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Midtown Residents Association Neighborhood Newsletter

SPRING 2016

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Phase 2 of Caltrans' San Francisquito Creek Bridge Replacement Project Begins

One-Way Traffic Control on East Bayshore Road Begins April 6

Traffic Shift for Southbound Lanes Begins Friday Night, April 8

Caltrans started Phase 2 of the US 101 San Francisquito Creek Bridge Replacement Project on March 2, 2016, with some public outreach to residents and businesses and placement of some changeable message signs on US 101 and adjacent streets announcing upcoming traffic circulation changes associated with the construction work.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will implement signalized one-way traffic control on East Bayshore Road in the City of East Palo Alto, between Pulgas Avenue and Laura Lane beginning **April 6, 2016**, and will remain in place until December 2016.

- This long term lane closure will allow crews to work on the replacement of the East Bayshore Road Bridge. In addition, various lane and ramp closures will be necessary on Route 101 during night hours.
- One-way traffic control will be implemented 24 hours a day.
- This traffic configuration will be in effect for the duration of approximately 8 months. Motorists should expect significant delays during this construction period.
- **NOTE: Due to environmental constraints, this closure will occur again in the summer of 2017.**

In addition, Caltrans is planning to switch southbound U.S. Route 101 lanes to a new alignment on Friday night, April 8, beginning at 10 p.m. Motorists should be aware that by Saturday, April 9, at 6 a.m., lanes will be shifted toward the right shoulder to make room for the next stage of construction.

The northbound half of the existing East Bayshore Road/San Francisquito Creek bridge will be demolished and reconstructed with heavy construction equipment. During this phase of work, the center lanes of the US 101 bridge will also be reconstructed. Construction crews will typically work between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Local residents and businesses may experience increased noise levels, and there will likely be significant traffic delays on Highway 101 as well as East Bayshore Road.

The City of Palo Alto staff is working to ensure that the proper signage is installed and that adjacent traffic signals are monitored in order to reduce the impacts of the partial closure. We do expect that there will be substantial impacts to the intersection of Embarcadero Road and East Bayshore Road.

For more information about this project, visit:

www.cityofpaloalto.org/us101

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/projects/sanfrancisquito/>

For the latest road conditions, try Caltrans Quick Map: <http://quickmap.dot.ca.gov>

Or follow Caltrans on Twitter at: <https://twitter.com/CaltransD4>

Matadero Creek Greenway for a Day

Saturday, April 23 -- 1-5pm -- Matadero Creek, between Waverly Street and Cowper Street

Matadero Creek will be open for you to experience a possible new trail along the creek.

Personal Emergency Preparedness

By Kenneth Dueker, Director, Emergency Services for the City of Palo Alto

The phrase Personal Emergency Preparedness is more complex than many might imagine. Parsing it out requires an understanding of 1) what sort of scenarios one should prepare for, 2) what the needs of an individual and family members are, 3) what needs might go unmet if one makes incorrect planning assumptions (or chooses not to) regarding supplies and availability of materials, utilities, government services, and so forth.

Living in Palo Alto can put one in a proverbial bubble, insulated from the tribulations that other geographies experience. This belies an unfortunate blind spot in human nature: out of sight, out of mind. While Palo Alto certainly is safe, we cannot and should not ignore the reality that the things upon which we rely for daily life could be disrupted from a wide range of possibilities, categorized in these three fundamental types: natural disaster (earthquake, floods, and so on), technological (accidental), and human caused (crime, terrorism) [see 1].



But of course it's not as simple as understanding what might occur. One must also consider the duration of the event and the consequences, many of which may be rather hard to foresee. Renowned journalist Ted Koppel recently published a book (non-fiction) describing the vulnerability of the U.S. power grid. In Lights Out, Koppel expounds upon a number of possibly crippling foibles of the grid. Those who question the probability of deliberate attack (cyber or physical) are directed to the many examples of widespread outages caused by accidents. In fact, in February 2010, Palo Alto experienced a microcosm of such an accident, when a small plane crashed into our City Utility's one and only connection to the grid.

The 2010 outage lasted for about a working day. While it certainly caused economic harm, for most it was more in the "nuisance" category. Had it gone on longer, however, the consequences would have been more severe. And so we return to the "personal" in personal emergency preparedness. While you may not be up to becoming an Emergency Services Volunteer [see 3], everyone in this community has a role to play to prepare themselves, their families, and anyone else they can reach. Complacency is the first foe to overcome. When we as a community begin to understand the risks we face, actions to mitigate such risks become imperative. Our lives are all very busy, but the time is now to take some basic steps [see 3] towards resilience: 1) make a plan for you and your household, 2) build emergency kits for your residence and anywhere you spend time regularly (including your commute), 3) get and stay informed, and 4) encourage others to also take these simple steps.

