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# Midtown Residents Association Neighborhood Newsletter

## SPRING 2012

Visit our web site at <http://www.midtownresidents.org/>

### MRA's 2011 Accomplishments by Sheri Furman

MRA's biggest accomplishments in 2011 were in the areas of Midtown parks and emergency preparedness.



**GREER PARK:** On December 11, 2011, MRA celebrated the dedication of the last undeveloped portion of Greer Park (1.5 acres), now named Scott Meadow, in memory of Jean and Charles Scott. They were tireless in their devotion to the park – from creation to completion.

In addition, the sculpture "Filaree" was installed at the Amarillo entrance to Greer Park and the "From Sea to Shining Sea" art on West Bayshore will soon be restored.

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS:** We now have 4 Neighborhood Preparedness Coordinators, over 60 Block Preparedness Coordinators and over 50 CERTS (for neighborhood and city wide deployment). Our vice-chair, Annette Glanckopf, has been spearheading this effort for years and the City Council again made emergency preparedness a Council priority this year.



**SEALE PARK:** The installation of bathrooms was celebrated in May with the "first flush" provided by Mayor Espinosa.

### MRA 2012 Priorities and Efforts

- Neighborhood Preparedness
  - Crime watch
  - Emergency/Disaster Preparedness
  - Block Coordinator program
- Neighborhood Parks
  - Get shade structures installed over tables in Scott Meadow (Greer Park)
  - Work to obtain public art in Hoover Park
- Traffic
  - Traffic slowing/enforcement
  - Bicycle paths/ Bicycle friendly streets / 101 bike/pedestrian overpass
  - Improving Middlefield / Colorado safety
- Planning for the Future – home environment, aging in place, green awareness

If you have suggestions for our efforts, contact Sheri Furman at [sheri11@earthlink.net](mailto:sheri11@earthlink.net) or attend our March 20 general meeting discussed in this newsletter.

## Help Midtown Win the Mayor's Challenge – Community-Wide Table Tennis Event

Sunday, March 25. We encourage you and your neighbors to participate in this event. Get to know not only your Midtown neighbors, but those in other parts of the city as well. *This event is open to City of Palo Alto residents only.*

### SCHEDULE

2:00 – 2:30 PM - Open Play

2:30 – 3:00 PM - Demo by Coach + Volunteer

3:00 – 3:45 PM - Open Play with opportunities for one-on-one coaching tips

3:45 – 5:00 PM - Open Play

### What is the Mayor's Challenge?

*By Mayor Yiaway Yeh*

Strong neighborhoods have been a long tradition in the City of Palo Alto. When a Palo Altan meets another Palo Altan, one of the first questions often is to find out which neighborhood they live in. It reflects a sense of community and identity within the City. It's also a tradition that benefits from renewal in Palo Alto. Today, over 65,000 people call Palo Alto home. Many have been here for decades with families that have lived here for generations. Some have just moved into the community from nearby. Some have recently emigrated from another country and are creating roots here in Palo Alto.

The Mayor's Challenge is an initiative designed to bring neighbor together with neighbor. As the community experiences changes as people move in or away, the Mayor's Challenge aims to bring people of different life experiences and backgrounds together through a series of athletic events. New relationships created by meeting neighbors through social, active ways benefit the strong tradition of engaged neighborhoods and maintains the sense of community that Palo Alto has long enjoyed.

The first community-wide athletic event is table tennis (ping pong) and is scheduled for Sunday, March 25 from 2 to 5pm. Five different community locations will host Palo Alto's residents and businesses for this event: Palo Alto Family YMCA (gym), Cubberley Community Center (Gym B and the Pavilion), Jordan Middle School (gym), Terman Middle School (gym), and the Campus for Jewish Life (gym).

The Palo Alto Family YMCA (<http://www.ymcasv.org/paloalto>), the Palo Alto Table Tennis Club (<http://www.tabletennisgold.com/paloalto.html>), Joola (<http://www.joolausa.com/>), and the Palo Alto Unified School District are the event's co-sponsors in bringing this fun, interactive event to life for Palo Alto.

