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Closed on federal holidays
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shha@sandiahomeowners.org

Fire prevention “Lessons Learned” for Sandia Heights

By Joe Boyce, Environment & Safety Committee chair

As you know, **we live in a high-risk wildfire zone** here in Sandia Heights. Recently, I talked to friends who live in northwest Denver, about half a mile from the 100 mph, wind-fed “Marshall fire” in late December that destroyed over 1000 buildings and killed two people. The fire reportedly moved at over 100 ft/sec at times! Until that day, they had the typical “can’t happen here” mentality that I fear many of our residents share. They were terrified and “in the dark” as the fire approached their home, and said they will always be better prepared in the future, including signing up for reverse 911 (www.nixle.com) and having a solid plan for what to take.

In addition to the fire prevention brochure Sandia Heights residents recently received in the mail from Sandia Services, here are several “lessons learned” to consider, gleaned from multiple sources:

1. Right now, clean any flammable items away from your home to improve your home’s chances of surviving.
2. You can’t fight a high-wind extreme wildfire—the only option is evacuation. Plan your evacuation now.
3. Opt-in and register for Bernalillo County’s reverse emergency notification system so you get emergency texts. Do this at www.nixle.com.
4. Have a neighborhood evacuation plan, including alternate routes. Choose a location where family members will meet if they are separated. Have a single contact point outside the area with whom everyone can coordinate and share info. Share key information with them.
5. Inventory and photograph or video your home’s contents now and save it off-site. Have a bag and checklist (see p. 2) to grab and go. Consider a note on the door that tells responders your information and that the house is empty (no pets, etc.).



Aftermath of Dec 2021 Colorado wildfire.
 (Photo by B. Murphy)



WILDFIRE EVACUATION CHECKLIST

REVIEW THIS INFORMATION NOW TO PREPARE YOURSELF FOR A QUICK AND SAFE EVACUATION.

TO-GO BAG ESSENTIALS:

- Important documents (bank, IRS, trust, investment, insurance policy, birth certificates, medical records)
- ATM, credit and debit cards
- Medications
- Prescription glasses
- Driver's license
- Passport
- Computer backup files
- Inventory of home contents (consider making a video inventory now, prior to an emergency)
- Photographs of the exterior of the house and landscape
- Address book
- Cell phone charger
- Personal toiletries
- Enough clothing for 3-5 days
- Family heirlooms, photo albums and videos.

WHAT TO WEAR:

- Wear only cotton or wool clothes, including long pants, long-sleeved shirt or jacket, a hat, and boots.
- Carry gloves, a handkerchief to cover your face, water to drink, and goggles.
- Keep your cell phone, a flashlight, and portable radio with you at all times.
- Tune in to a local radio station and listen for instructions.

PREPARE FAMILY MEMBERS, PETS, AND LIVESTOCK:

- If possible, evacuate all family members not essential to preparing the house for wildfire.
- Plan several evacuation routes from your home.
- Designate a safe meeting place and contact person.
- Relay your plans to a contact person.
- Evacuate pets and livestock whenever possible and never turn the animals loose.
- Notify your local Humane Society or other organizations for assistance with animals if needed.
- Be aware of your emergency notification system such as reverse 911.

PREPARE VEHICLE:

- If you can lift your garage door manually, place vehicle in the garage pointing out with the keys in the ignition and disconnect the electric garage door opener. If not, park in your driveway facing out.
- Roll up the car windows.
- Close the garage door, but leave it unlocked.
- Place essential items in the car.
- If you do not drive, make other arrangements for transportation in advance.

INSIDE THE HOME:

- Close all interior doors.
- Leave a light on in each room.
- Remove lightweight, non-fire-resistant curtains and other combustible materials from around windows.
- Close fire-resistant drapes, shutters, and blinds.
- Turn off all pilot lights.
- Move overstuffed furniture, such as couches and easy chairs, to the center of the room.
- Close fireplace damper.
- Close or block off any doggie-doors.

OUTSIDE THE HOME:

- Place combustible patio furniture in the house or garage.
- Shut off propane at the tank or natural gas at the meter.
- Close all exterior vents, doors, and windows.
- Prop a noncombustible ladder against the house to provide firefighters with easy access to the roof.
- Make sure that all garden hoses are connected to faucets and attach nozzles set on "spray".
- Leave exterior doors and gates unlocked.
- Turn on outside lights.
- If available and if there's time, cover windows, attic openings, and vents with plywood that is at least one-half inch thick.
- Fill trash cans and buckets with water and place where firefighters can find them.

Be prepared! It will likely be dark, smoky, windy, and hot. There may be airborne burning embers, no power or telephone, and poor water pressure. Remember, there is nothing you own worth your life! Please evacuate immediately when asked.



This checklist was adapted from *Wildfire Evacuation Checklist*, University of Nevada, Reno Extension publication #FS-06-07. Funding for this project provided in part by a Community Fire Assistance Agreement with the Bureau of Land Management – Nevada State Office in cooperation with University of Nevada, Reno Extension. University of Nevada, Reno is an EEO/AA institution.



Wildfire Season is Here!