- 1) Those who wish to research what could happen (and, in most cases, has already happened in the past) in Palo Alto are encouraged to read www.cityofpaloalto.org/thira
- 2) www.cityofpaloalto.org/emergencyvolunteers
- 3) Resources on www.cityofpaloalto.org/preparedness and www.cityofpaloalto.org/PAPDconnect

Midtown Connector Project Update

By Sheri Furman

In mid-2015, a preliminary constructability review indicated that constraints along the Matadero Creek channel may limit the feasibility of a public access trail on large segments of the corridor. Constraints include seasonal access closure structures, steep grades and required maintenance access to the creek channel. Staff presented these preliminary findings to the Citizen Advisory Committee, which recommended that the feasibility study not proceed.

However, on Nov 29, 2015, City Council directed staff to continue with the feasibility study and to evaluate both a hybrid alternative that would utilize portions of the Matadero Creek corridor that are usable and to identify the most practical alternative on a collector street between Alma Street and West Bayshore Road.

This direction changes the study from a Transportation project (bike riders and pedestrians) to a Recreation project, in order to maximize the City's opportunity to retain as much as possible of the \$1.5 million funding from the County.

Criteria have also been developed to evaluate On-Street, Shared Use and Pedestrian paths. Both Loma Verde and Colorado are being looked at as on-street options.

One safety/security issue concerns the Water District not allowing the construction of a fence along the creek. Several CAC members consider this to be a "deal breaker" for the project, especially given the rapidity of the creek flow during storm events.

Staff anticipates returning to Council in June 2016 with a draft feasibility study and preliminary environmental assessment.

City Plans for Midtown Neighborhood Drainage Improvements

By Joe Teresi, Senior Engineer, Public Works Engineering Services

In April 2005, a majority of Palo Alto property owners approved a special ballot measure authorizing storm drain fees to fund storm drain system maintenance, capital improvements, and storm water quality protection programs over a 12-year period. The keystone of the funding program is a set of seven high-priority storm drain capital improvement projects designed to increase the flow capacity of critical segments of the City's storm drain system.

City Public Works Department staff are now completing the design of the final project, improvements to the Matadero Creek Storm Water Pump Station, which will substantially improve drainage system performance throughout the Midtown neighborhood. The project, scheduled for construction starting this fall, will increase the station's capacity and reliability as well as include features that remove trash from the storm runoff prior to discharge to Matadero Creek.

The storm drain fee structure approved in 2005 will sunset in June 2017. City staff is working with an appointed Blue Ribbon Committee, including Midtown resident Stepheny McGraw, to develop a strategy for future storm drain funding, including the possibility of a new ballot measure. There is a continuing need to fund storm drain system maintenance, new regulatory mandates for "green infrastructure" techniques that slow and treat storm water runoff using natural systems, and additional capital improvements, including storm drain pipeline upgrades along Loma Verde Avenue and Louis Road in Midtown. The Committee's recommendations will be transmitted to the City Manager and City Council later this spring.



Matadero Storm Water Pump Station



Tributary area of Matadero Creek Storm Water Pump Station (storm runoff from the outlined area is discharged to Matadero Creek via the dark storm drain pipelines that connect to the pump station).

Low-income seniors exempt from Safe, Clean Water tax

From the Santa Clara Valley Water District's March "Valley Water Monthly Newsletter"

The water district is offering qualifying low-income seniors, age 65 and older, an exemption from the Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection parcel tax, a savings of up to \$60.

The Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program is a 15-year program approved by voters in November 2012 to provide a safe, reliable water supply; care for and restore wildlife habitat, creeks and open space; and protect our water supply and local dams from earthquakes and other natural disasters.

Funding for the program comes from a parcel tax on Santa Clara County properties each year. Seniors whose total income for 2015 was less than \$46,450, who were born before June 31, 1952, and who live in and own the home the tax is assessed on are eligible for the exemption.

The enrollment period begins April 15 and ends June 30. Applications are available only during the enrollment period. Get yours in by June 30 to be exempted for the upcoming property tax year!

If you have any questions about the tax exemption, email seniorexemption@valleywater.org or call our hotline at (408) 630-2810.

Greenwaste Facility Impressive in Recovering 97% of Recyclables

By Jill Matzke

If you're like me, you may have wondered if combining our recycling materials could possibly be a good thing. How could they ever separate all the bits of paper, bottle caps, plastic bags and cardboard in a jumbled mess of stuff? You might even have wondered if it was worth avoiding the trash bin for some things.