Sign up today online ([www.ymcamayorschallenge.org](http://www.ymcamayorschallenge.org)) or at the YMCA Office (3412 Ross Road) and select your closest location to play. Register early to ensure you are able to play at your preferred location. Bring your family and friends - and of course your neighbors!

### **MRA General Meeting – March 20 -- 7-9PM --Friends Meeting Hall – 957 Colorado Our Youth: How We All Can Participate in the Developmental Assets Initiative**

Join us for a presentation and discussion of the Developmental Assets Initiative, part of Project Safety Net. From Council Member Nancy Shepherd's Guest Opinion in the Palo Alto Weekly:

"All adults can build assets in young people, whether you're a parent or not. Simple actions like spending time listening to kids. Paying attention to what's going on with young people around you — intervene if you see threats, bullying or unsafe behaviors. Adopt Project Safety Net's asset of the month as your own personal mission statement, 'Our youth are watching, your actions are their lessons,' was featured for January. Take it personally and see what happens. We can't do it without you!"

- Developmental assets are the positive values, relationships, and experiences that youth need to thrive.
- Search Institute identified 40 assets that correlate with youth resilience and behavior
  - o Santa Clara County identified a 41st asset: Positive Cultural Identity
  - o Youth with low asset levels are more likely to engage in risk behaviors and fail to achieve at school.
  - o Youth with high asset levels are more likely to choose healthy activities, succeed in school, and avoid risk behaviors.
- We want all our kids to get to at least adequate and most into thriving
- Asset building ranges from simple actions like greeting a child to a major commitment like mentoring!

We will also discuss MRA's efforts and goals for 2012 and take your questions.

## Office of Emergency Services 2012 Re-Structuring

*By Kenneth Dueker, CPA Director, OES and Annette Glanckopf, MRA Vice Chair*

### About the Re-org

In accordance with outside consultants' recommendations, the City Council and the City Manager of Palo Alto have reorganized the Office of Emergency Services (OES). The mission of the new OES is to prevent, prepare for and mitigate, respond to, and recover from all hazards. This means that we do not focus primarily on earthquakes (although that is still a big issue for us, locally) or other natural disasters, but instead consider the entire spectrum of risk, including technological, criminal, and even infrastructure failure or accidents, such as power outages.

The new Director of Emergency Services is an executive position, reporting to the City Manager, but coordinated with Public Safety and other City departments, and, per PAMC (Palo Alto Municipal Code) 2.12.050 (b), shall: "(4) Direct coordination and cooperation of services and staff of the emergency organization of the city, and resolve questions of authority and responsibility that may arise between them; and (5) Represent the city in all dealings with public or private agencies on matters pertaining to emergencies as defined herein." This includes, per PAMC 2.12.070, volunteers and other non-governmental entities, as shown through the recently-announced restructuring of Emergency Services Volunteers (ESVs). The presentation is available on <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/ccc>.

Officer Kenneth Dueker was appointed to the Director position. His extensive background in law enforcement, emergency management, and technology will be a benefit as the new OES works with the various stakeholders to build a resilient community.

### What does this mean to Midtown?

We currently have an active Emergency Services Volunteers Program. The 5 Midtown areas are covered by almost 60 Block Preparedness Coordinators (BPCs). In a disaster, those blocks with BPCs will be able to communicate critical damage (such as roads blocked, power lines down, fires, severe medical needs, people trapped etc) upwards to the City Emergency Operations Center (OES) to ask for resources. With the new structure, each area will have a neighborhood CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) that can be sent to assist the blocks of greatest need.

Make sure your block has a BPC to be connected to the City during a disaster. Currently MRA is forming neighborhood CERT teams and recruiting new BPCs. If you would like to volunteer to be an emergency services volunteer for your block, please contact Annette Glanckopf at [Annette\\_G@ATT.NET](mailto:Annette_G@ATT.NET). If you would like training, or more information, for either of these roles (BPC or CERT), please check the activity calendar at <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/ccc> or <http://paneighborhoods.org/ep>.