Due to the continuing drought and El Niño/La Niña weather patterns, this wildfire season promises to be early and active, according to U.S. Forest Service meteorologist Kerry Jones and others. The National Weather Service has already issued several “Red Flag” Warnings and there has already been an early-season fire in the Belen bosque. Be ready and learn more in a series of Zoom seminars graciously shared by our East Mountain neighbors, and their wildfire prevention agency:

- *Weather Outlook for the 2022 Wildfire Season*, Kerry Jones, meteorologist: <https://youtube.be/IRjEo4iRsu8>
- *Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Update*, Cody Stropke: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfeknSoGzp8>
- *Defensible Space: Best Practices*, Lawrence Crane, NM State Forestry: <https://youtu.be/SZtjqoqDNF5g>
- *Drought, Bark Beetles and Wildfire*, John Formby, PhD, NM State Forestry: (<https://youtu.be/wTdrVtanGFQ>)

Check Weather.com (we are in District 107) and inciweb.nwcg.gov for conditions and existing fires.

Nixle Emergency Information System Reprinted from Nixle

This Community Information Service helps keep you and your family safe, informed, and connected to your community 24/7.

With emergency alerts, important advisories, community updates, and traffic information, you will receive up-to-date information impacting the areas near you by cell phone, e-mail, and on the web. To learn more about Nixle, visit <https://www.nixle.com/about.html>.

Spread the word with friends, family and neighbors! Help make your community a stronger, safer, and better place to live.

Additional questions can be answered by reading our [Frequently Asked Questions](#). You also can [contact us](#) by e-mail and your question will be answered within 48 hours.

To learn more about Nixle, please [click here](#).

Elena Gallegos Area “Improvements”? Speak now or....

By Joe Boyce, Environment & Safety Committee chair

There is talk of future building and construction by the City of Albuquerque at Elena Gallegos Open Space and Simms Park Road, including a visitor center, bicycle lanes, and road widening. This feasibility study has been going on for about a year. **Below are links with more information. We encourage you to review this information and get involved.**

A lot of local folks will be affected by the changes, so please review and comment to the appropriate authorities. Visit the SHHA website for more information as this issue evolves. For maximum effectiveness, please read the materials before commenting.

Colleen Langan-McRoberts is the superintendent of Albuquerque’s Open Space Division. (505) 768-4200 is the admin number.

https://www.cabq.gov/parksandrecreation/documents/eg_os_education_center_feasibility_study_3-4-2022_final_draft_w_appendix.pdf

https://foothillseducationcenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Presentation_Meeting_For_OSD_Updated.pdf

Elena Gallegos Feasibility Study

Extracted from a letter by Colleen Langan-McRoberts dated February 21, 2022

Elena Gallegos Open Space is in the Foothills at the base of the Sandia Mountains. The Open Space protects important wildlife habitat and offers majestic views, miles of multi-use recreation trails, picnic and event facilities, and access to the Cibola National Forest/Sandia Wilderness. Facilities at Elena Gallegos have not substantially changed since it opened in 1985, while public use has dramatically increased to over 200,000 visitors per year. In 2021, the Parks and Recreation Dept/Open Space Division began working with Dekker/Perich/Sabatini to study potential improvements at Elena Gallegos. The study identified needs at Elena Gallegos to maintain existing features and support public use, including improvements to the following: reservations areas, wetlands, trails, Cottonwood Springs trail and boardwalk, road and parking, outdoor furnishings and ADA access to facilities. The study also investigated the feasibility for a small education center for visitors of all ages. The

Foothills, one of Albuquerque’s most distinctive and highly visited areas, has no environmental education center. Elena Gallegos is ideally situated due to the existing infrastructure, accessibility to Albuquerque residents and visitors, history and ecology of the site and connections to other Major Public Open Space and Wilderness areas.

Potential Education Center. The focus of the proposed facility would be to provide education services and programs to visitors of all ages (especially children) to promote discovery, enjoyment, and a sense of connection and stewardship for this special area of Albuquerque, City Open Space, the National Forest, and the natural world in general. Using similar Education Centers at other natural areas as precedent, the feasibility study suggested that a facility at Elena Gallegos might be around 4,800 square feet of interior space that would feature a classroom, interpretive area and offices. An outdoor wraparound deck would offer wonderful views of the City and Sandia Mountains. The feasibility study evaluated six potential locations for an education facility, ranking all of the sites in terms of suitability and pros/cons. The two highest rank locations are a site inside the loop road at eastern side of the developed area, and a site on the north side of Elena Gallegos near the Kiwanis Shelter. The education center would have limited parking in addition to satellite parking near Tramway with a shuttle bus connection to Elena Gallegos, which would limit impacts and vehicle congestion. The concept of the shuttle is that it would not run all the time, but only during peak use. The building would incorporate sustainable design principles including solar energy as well as energy and water conservation features. Wildlife-friendly design elements would also be integrated including night sky protection, not allowing amplified noise, and supporting nesting sites for birds and pollinator plantings. The hours of operation for the building would be consistent with the current hours for the property, and the uses for the facility would be in line with existing polices. ...

Conclusions. The feasibility study identified overall improvements needed at Elena Gallegos, and revealed the benefits of and support for an appropriately-sized Education Center. The study was an initial step and no final decisions have been made. The City will continue to engage the public in the planning process and communicate about any projects at Elena Gallegos Open Space.