Well, our mixed recyclables are taken to the Greenwaste MRF (material recovery facility) in San Jose. After seeing the plant in action, it is not a surprise that they achieve over 97% recovery of the recyclables in our blue bins. It all happens through a combination of human picking and mechanical separation. As materials empty onto conveyors, workers pull out large items and actually separate items with mixed material. For example, I was amazed to see a worker wrestle apart the heavy plastic and cardboard tray from a 24-can beverage package. Downstream, recyclables move through air blasts, magnets and filtering grates to isolate paper, metal, plastic and cardboard.



Workers ease the separation of items here on the line, with vacuum tubes above taking plastic bags.



After the process, bins of separated plastic - soda/water bottles vs milk jugs - await pickup.

As efficient as this facility has become, there are still several things we can do to make it all work:

- **bag your bags:** Bundle your plastic bags and plastic film packaging into another bag and you'll make life easier for workers to pull them out – and avoid clogging the conveyors
- **separate plastic from paper:** If you have a package with combined paper and plastic (such as plastic film over a box), pull these apart before placing in the blue bin
- **no need to rinse:** Given the ongoing drought, it's good to know that so long as your container is not dripping any contents, it can be tossed into the bin without rinsing
- **bag your confetti:** If you shred documents, place shredded paper into a plastic bag
- **flatten cardboard boxes:** Take out staples if possible
- **no hazards:** Do not place needles, chemicals, propane tanks or any item that may be a safety hazard in the recycling cart

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 Trees
 Working with Midtown Merchants Newsletter Enews Zoning/Developments

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

Midtown Businesses Update

By Louise Yeung Furutsuki

Between 2015 and 2016, Midtown Shopping District on and around Middlefield Road has seen a cluster of changes, following a trend that started in recent years.

- After being vacant for two years, the former Coldwell Banker office at the corner of Middlefield and Colorado is becoming a Wells Fargo Midtown branch. The site plan is in its 30 day neighborhood notice phase; the proposal is to provide two ATMs and full bank service.
- Across the street Uber Eyes changed ownership to Dr. Xiao. They offered discounts on frames this year.
- Down the road where Hiruko Wellness was, Taekwonkids offers martial arts classes for children, youth and adults since its opening this January.
- Oh My! salon and spa took the place of long vacated TL Salon as of October last year. It offers hair, nail and skin services.
- Blue and White Cleaners retired and sold the business to Green St. Cleaners earlier last year. The 2740 Middlefield location is slated to be remodeled as the future store of an Edible Arrangements franchise after the City permit and review processes are completed.
- Down the road, next to Philz Coffee, Bill's Cafe, a family owned restaurant chain that originated in San Jose, finally opened last November. Residents were delighted with Grand Opening discounts offered on Midtown eNews during December. It is open daily for drinks, breakfast and lunch from 7am to 3pm.

Six Midtown eateries (Como Está, Baskin Robbins, Palo Alto Cafe, Indochine, Starbucks, Round Table Pizza) brought in favorite foods and drinks for MRA's June Multicultural Potluck last year and the year before. Midtown is truly blessed with a wide variety of shops, restaurants and various unique services along with supportive merchants. Based on an MRA survey, many residents shop there on a daily basis. Midtown is home to 130+ businesses, from small independent ones such as Young Builders to National branches such as Safeway, Walgreens and CVS, and international businesses such as Starbucks and Kumon.

Help MRA Reflect the Rich Diversity of Our Neighborhood

By Jill Matzke

Over the years, the Midtown neighborhood has evolved into a rich fabric of residents from many far corners of the globe. MRA has worked to help us all appreciate and enjoy this diversity with events such as the recent multi-national potluck and new activities at our annual Ice Cream Social. In order to continue to sustain and grow these as well as our ongoing programs, we need your help!

- Please start or maintain your supporting membership in Midtown Residents Association - at only \$15 per year, MRA is surely one of the best values around.
- Consider sharing this newsletter with a new neighbor on your street.
- Volunteer to help our organization with its many civic and recreational goals.

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
Enews	Gather information, collate and send out the weekly enews letter.	2-3 hours a week
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

Events and Meetings

Matadero Creek Greenway for a Day

Saturday, April 23 -- 1-5pm -- Matadero Creek, between Waverly Street and Cowper Street
Matadero Creek will be opened for the community to experience a possible new trail along the Creek.
MRA will also be in attendance to provide info on new bike paths and potential dog parks.

Annual MRA Ice Cream Social – September 15

Hoover Park — 2901 Cowper — 1:00-4:00 PM

Additional Meetings – Dates to be Announced

Midtown Neighborhood Meeting with the City of Palo Alto

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

Printing of this newsletter made possible by the kind donation of Midtown Realty.



Midtown Residents Association

824 Moreno

Palo Alto, CA 94303

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 and click the left icon "Become a Member".
If by check (\$15): make check out to MRA, and send to our treasurer, Sylvia Gartner, at 824 Moreno, Palo Alto, 94303.