

## **THE CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOOD AREA MEETING REPORT**

Responses to Issues Raised at the April 7, 2011  
Council Neighborhood Committee Meeting

Presented below are the City's responses to various issues and concerns raised at the April 7, 2011 Council Neighborhood Committee meeting with the Central Neighborhood Area. If you have further questions about any of the following responses, please contact the responsible Department at the phone numbers noted below. General questions can be directed to Linda Lauzze, the City's Administrative and Neighborhood Services Manager, at (650) 903-6379.

### **CITY MANAGERS OFFICE – (650) 903-6301**

- 1. What are the greatest challenges Mountain View faces in maintaining a structurally balanced budget?*

The City of Mountain View continues to be challenged by the effects of the Great Recession, but has managed to maintain a strong financial position compared to many other cities in the region. As a result, we are still able to provide an excellent array of quality services and facilities. Budget deficits over the past couple of years have been addressed through operating efficiencies, containing rising employee compensation costs, and minimally reducing service levels.

While the economy is slowly recovering and revenues are rebounding slightly compared to previous years, expenditures are still growing faster than revenues. In addition, the state's severe fiscal crisis continues to impact the City negatively. And even though employees have helped contain compensation cost increases over the past two years, health care and retirement cost increases continue to be a challenge. Salary increases have largely been avoided and employees pay a significant portion of their pension costs. Nonetheless, the City continues to work with its employees to try to further contain health and retirement cost increases, with the goal of once again structurally balancing the budget while minimizing service reductions.

The City has also taken an entrepreneurial approach to generating revenue through leases of City-owned land. Most recently, a lease of the City's Charleston East property will yield approximately \$1 million a year in new revenue for the next 52 years.

A more detailed summary of these budget challenges and how the City is attempting to confront them is provided in the May 3, 2011 Narrative Budget Report which can be downloaded from

[http://www.mountainview.gov/city\\_hall/admin\\_services/forms\\_and\\_documents.asp](http://www.mountainview.gov/city_hall/admin_services/forms_and_documents.asp)  
or reviewed in the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 500 Castro Street.

**CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE – (650) 903-6303**

1. *I have called Mountain View Code Enforcement on several occasions regarding the house on 1802 Villa Street, grass growing tall on sidewalk strip and owners' lawn, the house is in need of repair, there is an old station wagon filled with trash. Looks very bad, what can be done to make owner clean up front and back yard?*

Code Enforcement was working with the family while the property went through probate. The property has been fixed up very nicely and is on the market to be sold.

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT – (650) 903-6306**

1. *My question is with the lease up on the Sears, Sears Tire Center, Rite Aid and Burger King what is the hold up on the San Antonio Shopping Center? What month might we see it happen? Is it going to be in May, June, July or August of this year or next year is the question?*

The developer plans to begin demolition of the existing Sears buildings and start the construction for the new project in summer 2011.

2. *My question is about the owner of the Clarkwood Center and the leases and the status of Kragens, Petco, FedEx and Kinko's? When will the new Walgreens at 1905 El Camino Real in Mountain View be built?*

The owner of the Clarkwood Center purchased the property where the new Walgreens is proposed. We do not have an anticipated construction date for the Walgreens. Also, we do not have any information about the leases of the other tenants in the center.

3. *What is the status of the proposed hotel at El Camino and Castro where Gateway Park and the bicycle store are located?*

The Downtown Precise Plan allows a hotel at this corner. A proposal would come from a private company interested in developing the site. At this time, a hotel project has not been proposed.

4. *Regarding the Classic Communities development project, an early proposal was that a park-like setting would be preferred. Is this park setting part of the project concept? Will there be a pool and/or exercise facility as part of Classics?*

The project will have centrally located common open space, but will not have a pool or exercise facility.