MARCH CALLS TO SANDIA HEIGHTS SECURITY PATROL

The following statistics are the latest provided by Sandia Heights Security since the last GRIT. **Please be reminded that Sandia Heights Services (they provide water, sewer, trash and recycle collection, and security services) is a subscription service separate from Sandia Heights Homeowners Association membership.** Also, Membership in SHHA does not include Sandia Heights Security membership. You can call Security to confirm your membership with them. If you have questions, please call **Sandia Heights Security** at 856-6347, **mobile** 263-4654.

March	# of calls		# of calls
Alarms	15	Special Extra Patrol	2
Animal Control Assist	0	Special Request/Vacation	84
Customer Assist	1	Speeding Vehicle	0
Lost/Found Pet	1	Suspicious Activity	1
Mailbox Vandalism	1	Suspicious Person	0
Newspaper/Package Pickup	1	Suspicious Vehicle	5
Noise Complaint/Suspicious Noise	1	Threat/Personal	1
Pet Nuisance	1		
Snake Call	1	Total Calls	115

Useful Numbers: Emergency Police/Fire/Rescue: 9-1-1 (Be sure to let the operator know you are in Sandia Heights – an unincorporated area of Bernalillo County) **Bernalillo County Sheriff Non-Emergency:** (505) 798-7000 **Bernalillo County Fire Department Non-Emergency:** (505) 468-1310 **SHS Water/Sewer Emergencies (M-F 7AM – 4PM):** (505) 856-6345 **SHS Water/Sewer Emergencies After Hours:** (505) 888-5336 **NM Gas Co. Emergencies:** (505) 697-3335 **PNM Outage & Emergencies:** 1-888-342-5766

Announcements & Notices:

- **Office hours:** Monday – Friday 9 AM – 4 PM.
 - **Board Meeting:** scheduled May 11, 2022, at 7:00 pm in person.
 - **Office Closures for Holiday(s)** May 30, 2022, in observance of Memorial Day
 - **Notary services (except on Fridays), copies (20 per month) and faxes, e-mail alerts, and contractor evaluation binder** are free to members. **Also, voter registration in office.**
 - **Committee meeting dates** are posted on our website calendar: www.sandiahomeowners.org.
 - **Classified ads** can be found on the website on the top bar menu under Notices and Information/Classifieds.
 - **Safety vests for sale** in the SHHA Office. \$2.50 per vest for members, cash or check only.
 - **Tram passes for sale** in the SHHA Office. \$7.50 per ticket for members on a **first-come first-served basis.** Cash or check only. Tickets purchased must be for one date at a time per residence. To view the Tram Pass Procedures for SHHA Members go to <http://sandiahomeowners.org/notices-and-information/notices-and-information/96-tram-passes>.
- ACC Color Reference Guide** is available to borrow in the SHHA Office for up to 30 days. \$20 refundable deposit is required. Cash or check only.

SHHA Member Benefits:

Check out the entire SHHA Member Benefits Program and the discounts offered to SHHA members at www.sandiahomeowners.org, under the **Notices and Information** tab. Each participating merchant offers a discount to SHHA members. The following is a list of currently participating merchants:

Criel and Associates, LLC
Jade Enterprises Inc.
Remax Select – Pete Veres
Tutor Doctor
Waterstone Mortgage



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MARKET TRENDS

Listing Inventory for Greater ABQ Area

Class R1 & R2 (Existing Single-Family Detached & Condo/Townhome Attached)

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2005	2,267	2,156	2,276	2,099	2,206	2,243	2,377	2,350	2,319	2,298	2,263	2,211
2006	2,198	2,302	2,558	2,678	3,180	3,602	4,031	4,407	4,695	4,618	4,363	4,098
2007	4,191	4,465	4,881	5,428	5,729	6,106	6,404	6,675	6,718	6,708	6,534	6,066
2008	6,076	6,147	6,434	6,555	6,873	7,074	7,082	7,065	6,856	6,617	6,346	5,821
2009	5,925	6,037	5,995	6,054	6,082	6,114	6,128	5,902	5,574	5,528	5,413	5,176
2010	5,332	5,518	5,717	5,651	6,045	6,346	6,471	6,408	6,375	6,099	5,684	5,320
2011	5,296	5,334	5,444	5,511	5,625	5,552	5,636	5,511	5,249	4,977	4,643	4,216
2012	4,163	4,089	4,117	4,239	4,415	4,528	4,580	4,534	4,518	4,520	4,322	3,980
2013	4,007	4,062	4,227	4,372	4,531	4,795	4,910	5,007	5,035	4,868	4,657	4,232
2014	4,272	4,320	4,619	4,858	5,150	5,402	5,428	5,474	5,390	5,148	4,741	4,212
2015	4,098	4,027	4,156	4,335	4,369	4,490	4,487	4,353	4,216	4,100	3,813	3,407
2016	3,342	3,426	3,527	3,613	3,706	3,919	4,412	4,344	4,264	4,025	3,712	3,247
2017	3,178	3,145	3,187	3,283	3,565	3,769	3,883	3,854	3,793	3,641	3,350	2,982
2018	2,905	2,839	2,886	3,067	3,297	3,570	3,637	3,624	3,580	3,422	3,191	2,779
2019	2,661	2,301	2,276	2,357	2,495	2,665	2,614	2,633	2,605	3,112	2,264	1,901
2020	1,765	1,688	1,784	1,737	1,636	1,354	1,377	1,304	1,311	1,412	1,181	950
2021	823	701	673	752	747	898	1,062	1,072	1,016	958	778	639
2022	626	562										
2023												

Average 30-year mortgage rate trends

For some perspective on today's mortgage interest rates, here's how average 30-year rates have changed from year to year over the past four decades.

