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EDUARDO CONTRERAS U-T PHOTOS

A yearslong conflict over parking spaces at the College-Rolando Library has become complicated with adjacent building plans.

'LIBRARY ON AN ISLAND'

Parking spaces the city built for the College-Rolando branch are in contention as a developer plans a five-story building next door with housing and a hotel



Restrictions in parking access have hindered users of the College-Rolando Library, just at a time when the library, a community resource and meeting spot, plans expanded hours.

BY EMILY ALVARENGA

Twenty-five parking spaces are at the center of a simmering conflict in the College Area that some residents worry could jeopardize a neighborhood resource amid a broader debate over housing density, infrastructure and equity.

The conflict goes back years. But for community groups, a developer's proposal to add more than 50 homes to a planned hotel next door to the College-Rolando Library has given it new urgency, threatening access to parking the library badly needs.

Land use in the area is already a hot-button topic. An ongoing community plan update intends to increase housing density, breaking into the predominantly single-family neighborhoods many opponents want to protect.

"What the community's concerned with is continuing to add substantial residential density

and doing nothing to provide services," said Julie Hamilton, a local land use attorney and College Area resident. "We're not getting any parks. We're not getting any libraries. We're not getting anything to accommodate all the residential density that's going into the College Area."

As one of the only public meeting spaces in the College Area and Rolando neighborhoods, the library often hosts community group meetings, including ones where residents debate plans for the future of the neighborhood. Between that role and plans to expand its hours under a new program, the library is poised to become a more valuable resource to a growing community.

"Our library offers more than books; it is our community hub," said Jan Hintzman, a longtime Rolando resident and president of the Friends of the College-Rolando Library.

SEE LIBRARY • A10

BIDEN'S JOURNEY TO KYIV SIGNALS RESOLVE

President travels under secrecy into war zone to meet with Zelenskyy

BY MARC SANTORA, PETER BAKER & MICHAEL D. SHEAR

KYIV, Ukraine

President Joe Biden made an unannounced trip to the capital of Ukraine on Monday, traveling under a cloak of secrecy into a war zone to demonstrate what he called America's "unwavering support" for the effort to beat back Russian forces nearly a year after they invaded the country.

Biden arrived early Monday to meet with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy after a 10-hour overnight train ride through Ukraine, and the two stepped out into the streets of Kyiv even as an air-raid siren sounded, a dramatic moment that underscored the investment the United States has made in Ukraine's independence.

"One year later, Kyiv stands," Biden declared at Zelenskyy's side in Mariinsky Palace, the gilded ceremonial home of the Ukrainian president. "And Ukraine stands. Democracy stands."

"Thank you so much for coming, Mr. President, at a huge moment for Ukraine," Zelenskyy said.

In Kyiv for just five hours, Biden promised to release another \$500 million in military aid in coming days, mentioning artillery ammunition, Javelin missiles and howitzers, but he did not talk about the advanced arms that Ukraine has sought. Zelenskyy told reporters that he and Biden had spoken about "long-range weapons and the weapons that may still be sup-

SEE UKRAINE • A6

COLD, WINDY, WET WEEK IN STORE FOR SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Damaging winds, rain, temps 10 to 25 degrees below average expected

BY GARY ROBBINS

Waves of moist, frigid air from Canada will begin arriving in San Diego County late today at the start of one of the coldest, wettest, windiest weeks of winter so far, with temperature and wind records likely to fall, the National Weather Service said.

At various times through Saturday, daytime highs at and near the coast could be 10 to 15 degrees below average and inland valleys and mountains could be 15 to 25 degrees below average, according to forecast models.

The weather service also said that 2 inches or more of rain could fall along the coast and 4 to 5 inches could drench the mountains, possibly triggering mud and rock slides. The models also indicate that 1 to 2 feet of snow could fall above the 5,000-foot level in the mountains.

"We don't know yet what the upper limit of the snow will be," said Liz Schenk, a weather service forecaster. "We could end up with multiple feet, and some of it could fall as low as the 2,000- to 2,500-foot level."

The first wave of the storm system will also be notable for potentially damaging winds.