5. *To the extent of my abilities, I do home improvement projects myself. Recently I replaced a hot water heater which requires a permit and inspection. It took four separate phone conversations with three different (very helpful) inspectors to determine the ~5 items they*

*check. It would have been very helpful if an inspection checklist for simple projects like this was available. Is this feasible?*

The Building Division has a simple water heater handout that provides basic water heater installation information which is available on the Building Division Web page and at the counter. It is difficult to create simple checklists that cover every situation for every simple permit without potential causing misunderstandings on what is required. The building codes and the building division presume that people obtaining permits and conducting improvement work have a good working knowledge of the codes and have an understanding of what is required for proper installation and inspection. Although, the water heater handout has five of the most common items for the majority of the water heater inspections, there are many other code requirements that may or could be applicable.

- 6. Concerning the Prometheus Project on Evelyn Avenue, residents were told that the developer would use a green cover on cyclone fence to keep dust and maintain a closed-off area. When will developer put up dust screen?*

The green cover on the cyclone fence was installed the week following the neighborhood meeting.

- 7. The City owns several parcels of land in the Central neighborhoods area. Does the City have any plans for the sale or development of these parcels? Will any of these be set aside for parks, housing or more retail?*

The City owns one property on Bryant Street that is 1.45 acres. The City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in 2008-09 to ground lease the property for a mixed-use project with ground floor retail (preferably a grocery store), housing (including 10%-30% affordable housing), and associated parking. The City received two proposals but they were not acceptable and were rejected. Staff is now planning to go back to the City Council in the first quarter of 2012 to determine the next steps in placing the property back on the market.

In addition to this property the City also owns property on Franklin Street (across from the Tied House). Once the City decides the next steps on the Bryant Street property, the Council could then consider moving forward to ground lease the Franklin Street property. The City-owned portion of the Franklin Street property has “split” zoning. Part of the property is primarily for residential development and the other portion of the property could allow mixed-use with ground floor retail and possible residential/office/commercial above. The Council may want to consider combining the City owned property with the adjacent privately owned property (Dunn Automotive) to create a larger development site.

In addition, to these properties the City also owns the parking lots located on either side of Castro Street that have potential for future development but there is nothing active occurring on these sites at this time.

8. *Last fall we attended a meeting run by Mr. Berns where we heard from staff and the consultants regarding the new traffic parking study for the downtown area. We were told that the results would be available after the first of the year. It's now April – what is the status of the report? When will the results be shared with the community?*

The Downtown Parking Study Report was completed and presented to the City Council on July 5, 2011. If you are interested in a summary of the findings please proceed to the City's Web Site, City Council/Public Records/City Council Meetings/Prior City Council Meeting Documents/July 5, 2011 Council meeting and you will find a link to the staff report as well as the full parking study report. You may also call 650-903-6379 for a copy of the report.

### **COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT – (650) 903-6331**

1. *From time to time I observe staff from Castro Street restaurants hosing down the sidewalks and curbside eating areas. However, the sidewalks along Villa Street, alongside the Post Office and restaurants like Red Rock and the tea/juice establishments closest to Castro Street are filthy and never cleaned. Does City staff ever power wash or hose down these downtown sidewalks?*

The City of Mountain View has a dedicated power washing program for the sidewalks on Castro Street from Evelyn Avenue to El Camino Real. The business owners on downtown side streets such as Villa and Dana are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the sidewalks in front of their businesses. Occasionally, as funding permits, city staff will power wash dirty areas on side street sidewalks.

2. *As Mountain View's downtown neighborhood moves toward higher density, what can we do to ensure that adequate parks and recreational facilities are provided for people who don't have large back yards?*

The City addresses the challenge of providing adequate parks and recreational facilities through tools such as Park Land Dedication In-Lieu Fees and the Parks and Open Space Plan (POSP).

New residential projects are required by the City's Park Land Dedication Ordinance to dedicate park land in the amount of 3 acres per 1,000 residents, or if it is not feasible to dedicate land, an equivalent fee is collected. The fees are then used for the purchase, development and/or improvement of park and recreation facilities located in or near the neighborhood where the new development is located. The Parks and Recreation Commission makes recommendations to the City Council regarding how to allocate the Park Land Dedication In-Lieu Fees.