Year	Average 30 year rate	Year	Average 30 Year Rate	Year	Average 30 Year Rate
1974	9.19%	1990	10.13%	2006	6.41%
1975	9.05%	1991	9.25%	2007	6.34%
1976	8.87%	1992	8.39%	2008	6.03%
1977	8.85%	1993	7.31%	2009	5.04%
1978	9.6%	1994	8.38%	2010	4.69%
1979	11.20%	1995	7.93%	2011	4.45%
1980	13.74%	1996	7.81%	2012	3.66%
1981	16.63%	1997	7.60%	2013	3.98%
1982	16.04%	1998	6.94%	2014	4.17%
1983	13.24%	1999	7.44%	2015	3.85%
1984	13.88%	2000	8.05%	2016	3.65%
1985	12.43%	2001	6.97%	2017	3.99%
1986	10.19%	2002	6.54%	2018	4.54%
1987	10.21%	2003	5.83%	2019	3.84%
1988	10.34%	2004	5.84%	2020	3.10%
1989	10.32%	2005	5.87%	2021	2.96%

Source: Freddie Mac

This Is Why Our Market Is Red Hot!

Low Inventory and Low Interest Rates (historically)

ANNUAL APPRECIATION: ALBUQUERQUE, NM

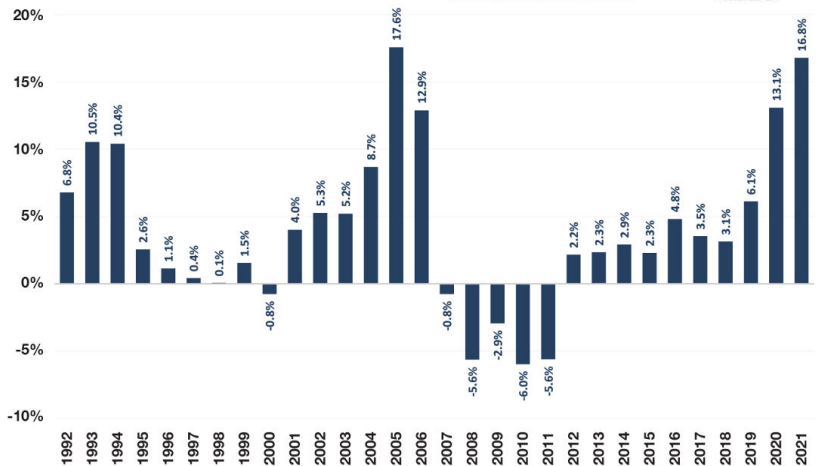
1992 - 2021 HOME PRICE INDEX
**APPRECIATION BASED ON PURCHASE ONLY DATA

AVERAGE ANNUAL APPRECIATION: 4.2%

RECENT QUARTER APPRECIATION

1Q21 2Q21 3Q21 4Q21

3.82 4.89 4.06 3.23



DATA REPORTED: 2/23/2022, SOURCE: WWW.FHFA.GOV

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PENDING



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Ranger Finds Poop Bag Every 466 Feet (or 2.5 Minutes of Hiking) on Colorado Trail + A Poop Bag Tip

By Spencer McKee, *OutThere Colorado*
(Reprinted with permission)

A Jefferson County* park ranger reports collecting 17 bags of dog poop along a 1.5-mile stretch of trail, presumably at Elk Meadow Park in Evergreen, Colorado. That's roughly one poop bag per every 466 feet of trail. Or, in terms of time, that's one poop bag for every 2.5 minutes of hiking at a 30-minute-mile pace.

The ranger, Jason, also pointed out how people will hide the bags over bringing them along to dispose of properly.

Unfortunately, poop bags are a common sight along many popular trails around the state, and there's one big reason why—no one likes hiking while surrounded by the scent of their dog's poop. But that doesn't mean it's cool to leave the poop behind on the trail, either. (Read more about how this can damage the landscape [here.](#))