Forecasters said that the wind will gust from 45 mph to 50 mph at the coast from Oceanside to Imperial Beach late tonight and early Wednesday, ripping fronds off eucalyptus trees and generating a perilous chop in local harbors and inlets. They added that it is pos-

SEE COLD • A9

HIGH COURT TO HEAR CASE THAT TAKES AIM AT LEGAL SHIELD OF TECH GIANTS

BY DAVID G. SAVAGE

WASHINGTON

Internet giants like Google, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter owe much of their success to a legal shield erected by Congress in 1996.

Known as Section 230, it has been called the rule that launched Big Tech. Though it drew little attention at the time, the law is now seen as a pillar of the wide-open global Internet we know today.

While newspapers and TV stations can be held liable for any false and malicious content they publish or broadcast, Internet platforms are treated differently under Section 230.

Congress passed the special free-speech rule to protect the new world of online communication. It said: "No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider."

Law professor and author Jeff Kosseff called Section 230 "the 26 words that created the Internet" because it allowed websites to develop freely as platforms for the words, photos and videos of others.

And it went unchallenged in the Supreme Court — until now.

This week, the justices will hear two cases that may finally pierce that legal shield and dramatically

SEE COURT • A5



HAYNE PALMOUR IV U-T FILE

Dr. Gwen Gleason-Rohrer examines a 4-month-old boy as she does a health screening on a young migrant family from Mexico at the JFS Migrant Family Shelter in January 2020.

STATE MAY PHASE OUT SOME FUNDING OF MEDICAL SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS

BY DON THOMPSON

All day and sometimes into the night, buses and vans pull up to three state-funded medical screening centers near California's southern border with Mexico. Federal immigration officers unload migrants predominantly from Brazil, Cuba, Colombia and Peru, most of whom await asylum hearings in the United States.

Once inside, coordinators say, migrants are given face masks to guard against the spread of infectious diseases, along with water and food. Medical providers test them for the coronavirus, offer them vaccines and isolate those who test positive for the virus. Asylum seekers are treated for injuries they may have suffered during their journey and checked for chronic health issues, such as diabetes or

high blood pressure.

But now, as the state confronts a projected \$22.5 billion deficit, Gov. Gavin Newsom said it can no longer afford to contribute to the centers, which also receive federal and local grants. The Democratic governor in January proposed phasing out state aid for some medical services in the next few months, and eventually scaling back the migrant assistance pro-

SEE MIGRANTS • A9

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U-T INDEX

Comics	C3	Editorial	B3	Local	B1	Sports	D1
Crossword	C5	Health	E1	Lottery	A4	Television	E4
Dear Abby	C5	Horoscope	C5	Scores	D4	Weather	A12



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COLD

FROM A1
sible that San Diego International Airport will be hit by a 55 mph gust early Wednesday, tying a record set at that site in January 1988.

Travelers using Interstate 8 could experience gusts upward of 50 mph at and near the border of San Diego and Imperial counties, and well into southern Arizona. Forecasters said the wind could hit 82 mph at Mount Laguna and 90 mph at other isolated peaks in East County.

The wind also will generate enormous surf, with sets in the 7-foot to 10-foot range, with occasional 14-footers Wednesday at some breaks, notably in the La Jolla area. A rare gale warning has been issued for near-shore ocean waters.

The coldest temperatures are likely to occur Wednesday, when the daytime high in San Diego is expected to be 55, which is 11 degrees below average. Escondido will only get to 51 and El Cajon will top out at 54. Palomar Mountain is expected to barely reach 30.

Similar temperatures are forecast for Thursday, with only minor warming for Friday and possibly Saturday.

The frigid air will add to what's already been a cold month. So far, the average February temperature for San Diego stands at 55.8 degrees. That's 3.2 degrees below average.

Rain and snow are expected during the first wave of the storm. Both will intensify late Thursday and last into Friday and possibly Saturday, forecasters said. Mudslides will be possible because the rain is being added to already saturated soil.

"By the weekend, we could surpass the amount of rain that San Diego gets in an entire rainy season," said Brandt Maxwell, a weather service forecaster.

The season lasts from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30. So far this season, the San Diego airport has recorded 8.37 inches of precipitation. The historic average for a full season is 9.79 inches. San Diego hasn't received above-average rain for three years.

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MIGRANTS

FROM A1
gram unless President Joe Biden and Congress step in with more help.