The City's POSP was recently revised in 2008. The purpose of the POSP is to evaluate the open space needs of the community. The City is divided into ten planning areas with the downtown as part of the Central planning area. The planning area is bounded by El Camino Real, Escuela Avenue, Central Expressway and Freeway 85. The area has five parks and two

School/Parks. An additional .65 acre mini park is being constructed on Mariposa Avenue, which is scheduled for completion later this year. The POSP makes recommendations for increasing or improving open space throughout the City. A copy of the latest POSP is available on the City's website, <http://www.mountainview.gov>. Click on Departments at the top of the page; go to Community Services; scroll down and the link to the POSP is in the middle of the page.

### **POLICE DEPARTMENT – (650) 903-6350**

1. *There is a house on my block that is a nuisance. A steady stream of young adults visits and hangs out. They cuss outside late at night. Marijuana smoke wafts into my home. The yard is full of trash. They have a pit bull. Police have been there several times. I am not comfortable addressing these many issues directly with these residents. What more can be done to improve this situation. Several neighbors are concerned.*

It is extremely important that community members call us directly any time there is a problem or suspicious activity occurs. If you believe a crime is occurring or is about to occur, you should call 911. Otherwise, please call our non-emergency number at 650-903-6395 to report anything suspicious, to report noise at night or to report a crime that already occurred. We have partnered with Code Enforcement to address many of the issues mentioned and will be taking a city-wide approach to solve the problems.

2. *Residents on Houghton Street are starting to see an uptick on crime. We had a burglary and UPS/US Postal theft. We also reported a suspicious person trying to enter a resident's backyard at 1:00 am. We need to start seeing more Police surveillance on our street.*

We have not experienced an increase in reported crime in the area and, in fact, crime is down for the third year in a row City-wide and is at a historically low level. It is likely that community members in the area are not reporting activity directly to the MVPD. It is crucial that residents call us to report all crimes and/or suspicious activity and suspicious people. We have instructed all officers to conduct increased patrol checks in the area.

### **PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT – (650) 903-6311**

1. *We have read a lot about the financial problems Caltrain is facing. What can the City of Mountain View do to help Caltrain sustain its existence and even thrive? Can we offer financial assistance while facing a deficit?*

Caltrain's financial situation has improved significantly since April 2011.

Caltrain's three partner agencies—San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority (SF Muni), Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), and San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans)—agreed to increase their contributions to Caltrain's FY 2013 operating budget from a total of \$25.4 million to \$33.5 million.

Additionally, Caltrain's ridership and revenue numbers are on the rise. Ridership has increased by approximately 13 percent in the past 12 months, and fare box revenues are also up by 15 percent.

The City of Mountain View will continue to work with Caltrain in its efforts to become more financially stable in the future.

- 2. I have a couple questions concerning the Stevens Creek "bike" trail. Is this only a construction of the Highway 85 pedestrian overcrossing bridge? Is the proposed "bike" trail a dead end or does this trail continue through Sunnyvale/Cupertino? Where is the remainder of the building cost (60%) going to be raised? Was this a balance of power decision (City Hall) or will of the voters?*

The project that is currently under construction will cross over Highway 85 and end at the intersection of Dale Avenue and Heatherstone Way. The City prepared a feasibility study to extend the trail along the east side of Highway 85 and back over Highway 85 to Mountain View High School, but that project is not yet funded. The City is also working with the cities of Cupertino, Sunnyvale and Los Altos to review a possible route to link the four cities.

Funding for Stevens Creek Trail is from a number of sources. The City has funded much of the existing trail and has also received State, Federal and local grants for a significant portion. To date, all funding has been approved by the City Council. The question of funding Stevens Creek Trail has never been put before the voters.