## 2011 Greer Park Planting

*By Annette Glanckopf, MRA, and Elliott Wright, former of Canopy*

In September 2011, Midtown Residents Association (MRA) was notified that 32 trees were to be removed from Greer Park. MRA Chair, Sheri Furman, and Vice Chair, Annette Glanckopf, requested a walk-through of the park with City Tree Section Project Manager Gino Segna to determine the need for the removal. Their findings: while many of the trees were dead, there were others that appeared healthy but required proper trimming.

After the walk-about, MRA formally protested the wholesale removal of 32 trees and asked for a public meeting on this issue. With its designation as a Tree City, removal of seemingly healthy trees in Palo Alto is a touchy issue for many of our residents. MRA asked staff to discuss why each tree was to be removed and present a plan for tree replacement.

A well attended and spirited public meeting was held in October. The meeting resulted in the removal of 30 trees and the planting of 54 trees of 15-gallon size. The new trees would increase the overall tree canopy at Greer Park by 15% over the existing tree canopy. The species selected were chosen for rapid growth, and most of the species will begin to provide significant tree canopy in 8 - 10 years, with some species (notably Ash) providing canopy within 2-3 years. The trees selected as replacements are varieties that are already thriving in Greer Park, and thus expected to thrive in that microclimate, and with the irrigation with reclaimed water.

In December 2011 more than 45 Midtown Residents, Palo Alto Rotarians and community volunteers joined Canopy and the City of Palo Alto to plant 54 new trees at Greer Park! Canopy Program Director and Arborist Michael Hawkins led the community through a tree planting demonstration, and Estefani Morales organized the planting event.

Photos of the tree planting can be found at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/canopy/sets/72157628292863113/>

## Traffic in Midtown: What's Ahead

By Sheri Furman

Traffic changes are finally coming to Midtown!

### Dynamic Speed Signs

These permanent signs, similar to the ones on Charleston, will be installed at four locations (2 northbound and 2 southbound) along Middlefield Road in Midtown.

The northbound signs will be: 1) Near Moreno and the Walgreen's entrance and 2) Near Towle

The southbound signs will be: 1) Somewhere between Moreno and the CVS entrance and 2) Near Wellsbury

Installation will be in a few months.

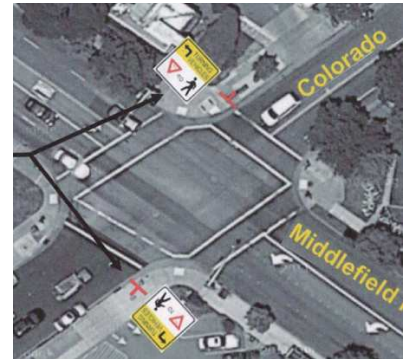
### Pedestrian Warning Signs at Middlefield and Colorado

These signs will warn drivers to look out for pedestrians crossing Middlefield and should be installed within a couple of months.

### Loma Verde and Safe Routes to School

Although a traffic study done on Loma Verde showed it did not qualify for speed bumps, it is being considered as a part of the El Carmelo Safe Routes to School program for next year.

A policy is also being developed regarding speeds near schools, wherein the speed limit along Loma Verde from Waverly to Alma would be 20 mph during school commute times.



### Oregon Expressway

Construction is expected to start in the fall. Plans will be presented to the City Council on April 9.

### \*\*\*\*\* COMMUNITY MEETING: MAGICAL BRIDGE PLAYGROUND DESIGN REVIEW \*\*\*\*\*

Saturday, March 17, 11AM – 1PM, Cubberley Community Center, Room M-2, 4000 Middlefield Road  
Come review the proposed designs for the universally-accessible playground at Mitchell Park.

## Palo Alto Responds to Housing Allocations

By Karen Holman, Palo Alto City Council Member

You may recognize the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) as the entity that is saying we should anticipate as many as 25,000 new jobs and 12,500 new housing units by 2040. The basis for the "assignment" of 12,500 housing units to Palo Alto is our jobs-housing imbalance and a reduction of green house gas (GHG) production if we but house our workers here within our borders. Of course, there is no constraint on where people who work here choose to live for a variety of reasons: housing costs, type of housing units available, where a spouse works, etc. Nor is there a determinant on where those who live here decide to work.