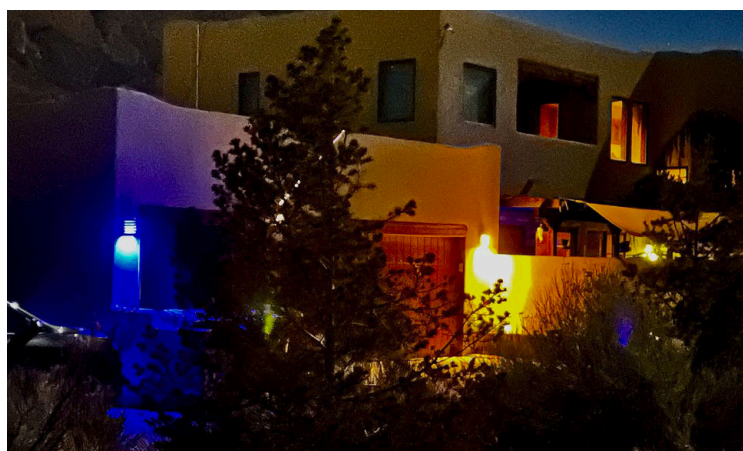
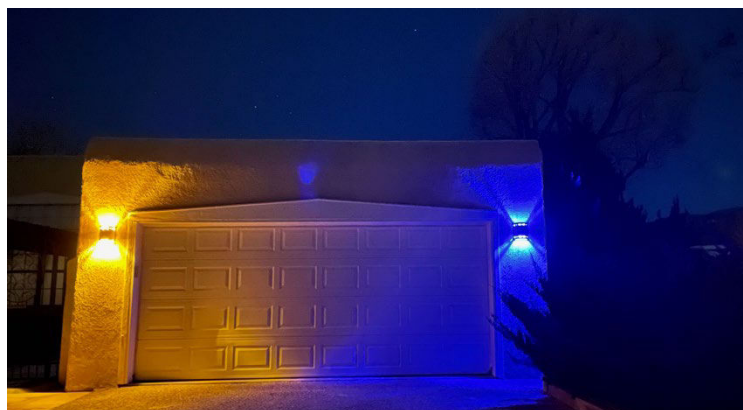
One great trick for hikers with dogs is to bring a second, larger bag with a better seal along for the trek. This way, once a poop bag is collected, it can be tucked away without the smells. Toss a dryer sheet in there, too—eventually, you'll probably have to open that bag again. One bag that can work great is a gallon-size Ziploc bag with the slider.



* Jefferson County is a suburban part of Denver in the foothills of the Front Range. Does this kind of locale sound sort of familiar?

Gestures of Support for Ukraine

Some of our neighbors have been showing their support of Ukraine in their war with Russia. There are Ukrainian flags flying here and there. Another visible symbol is blue and yellow porch lights. Here are some spotted in Sandia Heights.



ACC Activity Log

Summary of **Approved Projects** activity since the last GRIT:

50 Rock Ridge Drive – Reroof
141 Big Horn Ridge Court – Replace Decking
239 Spring Creek Court – Re-stucco
328 Paintbrush Drive – Reroof
518 Black Bear Loop – Re-Stucco
551 Black Bear Road – Coyote Fence Enclosure and Basketball Backboard/Post Installation
612 Cougar Loop – Repair and Resurface Driveway
726-10 Tramway Vista Place – Roof Mounted Photovoltaic Panels Installation
1016 Red Oaks Loop – Reroof
1019 Tramway Lane – Roof Mounted Photovoltaic Panels Installation
1045 Red Oaks Loop – Reroof
1114 San Rafael Avenue – Replace Furnace and AC Unit
1155 Laurel Loop – Garage Addition with Sun-Shaded Deck Structure
1221 Rockrose Road – Addition of Circular Driveway and Carport
1554 Eagle Ridge Lane – Refinish all Exterior Trim, Refinish Driveway, and Repair and Re-stucco Exterior Walls
1801 Tramway Terrace Loop – Replace Windows/Doors and Add a Window
1846 Tramway Terrace Loop – Repair/Re-stucco and Construct New Wall with Gate
2034 Quail Run Drive – Repaint Exterior Wood and Repaint Trim on Garage Door
2440 Tramway Terrace Court – Raise Height of Wall
7712 Cedar Canyon Place – Reroof Tar & Gravel
7732 Cedar Canyon Road – Replace Concrete Courtyard Slab and Entry Sidewalk
7732 Cedar Canyon Road – Re-stucco Home and Courtyard Walls
7739 Cedar Canyon Road – Roof Mounted Photovoltaic Panels Installation
9100 Lynx Loop – New Stuccoed Block Wall and Courtyard

12700 Carmel Court – Install Gutters
12701 Colony Place – Replace Windows
12704 Carmel Court – Paint House, Courtyard Wall, Block Wall, and Garage Door
12704 Colony Place – Re-stucco
12705 Carmel Court – Reroof

Visit the website: www.sandiahomeowners.org to read about all projects currently under ACC management.

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Membership Appreciation Day

Hosted by your Community Service
& Membership Committee

Sunday, June 5th, 1:00–4:00 PM, at the Sandia Heights Village shopping center (formerly Quail Run)
12700 San Rafael Ave NE

Bring the family. Meet up with old and new neighbors at this SHHA-sponsored event featuring area businesses, food, drink, music, fun, and your Association board members.



Now is the Time to Sell your Sandia Heights Home!