California began contributing money for medical services through its migrant assistance program during the deadliest phase of the coronavirus pandemic two years ago. The state helps support three health resource centers — two in San Diego County and one in Imperial County — that conduct COVID-19 testing and vaccinations and other health screenings, serving more than 300,000 migrants since April 2021. The migrant assistance program also provides food, lodging and travel to unite migrants with sponsors, family or friends in the U.S. while awaiting their immigration hearings, and the state has been covering the humanitarian effort with an appropriation of more than \$1 billion since 2019.

Though the White House declined to comment and no federal legislation has advanced, Newsom said he was optimistic that federal funding will come through, citing "some remarkably good conversations" with the Biden administration.

Already, one pot of federal money has been identified. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security issued a statement noting that local governments and nongovernmental providers will soon be able to tap into an additional \$800 million in federal funds through a shelter and services grant program. FEMA did not answer questions about how much the agency spends serving migrants.

"We're continuing our operations and again calling on all levels of government to make sure that there is an investment," said Kate Clark, senior director of immigration services for Jewish Family Service of San Diego, one of two main migrant shelter operators. The other is Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego.

While health workers and immigration advocates want the state to continue funding, Newsom appears to have bipartisan support within the state for scaling it back. He promised more de-



K.C. ALFRED U-T FILE

tails in his revised budget in May, before legislative budget negotiations begin in earnest. And, he noted, conditions have changed such that testing and vaccination services are less urgent.

County Supervisor Nathan Fletcher, a Democrat, agreed that the burden should be on the federal government, though local officials are contemplating additional assistance. And state Senate Republican leader Brian Jones, who represents part of the affected region, said that California is set to end its pandemic state of emergency on Feb. 28, months before the budget takes effect in July.

"The pandemic conditions no longer warrant this large investment from the state, especially since immigration is supposed to be a federal issue," Jones said in a statement.

California began its migrant assistance support soon after Newsom took office in 2019 and after the Trump administration ended the "safe release" program that helped transport migrants seeking asylum to be with their family members in the United States. It was part of California's broad pushback against Trump's immigration policies; state lawmakers also made California a so-called sanctuary state, an attempt to make it safe from immigration crackdowns.

California along with local governments and non-profit organizations stepped in to fill the void and take pressure off border areas by quickly moving migrants elsewhere in the United

States. The state's involvement ramped up in 2021 as the pandemic surged and the Biden administration tried to unwind the Trump administration's "Remain in Mexico" policy. While some cities in other parts of the country provided aid, state officials said no other state was providing California's level of support.

In a coordinated effort, migrants are dropped off at the centers by federal immigration officers, then are screened and cared for by state-contracted organizations that provide medical aid, travel assistance, food and temporary housing while they await their immigration hearings.

Both Catholic Charities and Jewish Family Service coordinate medical support with the University of California San Diego. The federal government covers most of the university's costs while the state pays for nurses and other medical

contractors to supplement health care, according to Catholic Charities.

It often takes one to three days before migrants can be put on buses or commercial flights, and in the meantime, they are housed in hotels and provided with food, clothing and other necessities as part of the state's program.

"Many of them come hungry, starving," said Vito Paganor, chief executive of Catholic Charities in San Diego, who described the screening and testing process at the centers. "Most of them don't have shoes. They get shoes."

Officials said about 46,000 people have been vaccinated against the coronavirus through the program. They said the figure is significantly lower than the number of migrants who have come through the centers because some were vaccinated before reaching the U.S. and younger migrants were initially in-

eligible, while others refused the shots.

According to the California Health and Human Services Agency, the state plans to phase out some medical support, but the sheltering operations are expected to continue "for the near term" with their future determined by the availability of federal funding. Of the more than \$1 billion spent by the state, \$828 million has been allocated through the Department of Public Health, according to the governor's office.

The agency said that while the state has not adopted specific plans to cut the sites' capacity, it will put a priority on helping families with young children and "medically fragile individuals" if the shelters are overwhelmed by arrivals.

Some immigration advocates said the state was making the wrong choice.

"Now's the time for the state of California to double down on supporting those individuals that are seeking relief from immigration detention," said Pedro Rios, who directs the U.S.-Mexico border program at the American Friends Service Committee, which advocates on behalf of migrants. "I think it sends an erroneous message that the issues are no longer of concern."

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