- 3. Last year we read about the City's interest in purchasing an area of land near US 101 and Moffett Boulevard for possible development into a shopping center or some retail outlet. Is that still a possibility?*

There were two parcels at Highway 101 and Moffett Boulevard. One was owned by the County of Santa Clara, and the other by the State of California. The City purchased the parcel owned by the County, and is currently working with the State to purchase the other, adjacent parcel.

- 4. Why do two corners of Mercy and Anza Streets have yellow caution bumps on ramps and the other corners do not?*

The standards for wheelchair ramps and other improvements required by the Americans with Disabilities Act continue to evolve. The yellow caution bumps (called "truncated domes") are a relatively new requirement and are installed on all new ramps. The other ramps in the intersection were installed prior to the requirement for the truncated domes.

- 5. After lunch time, Villa Street between Bryant and Castro Streets backs up – sometimes requiring two to three traffic light changes to drive one block. The problem is cars on Villa Street waiting to make a left turn onto Castro Street because there is not enough room to pass on the right to continue on Villa Street. Only one spot is no parking – need more.*

*Proprietors do not like to lose parking spots, but some of my friends refused to meet me in Mountain View as “It’s impossible to get back to work on time due to impossible traffic”.*

Keeping the on-street parking spaces, as you mentioned, is important for businesses in the downtown area. While congestion is expected at lunch hours in most downtowns, downtown Mountain View has plenty of surface parking and parking structures including the new parking structure at the northeast corner of California and Bryant Streets with plenty of parking spaces available during lunch hour. The City of Mountain view also encourages alternative modes of transportation such as using transit, bicycle and walking.

- 6. Are there any plans to study peak hour traffic flow at Moffett Boulevard and Central Expressway? At peak train times, cars southbound on Moffett Boulevard can get stuck for up to 20 minutes at this light. Re-striping for a dedicated right turn lane onto Central Expressway and added signage could be effective to divert through traffic to southbound Shoreline Boulevard.*

There is a plan for major modifications of the existing traffic signal at the intersection of Moffett Boulevard/Castro Street and Central Expressway by Caltrain, which is governed by the Peninsula Corridor Joint Power Board (PCJPB) to improve railroad preemption. Part of the project includes updating the existing signal to improve safety and decrease delays at the intersection by changing the sequence of the signal phasing to allow left turns from both Moffett Boulevard and Castro Street at the same time. This signal is owned and operated by the County of Santa Clara and therefore both the County of Santa Clara and the City of Mountain View are involved in the design and construction of this project. There is not enough roadway width on Moffett Boulevard to maintain the existing two through lanes and add a dedicated right-turn lane. As you suggested, we will consider including in the project scope adding signage on Moffett and Central Expressway to divert traffic to southbound Shoreline Boulevard via the existing free right-turn pocket on Moffett Boulevard as an alternative route. This project is currently in the planning/design stages and scheduled for construction in early 2013.

- 7. Calderon Avenue is wider than normal where the pedestrian crossing is at Mercy Street. The width allows cars to illegally pass around cars stopped for the many pedestrians going to Landels Elementary School. This is dangerous. Is it possible to narrow the street or stripe it differently to create a safer pedestrian crossing?*

The City recently installed a temporary median island and bulb outs to create a pedestrian refuge island and to narrow the street on one approach to this intersection. Our plan is to test this temporary installation for one year and collect feedback from pedestrians and motorists. Depending on the feedback, we may modify the design and then plan to construct permanent bulb outs on all four corners of the intersection and median islands on both approaches to Calderon Avenue.

- 8. How about some renewed efforts at traffic “calming” on Villa Street? Past proposals and efforts went nowhere.*

The City's Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) includes a process for requesting the City evaluate traffic calming measures and petitioning affected neighbors to see if there is support for traffic calming measures. Neighbors weigh the pros and cons of traffic calming measures (speed humps, traffic circles, etc.) and often decide that the current condition, even with some speeding vehicles is preferable to having the traffic calming measures. Please see the City's website (Neighborhood Traffic Management Program) for information about the NTMP process.