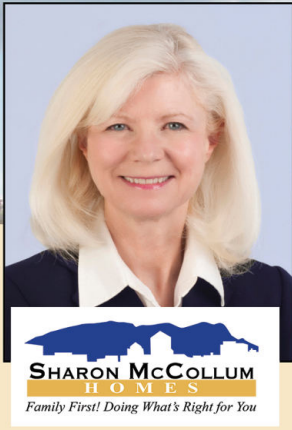
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smminabq@aol.com | (505) 822-0080



Sandia Heights MARKET UPDATE PAST YEAR 5/2021 to 5/2022

1 Larger home For Sale on Larger Lots | Avg Asking price \$845,000 Avg Asking price/sf \$295.97
 7 homes Pending | Avg Asking Price \$767,429 | Avg Asking price/sf \$268.39
 53 Homes Closed past year to date | Avg Sold Price \$834,904 | Avg Sold price/sf. 227.48
 1 Smaller homes on smaller lots | Avg Asking price \$447,000 Avg Asking price/sf 222.08
 3 homes pending | Avg Asking Price \$433,000 | Avg Asking price/sf \$215.05
 39 Homes Closed past year to date | Avg Sold Price \$393,914 Avg Sold price/sf 223.62
 Note Every Home Is Unique . Price is always based on condition, updates, location and views.
 Current Interest rates hovering around 5.25% for 30 year conventional & 5.1% 30 year VA!



SOLD!

San Rafael Pl NE



SOLD!

Bobcat Blvd NE



SOLD!

Indigo Court NE



SOLD!

Rock Ridge Court NE

930 TRAMWAY LANE NE ASKING PRICE \$600,000 SOLD!

LOCATION | GREAT VALUE | ACREAGE | VIEWS | CUSTOM HOME! NATURE!



SOLD!

Quality Home!



Pending!

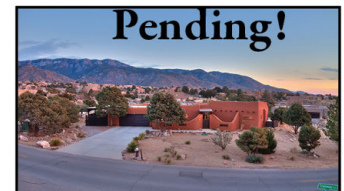
Unique Home!



Understated Elegance!



Quality Features!



Pending!

Great Views! & Space!

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Sandia Heights Year to Date Market Stats	Closed Sales 17 -48% from 2021	Average Sale Price \$756,033 + 40% from 2021	Total New Listings 27 -30% from 2021	Avg Price per sq.ft. \$255.45
	<i>Year to date comparison 1/1/2022 - 4/6/2022 to same time in 2021</i> <small>single family homes</small>			

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Sandia Heights Resident

43 Cedar Hill Place NE \$1,395,000	59 ROCK POINT Place NE \$1,160,000
9114 Lynx LP NE \$850,000	532 Roadrunner Lane NE \$830,500
1570 Eagle Ridge Court NE \$785,000	24 Sandia Heights Drive NE \$760,000
1567 EAGLE RIDGE Court \$651,000	2724 Tramway Circle NE \$399,000



Advanced Treatment Septic Systems & Other Issues Related to Replacing a Septic System in Sandia Heights

By Stan Davis, CSC member

The April 2022 *GRIT* included an article on “Proper Septic System” care; this article was originally published in *The GRIT* in 1992, and the content is still relevant today. However, Bernalillo County (BernCo) Natural Resources Services introduced a new ordinance in 2014 that requires new septic systems be the Advanced Treatment type under certain circumstances. This current article is not intended to be a comprehensive tutorial on Advanced Treatment units; rather, its purpose is to raise Sandia Heights homeowner awareness about this and other relevant issues. It is based on my casual research and personal experience with BernCo and different local septic companies during a recent project to replace an entire septic system. More information on septic systems from the county perspective can be found on the BernCo Public Works website:

bernco.gov/public-works/public-works-services/water-wastewater-stormwater/wastewater-septic-systems/.

Note that the local septic companies are highly knowledgeable about the products they offer, and abundant information about septic systems, including the advanced ones, can be found online.

In the past couple of years, on a walk or drive around Sandia Heights, one sees numerous yards being disturbed to replace old septic systems. Many of the systems in Sandia Heights are 30–40 years old; it appears these older systems are approaching the end of their life and are beginning to fail. It is unfortunate that the “natural” desert landscape has to be marred in order to replace septic tanks and leach fields, but this is a necessity when there is no sewer system, and one over which the SHHA has no jurisdiction. According to the EPA, about one-fifth of all households in the U.S. have septic systems—we are not alone!

BernCo requires that a failed septic system be replaced by an Advanced Treatment System when the property’s area is less than 0.75 acres. The BernCo website classifies these types of systems as “Secondary Systems (Class 2)”. Unlike conventional systems, Advanced Treatment Systems require the active addition of oxygen (air) to the wastewater to promote the growth of aerobic bacteria and more efficient breakdown of the suspended solids in the wastewater. Note that for septic systems subjected to a large flow volume, for example in large households, an Advanced

Treatment System may still be required by BernCo even if the lot is over 0.75 acres.

Different septic companies deal with different septic system manufacturers; no single company offers all the different septic system brands and techniques available. One type of Advanced Treatment System uses a paddle-agitator to introduce air into the sewage/effluent in the multi-chamber tank. Another approach uses an air-pump compressor to vigorously blow air into the tank. Note that with an Advanced Treatment System, the homeowner should not use any of the bacterial treatment powder packs that are used with traditional systems because the bacteria in the Advanced Treatment Systems come naturally from the environment.

