

LA JOLLA LIGHT

Commentary: Why should La Jolla Village residents get MAD?

Attend one of Enhance La Jolla's community outreach meetings 10:30 a.m. or 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, June 22 at La Jolla Rec Center, 615 Prospect St.

By Phyllis Pfeiffer, president of La Jolla Light and chair of La Jolla Community Foundation
1:26 p.m. May 25, 2016



The Bird Rock Maintenance Assessment District (MAD) has produced funds for the safety and beautification of La Jolla Boulevard, the community's main throughfare. Improvements include traffic roundabouts, median landscaping, street lamps, irrigation, maintenance and repair. — Susan DeMaggio

OPINION / COMMENTARY:

We get it. You're sick of paying taxes. So are we. Where do the big bucks we send every year to Washington, Sacramento and San Diego go? What do we get for our money?

To address the lack of city services that have detrimentally impacted our Village, the La Jolla Community Foundation has underwritten the legal fees, engineer's report and communication outreach to establish a Maintenance Assessment District (MAD) for the purpose of garnering funds for Village beautification. To implement and oversee the MAD once it's established, an Enhance La Jolla board

was also formed. Some 62 communities within the City of Diego already have MADs for community improvements — the best local example is Bird Rock.

To quote Darcy Ashley, a well-known Bird Rock resident, "The best \$90 I send to the government every year is for the Bird Rock MAD. Every time I go in and out of my neighborhood I see my dollars at work on La Jolla Boulevard."

Joe LaCava, another well-known Bird Rocker recently wrote, "With 10 years of operation under its belt, I've seen firsthand how a MAD can transform a community. The real measure of success of the Bird Rock MAD is that residents and merchants came together for the common good of our neighborhood."

Bird Rock, once the sad, southern sister neighborhood of La Jolla, is now the best-maintained and unified neighborhood in our community. Ninety-three percent of the land parcels in the Bird Rock MAD are residential, and pay 70 percent of the MAD assessments, even though almost all of the improvements are in the commercial district along La Jolla Boulevard.

This is, in part, why the authors of the proposed La Jolla Village MAD included residential streets in its boundaries, along with the commercial strips. Bird Rock residents took pride and action to fix up their neighborhood and we thought Village residents would want to do the same. Unlike Bird Rock, where the residents pay the lion's share of the assessments, only 13 percent of the Village MAD fees will come from residential property owners.

The Village is your backyard and your front yard. Not tied to a big house and garden, you live a cool, urban-type lifestyle, without the tall buildings. You can walk to cafes, parks and restaurants. With the opening of The LOT, you can even walk to the movies!

Enhance La Jolla took into consideration the Park Row residents whose streets and yards are too often receptacles for trash from Village employees and visitors who park all day in front of their homes. We thought a MAD could help. These same employees and visitors come to our museums and churches and park on other Village streets, which also affects homes on Prospect, Coast Boulevard, Eads and Draper, among others.

A Village that looks shoddy, unkempt and dirty will certainly impact the property values of homes and condos in the Village. Even if you or your HOA take great care of your property and keep your sidewalks clean, your home or building is not an island. If the rest of your neighborhood looks bad, it will impact the value of your residence.

If you're asking what will Village residents get for \$86.87 a year (the proposed MAD assessment), which boils down to \$1.67 a week – or less than the cost of a tall cup of Starbucks coffee? The MAD will cover a well-maintained Village with power-washed streets, supplemental trash collection and groomed landscape areas. Your small investment will have a big multiplier effect on the Village.

A MAD is one of the only designated community groups that the city permits making improvements on city-owned property. Enhance La Jolla plans to work in partnership with the La Jolla Community Foundation to raise additional private donations for capital improvements in the Village, such as trees, benches, custom street signs, lighting, flowers, traffic calming solutions.

Take a walk around the Village this week. Are you happy with what you see? Without a MAD, what you see is what you will get, forever. And conditions will only deteriorate further with the passage of time.

We need to pull together as a community to enhance our community. Learn more about Enhance La Jolla from its website enhancelajolla.org and attend one of the community outreach meetings at 10:30 a.m. or 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 22 at the La Jolla Rec Center, 615 Prospect St.

Talk with the Enhance La Jolla steering committee and board members, whose names appear on the website. Get involved. Get MAD.