

Safety and Security Update: May 28, 2025

Dear Escena Residents:

As Board liaison to the Escena Safety and Security Committee I post a monthly update on its work. Here are the main items the Committee looked at since the last update. Feel free to jump to the item of most importance to you.

1. Vesta

During the past month, the Committee continued to monitor work at Vesta. The home builder, Richmond American Homes (RAH), was contacted on several occasions about a variety of safety related items, including the failure to adequately secure the front and back gates as had been promised.

Since then, the situation has improved. RAH hired an on-site security guard to work nights until the “back gate” that leads to Cathedral City is repaired. It also secured the front gates more consistently and installed multiple cameras on poles to monitor the southerly tract.

Committee members found the northerly tract (where the model home is located) has two metal gates that lead to the wash. In addition, the construction of the CV link, a pathway that runs by Escena on the east and now runs by Vesta is bringing additional people to that area. It is possible “No Trespass” signs will be needed on those outside walls. At this point, however, the Vesta property has not been annexed into the community and the HOA does not control the building site.

2. Virtual Gate Attendants/Other Access options

The Committee is exploring alternative access control options for Escena. Last month committee members toured an HOA that uses “virtual” gate attendants as described in last month’s update. This month the company (Safe Passage Solutions) was sent pages of follow-up questions to make sure the Committee understood how their services work.

The Committee believes at least one more access system should be considered before making a recommendation to the Board. The new system is called “cell-gate” and has been installed in several HOAs in the valley. The Committee has reached out to the supplier and is trying to arrange a site visit.

The Committee has made no decision at this time. It continues to evaluate options and research various alternatives. Everyone understands frustration with the current access system, but researching various alternatives is a time-consuming process.

3. No Trespassing Signs

During the past month a committee member met with the Infrastructure chair to evaluate alternative locations to the signs, since the Board rejected posting the signs on the entrance columns. A mock-up of the sign was created and photos were taken of potential placements. Thereafter, this information was forwarded to the Design Review Committee, who came up with an alternative proposal at the end of this month. The Safety and Security Committee will review all proposed locations and make a recommendation to the Board as it was requested to do so.

4. Code Access

As previously described, the Committee is looking at a lengthy spreadsheet provided by DRM about persons who have “codes” to enter through the antiquated DoorKing call box system. In Several issues have arisen regarding these call boxes:

a. Vendor Access:

The HOA controls only the Escena Way Gate. Other gates are owned by SunCal, the Declarant. The Declarant and home-builders have the right to enter our community under the CCRs. The HOA does not own three of the four call boxes and cannot unilaterally terminate vendor codes, as some have suggested. We will, however, continue to see if there are codes that were assigned to people no longer associated with the community. If so, those particular codes will be terminated. However, to date, the Committee has not received reports of vendors mis-using the codes.

b. Call Box functionality

Some residents informed us the call boxes are in poor working order, including screens that are difficult to read. However, it is not clear that new parts are available. When SunCal “fixed” the Artisan call box it had to use a refurbished part. Our Infrastructure committee has reached out to SunCal to see if a similar solution exists for the other boxes. If so, we may be able to fix the Escena Way callbox, but will have to ask SunCal to cooperate to fix and pay for the boxes.

c. Telephone access

Some residents informed us that when their code is entered at the call box, the call goes to voicemail. Other residents informed us they have not experienced problems.

When a call goes to a resident's voicemail it means the system has dialed the resident's number. However, if network functionality is poor, calls may go to voice mail. The Committee has no ability to affect the cellphone network.

In addition, sometimes calls go to voicemail because residents have enabled a "do not disturb" feature on their phone or have set up filters blocking calls that are not recognized. Residents experiencing these problems likely should review their own telephone settings to make sure this isn't a problem on their end. Even if not, the antiquated system and poor network connection reinforces my personal conviction that the system needs to be eliminated or replaced.

d. No Resident codes

Some residents want access codes to give to friends so they can enter Escena. These codes remain effective until DRM actively terminates the Code. This is not possible for 542 homes. Other residents say our community is too porous caused by an excess of access codes and "white cards" that can be handed to third parties. In light of these competing concerns, the Committee does not recommend DRM distribute access codes that live forever to residents.

Nevertheless, the Committee would love to have a system where "one-time" access codes can be given to residents, which would solve the problem of redistribution. The current system cannot generate such one-time codes. Such codes, as their name implies, automatically expire after one use. The Committee is looking at systems that give residents this option.

5. Damage to Outside Wall

SunCal repaired the damage to the outside wall owned by SunCal caused by an auto accident.

6. Asking for work to be performed from DRM

As mentioned last month, the only way to get DRM to take action on irrigation leaks, inoperable equipment and the like is to file a "request" in the TownSquare app. DRM does not monitor "Forum" discussions.

Sometimes, it is not HOA equipment that fails. Earlier this month I reported a water leak by the golf cart crossing near the 12th fairway. It turns out the leaky pipes lead to nearby restrooms. Our landscape company, Conserve, is not legally permitted to touch the pipes, only Desert Water Agency can do so. Fortunately, Conserve notified DWA for us and the leak was fixed. Thanks to Conserve for this.

7. Homebuilder Signs and Equipment

Committee members observed homebuilder signs that fell into the roadway causing a hazard. A committee member moved these heavy signs to the side. Homebuilders have been notified of this issue and been asked to correct this safety hazard.

Under our CCRs, homebuilders have the right to put their signs on Association property, including walls and streets owned by the Association, even in areas where we don't want them. They also have the right to park their construction equipment wherever they want on their own property, such as the water tanks that were temporarily near the Escena Way entrance, even if we think that placement is ugly.

8. Dog Issues

We are fortunate to have a community filled with responsible and caring dog owners. Thank you for your continued efforts in keeping our shared spaces enjoyable for everyone. That said, the committee received a few concerns this month that we would like to bring to your attention:

- a. Failure to clean up after pets;
- b. Dogs being walked on the golf course; and
- c. Aggressive behavior by dogs at the dog park.

We know all residents understand the importance of preventing these situations to ensure a safe and pleasant environment for all. Your cooperation in addressing these matters is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your attention and continued commitment to our community.

Conclusion

Thanks to all residents for their help and a big thanks to the volunteer members of the Safety and Security Committee for their work. They put in a lot of time on behalf of residents and are to be commended for their work on behalf of the community.

Note: The opinions expressed in this update are mine and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Committee or the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

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