Some practical considerations regarding the “lay of the land” need to be recognized when replacing a failed septic system with an advanced one. For Advanced Treatment Systems, the top of the tank, and the top of any lift stations/tanks that may also be required, can be no deeper than four feet below the ground surface, as per BernCo. This has implications if there is significant topography in the area of the property where the tank is to be placed. To honor this requirement, if the elevation of the top of the new tank is higher than the elevation of the sewer main coming out of the house, then a lift station tank may be required to store the raw sewage, and then a pump will lift the sewage up to the septic tank itself. This pumping requires electricity, and this may not be desirable with the prospect of rolling power blackouts on the horizon. Note that septic systems cannot be placed where the slope is greater than 15° (again, per BernCo). An additional constraint is proximity to any drainage easement: you cannot place a tank—regardless of whether it is conventional or Advanced—within 25 feet of a drainage easement. It is unclear whether this distance is measured from the center of the easement. Regardless, there are many drainages running through our neighborhood, and 25 feet cuts a considerable swath whether it’s measured from the center or edge. There is more flexibility regarding proximity to easements for placement of piping and the drain field. There are various techniques for designing the drain field, and the “footprint” of these varies. The result may be that the current location of a failing septic tank may not be practical for a new Advanced Treatment System to replace it.

One way to save space regardless of the septic system type is to use a seepage pit in lieu of a conventional leach field. Seepage pits are tall cylindrical chambers—

... continued from previous page

up to 12 feet tall. I know of at least one recent Sandia Heights success where two seepage pits were installed as part of a septic replacement project. However, the presence of huge boulders in the ground may prohibit using these chambers on some properties, especially those that are closer to the mountains.

Another geographical constraint is simple access. I know one resident whose neighbor has virtually no access to the septic tank in his back yard. That resident would be willing to permit his neighbor access through his yard, but other neighbors may not be so accommodating. Concrete tanks are heavier than the polyethylene ones, and require larger trucks/machinery to lift and manipulate them, so locations far from roads and driveways may require polyethylene tanks. Vegetation may have grown significantly since original tanks were put in—trees may have to be pruned or cut down to allow replacement.

Advanced Treatment Systems have a couple other requirements worth mentioning. Discharge from household water softeners, regardless of whether they are sodium- or potassium-based, is not allowed to go into the septic tank. Rather, the discharge needs to be re-routed to something like a French drain somewhere else in the yard, which is something the septic company can do. And, of course, an electrical line and switch box will have to be provided somewhere near the air compressor/blower or agitator.

In my recent septic replacement project, I faced many of these issues and also desired to have an entirely gravity-based system. Representatives from four local septic companies examined my situation, and proposed four different types of solutions! One company's preferred approach was a system involving mechanical pumps, so that there would be a lift station (euphemism for sewage tank) right under the back patio with a pump to pump sewage uphill from the house to the septic tank, after which there may be need for additional pumping. This proposal also relied on the use of seepage pits. In hindsight, I suspect that big boulders would have been encountered. Another proposal required lots of trees to be cut down ahead of time, including a large, spreading, very old juniper. A third proposal spread the footprint of the tank and drain field over much of my property, also required cutting many trees for access, and could not guarantee pumps would not be required. Only one company was confident that a pump-free, gravity-based system could be installed. Although this company also proposed trying to use seepage pits, when they reached

solid rock at about 6–7 feet, they were nimble enough to quickly find an alternative solution using a series of sub-horizontal, semi-cylindrical seepage chambers—something I've seen in other recent replacement projects in our neighborhood where space is tight. This company also had a deft backhoe operator, who was able to navigate between and around trees so that not a single tree was entirely removed.

In summary, replacing a failing septic tank may not be a simple “plug and play” if you need an Advanced Treatment System. Beyond logistics, the expense—not discussed here—is generally greater for Advanced Systems than for conventional ones. A couple of words of advice if you still have your original system: (1) follow the recommendations in the 1992 GRIT article to extend its life and (2) have a plan of action ready for when your original system begins to fail.



This picture shows one of two Infiltrator brand seepage chambers being installed that will be used to drain effluent exiting the septic tank once the piping is hooked up. This chamber was used because too much rock was encountered at depth, preventing use of seepage pits, and because there was not enough space to accommodate a conventional leach field. I've seen this approach being implemented at other recent septic replacement projects in the neighborhood. The backhoe used in the project can be seen in the background. The black object and white pipe on top of the chamber just happened to have fallen into the trench before this picture was taken, and are not representative of the completed chamber and trench design.

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Road NE**
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2 Car Garage



**11108 Bobcat
Place NE**
List Price \$675,000

2488 Square Feet
4 Bedrooms
3 Baths
3 Car Garage



**133 Juniper Hill
Road NE**
List Price \$750,000

3468 Square Feet
4 Bedrooms
3.5 Baths
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**1014 Tramway
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Stage Your Home to Sell

Staging your home is a powerful way to sell it faster and at a higher price.¹ Here are some easy, affordable ways you can ensure your property is ready for the spotlight.

Clean Thoroughly

A clean home is a sign that you've taken good care of your property so ensure yours is spotless. Give everything a deep clean from floor to ceiling, keeping in mind that homebuyers will look in closets, cabinets and under sinks.

