initiated this process to address local urban design and transportation concerns associated with an increase of traffic in and around Old Fig Garden as well as the planned land use changes along Blackstone and Shaw Avenues—two of the boundaries of the community. Several community meetings were held and surveys conducted to solicit input from the residents of Old Fig Garden. The Study includes many recommendations for improvements as illustrated in Figure 1.2 below.



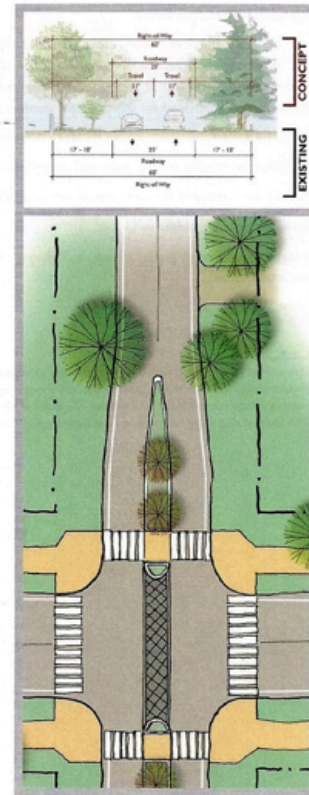
There are five distinct segments of Ashlan Avenue within the study area. Preferred design options for each segment seek to capitalize on existing roadway infrastructure, provide for additional pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and maintain the neighborhood character, particularly the tree foliage. The five segments and their specific preferred design alternatives have been developed with consideration to the following strategies to improve the safety and traffic volumes. Details on all five segments can be found in the Study using the link above. For the purposes of the current newsletter, however, we will limit the discussion to a single segment.

Between Palm and Maroa Avenues

This segment is characterized by single-family residences, curb-less streets, and established private land-scape within the right-of-way and is decidedly the most 'rural' feeling of the five segments. Great attention has been given to maintain the character of the neighborhood while also providing improved traffic calming. This alternative offsets pedestrian and bicycle amenities on adjacent parallel Swift Avenue street segment.

See Figure 5.8 for an illustration of the improvements listed below.

- Maintain the existing total roadway width.
- Maintain the landscaping between the edge of pavement and the property line.
- Reduce travel lane widths from roughly 12.5 feet per lane to 11 feet in to support a reduction of actual vehicle speeds to posted residential speed limits.
- Increase intersection safety by installing short medians with refuges to decrease crossing distance and to allow for replacing landscaping lost at the edges of the roadway, in the median.
- Encourage property owners with driveways that require backing out onto Ashlan Avenue to consider the safety benefits of a reconfiguration of their driveways – to the extent feasible – to a circular or hammerhead configuration, which would eliminate the safety risk associated with backing out into traffic on Ashlan Avenue.



As noted in his letter to Fig Garden residents in this newsletter, County Supervisor Andreas Borgeas and County staff are working with the Fig Garden Home Owners Association on Ashlan Avenue issues. We will keep neighbors in-formed as updates are available.



Figure 5.8: Ashlan Avenue Between Palm and Maroa Ave. - Looking East (See enlarged section on facing page.)



Thank you for sponsoring Old Fig! Please join the Fig Garden Home Owners Association. We work to protect and strengthen our unique neighborhood. The dues are \$60/year. Please mail your check payable to:

FGHOA
PO BOX 5796
Fresno CA 93755 or pay on our website: www.oldfig.org

Unlike most homeowners groups, our dues are voluntary and we depend on the generosity of our fellow neighbors. Dues money goes to pay fees associated with filing documents that protect the quality of life and integrity of the neighborhood, printing and mailing newsletters to keep you informed, and running the www.oldfig.org web site.

Useful Contact Numbers

Sheriff's Dispatch:	600-3111 (for emergencies call 911)
Fresno Humane Animal Services:	600-7387 (PETS)
Fresno County Code Enforcement:	600-4550
24-Hour Domestic Violence Help:	233-4357 (HELP)
Building Permit Info:	600-4540
City of Fresno Water Division:	621-5300, 621-5480
Fig Garden Fire Station (non-emergency):	621-4320 (for emergencies call 911)
Fresno County Library Information:	600-7323 (READ)
Fresno County Public Health:	600-3200, 600-6449
Graffiti Abatement:	600-8107
Fresno County Road Maintenance:	600-4840