9. *Regarding street cleaning – why can't Villa Street have "no parking" on street cleaning day twice a month? There are signs on Escuela Avenue to that effect – why not extend the zone? Villa Street rarely gets cleaned completely because so many cars are parked on cleaning day.*

Residents of Villa Street (residential area outside downtown business area) can submit a petition for installation of No Parking on street cleaning days to the City Traffic Engineer. A two-thirds majority approval by the residents is required for the installation of these signs.

10. *Are there long term plans to resolve the issue of cars driving into the gutters at intersections in Old Mountain View? All the little fixes have failed and the latest fix with all the little reflector signs is obviously costing the City a lot of money since they are constantly being knocked over.*

The City is gradually replacing the "cross-culverts" at the intersections with conventional curb ramps and gutters as other street improvements are made. The next street to be upgraded will be Church Street.

11. *Can you put a bike sensor on Church Street and Castro Street (heading east, i.e. on Le Boulanger corner). Right now the sensor is only in the left turn lane (left onto Castro Street north).*

We will add a bike detection symbol on the through/right lane on east direction on Church Street by the end of December 2011, weather permitting. In the meantime, if you stop in the middle of the lane, near the stop bar, you should get bike detection.

12. *Recently I discovered the Ask Mountain View app for the iPhone and I have been very happy with the responsiveness of City staff. My question is regarding using this app for reporting graffiti? Can it be used for reporting graffiti on private property as well as City property?*

The City removes graffiti from public property only, but we will work with private property owners to ensure graffiti is removed as quickly as possible. You may report graffiti on private property by calling the graffiti removal hotline at (650) 903-6767 or through Ask Mountain View on the City's website ([www.mountainview.gov](http://www.mountainview.gov)) or the iPhone app.



13. *I am trying my best to get the shopping carts off the (apartment) complex, so it will not get very costly all the time. Plus, I cannot wait until 2020 to get here on the high-speed rail.*

The Public Services Streets Operation responds to reports of abandoned shopping carts in the public right of way, but does not collect carts from private property. You may report carts on private property by calling the Public Services Division at (650) 903-6329 or through Ask Mountain View on the City's website ([www.mountainview.gov](http://www.mountainview.gov)) and we will help you get the carts removed. Carts in the public right of way should be reported through the City's abandoned cart hotline at (650) 903-6767 or through Ask Mountain View.

14. *Our street has many trees with shallow roots that are lifting up the sidewalk, presenting a pedestrian hazard. What should be done about this? Can the trees be replaced? Can we get varieties that will not cause the same problem later?*

The Public Services Streets Operation responds to reports of unsafe sidewalk conditions, and will eliminate hazards by grinding or adding asphalt (ramping) to the sidewalks. To report a hazard, please contact the Public Services Division at (650) 903-6329 or use Ask Mountain View on the City's website ([www.mountainview.gov](http://www.mountainview.gov)). The Forestry Division is responsible for maintenance of street trees. They can be reached at (650) 903-6273 regarding street tree selection.

15. *The City of San Jose announced a program today whereby home and business owners can get a \$2,000 discount on solar PV systems. I believe the City's only cost relates to publicizing the offer, which is provided by Sunpower. Is this something Mountain View would consider emulating?*

The City of Mountain View is aware of the program offered by SunPower through the City of San Jose. As part of a longer-term sustainability plan currently under development, the City is evaluating staff resources and costs for educating residents and business owners about both energy efficiency and solar energy. A SunPower-type program will be considered as part of this evaluation process.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS.**

1. *The thing about me, I love to come to the neighborhood meetings and the community meetings to learn what is going on in our community all the time. In this world it helps a lot to learn, including when buildings are leased and much more.*
2. *Everyday my front yard along Permanente Way and Villa Street gets littered. I would like to see some sort of program in our community to help people be proud of their community so that they do not litter.*