Declutter

Not only is clutter an eyesore, but it also makes your home appear smaller. Now's the time to get rid of things you no longer need or consider getting a temporary storage unit. Give extra attention to closets, cabinets and pantries to give the impression of ample storage.

Set the Stage

Buyers want to envision themselves living in your home. Remove items like family photos, framed diplomas, keepsakes, kid's artwork or toys. If you have pets, remove their toys, beds and feeding dishes.

Lighten Up

Great lighting can make your home feel more inviting. Let in as much natural light as possible by opening all curtains and blinds. Turn on all the lights in every room, including closets - this saves buyers from having to hunt for light switches - and upgrade to higher wattage bulbs.

Staged Homes Sell Faster and for More²

82%
of buyers' agents

said a staged home made it easier for a buyer to visualize the property as a future home.

47%
of buyers' agents

stated that home staging influenced most buyers' view of the home.

23%
of buyers' and sellers' agents

agreed that home staging raised the price offered between 1% and 5%.

Staging the living room was found to be the most important for buyers (46%), followed by the master bedroom (43%) and the kitchen (35%).

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Summer Is Coming—and So Are RVs

By the Covenant Support Committee (CSC)

Summer will soon be here but, unfortunately, also returning are boats and RVs. When you bought or rented in Sandia Heights, you agreed to follow your unit covenants with restrictions on parking your recreational vehicles. SHHA does not look for violations, but does investigate complaints submitted by your neighbors whose names are not divulged. After investigation, if there is a violation, you will receive a letter from SHHA asking you to correct the problem. There are consequences for failure to remove the RV.

In some instances, a homeowner has built a separate garage which is large enough to park the RV. The RV is completely enclosed and not visible from the street. This is perfectly satisfactory. The objective of our covenants is to maintain the natural beauty and environment of our community and, thereby, maintain our property values. No one wants Sandia Heights to look like a trailer park.

Below is a list of local facilities that store RVs, motorhomes, boats, campers, and trailers:

Paseo Covered RV Storage

7950 Jacs Lane NE
505-310-8290

Blue Sky RV & Boat Storage

7800 Jacs Lane NE
505-697-2458

Malcolm Properties RV Storage

2525 Aztec Rd. NE
505-884-1025

A Class RV Storage

900 Osuna NE
505-453-9778

RV USA Storage

11117 Skyline Dr. NE
505-604-9182

Premier Mega RV Storage

5134 2nd St. NW
505-400-7260

Albuquerque Boat & RV Storage

155 El Pueblo Rd. NW
505-792-1500

Xtreme Storage

100 Trumbell Ave, SE
505-888-2430

If you are a veteran, check with the Morale Welfare & Recreation office. Kirtland has bare-bones RV storage at a significant discount. There may be a wait list.



48 hours before and after your trip, otherwise ⓧ

Red Flag Warning

The NWS issues a Red Flag Warning, in conjunction with land management agencies, to alert people to an ongoing or expected **critical fire weather** pattern.

Critical fire weather conditions are either **occurring now, or will shortly**. Be extremely careful with open flames.

Take action.

Fire Weather Watch

A Fire Weather Watch alerts land managers and the public that upcoming weather conditions could result in extensive wildland fire occurrence or extreme fire behavior.

A watch means critical fire weather **conditions are possible** but not imminent or occurring.

Be prepared.

[weather.gov/fire](https://www.weather.gov/fire)



Community Events Bulletin Board

This group is not sponsored by SHHA. Information is provided to keep residents informed.

Sandia Heights “Cork & Fork” Dining Activity: We are happy to announce that Cork & Fork has resumed our bimonthly dinners. We gather in the homes of our members. Each small dinner group is typically 6–8 people, including the hosts. The host decides the menu theme and prepares a main dish, with attendees contributing to some part of the meal—along with a wine to go with their dish. The emphasis is on food and fun rather than formal elegance. Though most of the dinners are smaller, there are 2 whole-group dinners during the year. All adult Sandia Heights residents are welcome. To inquire or join any time of year, call Rene Kessel at (505) 504-3886 or email at rene.kessel@cblegacy.com.

SAVE THE DATES!! Saturday-Sunday September 17-18, 2022

Thirty-six Sandia Heights artists and guest artists will exhibit their skills and artistic accomplishments in a face-to-face Sandia Heights Art Tour. Approximately twelve venues will be open. Jewelry, paintings, wood working, gourds, silk painting, ceramics, clay, textiles, and sculpture are many of the mediums that will be on display. We artists love to share and talk about our work so SAVE THE DATES!

Notice: Any corrections to the printed version of the GRIT can be found on the website: www.sandiahomeowners.org. We always welcome Letters to the Editor and your response to articles in *The GRIT*. Email us at thegritshha@gmail.com.

A Fond Farewell

Long time US Postal carrier Lisa Hendrix retired in March. She delivered mail in Sandia Heights for 28 years. Lisa plans on camping/traveling, some pet sitting here and there, and hiking with her golden retrievers. We wish her all the best.





Sandia Heights Homeowners Association
12700 San Rafael Ave. NE Ste. 3
Albuquerque, NM 87122



**The SHHA Office will be closed
Monday, May 30, 2022, in
observance of Memorial Day.**