Additionally, a recent Regional Land Use and Transportation SCS report stated "Achieving Statewide GHG Reduction Targets produced for the Contra Costa Transportation Authority indicates that GHG reduction goals are not significantly met with the housing units being assigned to Bay Area communities."

- Palo Alto's most recent response to ABAG can be found as Item 13 on the March 5, 2012 City Council agenda. Among the issues the letter raises are:
- the regional jobs forecasts are likely unrealistic and overstated
- Palo Alto has long been a national leader in effectively reducing green house gases through policies and programs more effective than what is being proposed thru ABAG's housing scenarios
- the allocation of jobs and housing to Palo Alto does not recognize the various constraints of our Comprehensive Plan, market feasibility, and fiscal costs to the community to meet the allocations
- the effort and investments required to meet the housing allocations should be redirected to more cost-effective and less disruptive GHG reduction measures

The community's involvement and support in addressing housing assignments are heard and appreciated. This is your community, and your opinions matter. Stay involved.

## Eat, Play, Live – Local: Support your Neighborhood through MRA

By Jill Matzke, Membership Chair (contact: [jillmatzke@yahoo.com](mailto:jillmatzke@yahoo.com))

We all enjoy the great quality of life in Midtown. MRA is dedicated to making sure we maintain that quality and we would like to invite you to join us in that effort. With only a few hours of time each month or a even just a few hours once in a while, you could make a positive difference in our neighborhood. We are especially interested in volunteers to help in the following areas:

Topic	Where we need help	Time Involved
Traffic Chair	Represent Midtown concerns regarding traffic issues. Contact our local government officials and staff in order to solve problems and provide input when new projects are proposed. Attend meetings, send letters.	Monthly, or occasionally for specific issues
Business Liaison	Coordinate with our local businesses to mutual benefit. Visit business owners, ask how we can help them, ask them to publicize and support our events. Attend meetings to keep up with their concerns.	Occasionally, especially when we or they have events planned.
Events & Programs	Help organize, promote and manage Midtown events, such as our Annual Ice Cream Social and general meetings.	Varies
Membership	Promote MRA events, including distribution of flyers and signs. Help organize our member database and encourage more of our neighbors to support us through annual dues.	From a one-time commitment up to a few hours per month
Trees	Notify city staff when a tree in your neighborhood is threatened by construction or other damage. Identify places where trees should be planted, and request plantings from Canopy and city staff	Occasionally
Neighborhood improvement	Photograph or note things you like in other places, or don't like in Midtown (signs, trees, art, sidewalks, street configurations, etc.) and send them to city staff, requesting improvements for Midtown.	Occasionally

### I'D LIKE TO HELP SUPPORT MRA

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Add me to enews (email required)  Yes

Areas I'd like to become involved in:

- Traffic  
  Schools  
  Events  
  Membership  
  Parks  
  Public Art  
 Working with Midtown Merchants  
  Newsletter  
  Zoning/Developments

==== Send your \$15 membership payment to Sylvia Gartner, 824 Moreno, Palo Alto 94303 ====



## Upcoming Events and Meetings

- **March 20: General Meeting**  
Developmental Assets Initiative – How We Can All Help Youth Thrive  
Friends Meeting Hall — 957 Colorado — 7:00 – 9:00pm
- **March 25: Mayor’s Challenge – Community-Wide Table Tennis Event**  
See inside for details.
- **May or June: Going Green Without Going Broke & Looking Ahead to Aging in Place**  
Details to be announced in enews and on website
- **15th Annual MRA Ice Cream Social – September 16**  
Hoover Park — 2901 Cowper — 1:00-4:00 PM — Meet the City Council Candidates

Please let us know ( [MidtownNews@att.net](mailto:MidtownNews@att.net) )  
if you would like to receive our periodic electronic enews  
and/or if you have a new email.

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**Your financial support enables us to pay for the modest expenses of MRA: postage, events, etc.**

Please note the date on your label on this newsletter is the date you last paid or sent a check.

To join or renew online: go to our web site [www.MidtownResidents.org](http://www.MidtownResidents.org) and click the left icon “Become a Member”.  
If by check (\$15): make your check out to MRA, and send to our treasurer Sylvia Gartner, at 824 Moreno, Palo Alto,