

City Manager's Weekly Update

Oct. 9, 2020

Parks & Recreation

Parks

With all current social distancing measures in place, we hosted a great volunteer work day at Grant Park over the weekend. We had a great turnout with a total of 17 volunteers! Members of the Grant Park Neighbors group and other Parks volunteers work tirelessly for half a day to install and grade out over 100 cubic yards of engineered wood fibers in the play spaces. It was a great day!



Facilities

We are happy to announce that we have worked out an arrangement with Santa Cruz Swimming to use Harvey West Pool for their swim team practices. This team has used the pool in the past, and there is a great working relationship with them and the City. They will be practicing afternoons and evenings. With CRUZ and Jim Booth Swim School, it's really great to see kids in the water.



Planning and Community Development

Pacific-Front-Laurel: Commercial Mixed-Use Project

This project was originally submitted for building plan check in Dec. of 2019, though a new applicant (Anton LLC) and new Architect (Coret Demanty) is now in place. The site's address is currently 100 Laurel Street; however, an address change is expected and is soon to be 800 Pacific Avenue. A revised application was submitted on Oct. 1, 2020, which maintains the building aesthetics, yet includes revisions updating unit floor plan layouts, adding a ground-floor fitness amenity, and eliminating a mezzanine area above the retail area. This multi-story building hosts



205 residential units over two levels of parking and retail space and is hoping to start construction in early 2021. For more information on this project, visit the Pacific-Front Mixed-Use project page at: <https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/planning-and-community-development/active-planning-applications-and-status/pacific-front-mixed-use-development>

Increases to Maximum Density Bonus: Assembly Bill 2345

The State of California recently passed Assembly Bill 2345 (AB 2345), which increases the maximum density bonus a development can receive. Under previous density bonus law, a market-rate residential development providing a specified percentage of affordable units could receive up to a 35% density bonus. Under AB 2345, the maximum density bonus has been increased to 50% when an increased specified percentage of affordable units are provided. For instance, previous law allowed for a residential development to include 11% very low-income affordable units to receive a 35% density bonus. That ability remains, but under AB 2345, a residential development could now include 15% very low-income affordable units and receive a 50% density bonus. Other inclusionary unit affordability levels, such as 24% low income or 44% moderate income, could also be used to reach the new maximum density bonus of 50%.

For those interested in a more detailed summary of recent state legislation affecting housing and land use, staff will be presenting a legislative update to City Council sometime this fall on a date to be determined. Please look for this item in a posted Council agenda or contact Principal Planner, Matt VanHua, for more information (mvanhua@cityofsantacruz.com).

Police Department

Neighborhood Courts

The Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office hosted a town hall to share and discuss the new Neighborhood Courts program. For the City of Santa Cruz, the panel included District Attorney Jeff Rosell, Supervisor Ryan Coonerty, SCPD Chief Andy Mills, and UCSC PD Chief Nadar Oweis.

The Neighborhood Courts program, implemented and managed by the District Attorney Office, is a community-driven, pre-filing diversion program designed to divert low-level misdemeanor offenses from entering the criminal justice system.



First-time offenders, vetted by the District Attorney Office, are given an opportunity to take responsibility and repair the harm they caused through a community-based process using restorative justice principles instead of a courtroom.

Neighborhood Courts address criminal violations that impact the quality of life in the community and are an alternative to entering into criminal court. More information about the [Santa Cruz County Neighborhood Courts](#).

Stand with SCPD to support Domestic Violence Awareness

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Every day, we fully commit to working with domestic violence victims and the service providers that assist us in combating domestic violence.

SCPD has Domestic Violence Awareness lapel pins, and wristbands with "Awareness Creates Change" for patrol officers and community members. If you would like a lapel pin or a wristband, please email jblaschke@cityofsantacruz.com.

SCPD strives to reduce domestic violence through a three-fold approach: it trains police personnel, it educates the public, and it investigates domestic violence crimes. A vital message of domestic violence awareness is encouraging victims of domestic violence to speak out. Never hesitate to call us for help.



Public Works

Engineering

Rail Trail Segment 7/Phase 1 update: the eastside curb ramp and sidewalk on Swift Street have been demolished and poured in place. This leaves only four curb ramps to construct after final paving. The east abutment of the Arroyo Seco Bridge was also poured. If concrete reaches design strength as planned, the bridge will be delivered and placed on Oct. 15. Once the bridge is in place it will take several more weeks to fine grade and pave the Swift to Natural Bridges trail section along with constructing the last four curb ramps and islands.



The fine grade of the Almar to Fair trail section has been completed. Paving of this section is scheduled in the next couple of weeks. Sign locations between Bay and Almar have been marked out. The first phase of signs will be installed next week, with the final phase to be installed at the end of the project along with final striping in mid-November.

Wastewater Treatment Facility

We invite you to take a virtual stroll through our [Santa Cruz Wastewater Treatment Facility](#)! Our new video allows you to observe even more than our in-person tours. See how we provide an essential quality-of-life service to the community while helping to reduce our City's carbon footprint. Learn how we treat 7 million gallons of wastewater each day with all-natural processing that is environmentally friendly. [Click here](#) to see how we transform wastewater! En [español](#).



On May 26, City Council adopted Resolution No. NS-29,659 authorizing Public Works staff to apply for and accept a loan for up to \$30,000,000 from the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (Ibank) for the Wastewater Treatment Facility Ultraviolet Disinfection System Replacement and the Electrical System Projects. This financing was passed, approved and adopted at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Ibank on Sept. 23 by unanimous vote. The loan of \$30,000,000 has a financing term of 30 years at an interest rate of 2.5%.

The UV disinfection system replacement project, first identified in the FY 2015 Capital Improvement Plan, is now in construction. The Electrical System Projects had been defined in the WWTF Infrastructure and Major Equipment Study which assigned a high risk of catastrophic failure to the electrical system and provided project definitions and budgetary estimates required to mitigate these risks.

The primary project benefit will be to ensure the continued successful operations of the Wastewater Treatment Facility. All loan project components are necessary for the WWTF to effectively and efficiently treat the daily inflow of raw sewage. This project loan will ensure no interruption or diminishment to service and that no untreated or partially treated sewage could be discharged to the Pacific Ocean. We expect the results of the loan project to result in a significant reduction in energy usage. The UV system upgrade alone will reduce energy consumption and reduce energy costs from an average of \$90,000 per year to \$30,000 per year.

Environmental Compliance

The City monitors the algal blooms that are currently visible along the San Lorenzo River and potential toxins from them as part of its commitment to public health of the community and our ability to safely use the recreational resources.

The ongoing blooms are being analyzed weekly using the most stringent reference standards for public health and for pets, and in cooperation with a highly reputable lab at UCSC.



Apart from the nuisance of the blooms to the aesthetics of the environment, there are no detectable toxins at a level of concern. The weekly monitoring continues, and we will continue to update the community with any changes.

Water

This was a fairly quiet week, at least in the context of 2020. We had a minor leak on the North Coast water main that put some of our raw customers out of service for a while, but fortunately our Distribution team was able to get it back in service quickly.

At Monday night's Water Commission meeting the Commission heard a presentation on work to amend our water rights. (Water rights law in California is fascinating – where else could putting a plaque on something in 1890 have ramifications in 2020?) A lot of good work has gone into revising our water rights over a number of years (decades) to get us where we are today. Why the need to amend our water rights now? Like our water collection, storage, and treatment processes, our water rights worked under “normal” water years, and under “normal” conditions. However, with the increased impact of climate change, we're no longer operating under those normal conditions; we're operating

under the “new normal.” Current water rights provide very little flexibility, which is what is most needed now and into the future. As an example, current water rights don’t allow for Santa Cruz water to be used outside of our jurisdiction for water transfers with Soquel Creek or other water agencies.

This week SCMU customers received their first notices about the new MyCityofSantaCruz payment portal. With the utility bills that went out this week, customers received an insert describing the program, as well as an invitation to join. We will be following up next week with a strong campaign on social media. Between the Eden malfunction last spring, customer hardship declarations due to Covid-19, the need to protect and social distance SCMU customer service staff from Covid-19 – our customer service staff has had a very busy year.

This week is Water Professionals Appreciation Week and I couldn’t be more appreciative of our Water Department crew. On more than one occasion this summer (due to storms, fire, and infrastructure failures,) we had conference calls at 1 and 3 a.m., as well as on Saturdays and Sundays, to ensure our ability to provide drinking water to our customers. (These nightly calls commenced the first week of furloughs, by the way.) Along with appreciating Water Professionals, this month is also the month that we’re called upon to “Imagine a Day Without Water.” (Last year’s campaign is still up on the windows of the Locust Street building, and we still have passersby stop to take selfies in front of the “No Weed” window.)

