

City Manager's Weekly Update

June 4, 2021

Planning & Community Development

On May 24, 2021, the Planning Department received an application from the City of Santa Cruz Economic Development Department to construct a 5,360 square foot dance studio building at the Tannery at 1020 River Street. The project requires approval of a Historic Alteration Permit by the Historic Preservation Commission at a public hearing and a Minor Modification to the original permit for the Tannery redevelopment as the proposed building is slightly larger and in a different location on the site than the ballet building concept originally approved. The project will likely fall under the scope of the EIR for the original Tannery redevelopment permit and will therefore likely be exempt from further CEQA review. This project is considered to be a Small Development Project pursuant to the Community Outreach Policy for Planning Projects and is not required to hold a community meeting. An appeal of the decision made by the Historic Preservation Commission would be heard by the City Council. Clara Stanger is the Planner for this project.



Parks & Recreation

New Landscaping for Chinatown Bridge Dragon Art Complete

The plant vision includes edible plants associated with the original Chinese marketplace, native plants to promote habitat along the San Lorenzo river walk, and pops of perennial color to enhance the design elements & colors of the dragon sculpture. All plants are water wise perennials on a drip irrigation system to promote water conservation.

Special thanks to all of our community partners. Tom Ralston Concrete- art, unlimited project support, and concrete work & construction; Suncrest nursery –plant material; Barry Swenson Builders & Don Genesy's planting crew at Coastal Evergreen Landscape; Regan Barry owner & Thomas Witz- irrigation donations; Sandy Lydon & Geoffrey Dunn- plaque wording & history team; Tony Armor- solar work; Kathleen Crocetti- Dragon Creation; Sean Monaghan Bronze work; Michael Corcoran -forms for the plaque & columns; Gregg Pepping from Coastal Watershed Council-Vision & River San Lorenzo River connections; George Ow- vision & greater project support; staff from Parks & Recreation, Economic Development, and Public Works Engineering.



Public Works

Engineering

Construction of the 2021 Overlay Project started this week. The project has been working on upgrading curb ramps on Delaware Avenue between Fair and Almar. The 2021 Surface Seal Project continued construction on several local streets. As both paving projects impact traffic, we apologize for any inconvenience this work may cause.



2021 Overlay Project – Delaware & Almar



2021 Surface Seal Project – Heather Ct.

Traffic Engineering

Our new Street Smarts message addresses a prime cause of crashes throughout Santa Cruz County with our UCSC partner Sammy. Scroll down for Spanish [here](#).

Never drive faster than what is safe for the current condition of the road – regardless of the posted speed limit. Unusual circumstances and bad weather will make the road unpredictable.

Keep a buffer zone between the vehicles in front of you and behind you to help when the unexpected happens.

Obstructions in the road can surprise you at any moment, and are less visible when you turn around a blind corner.


The faster you drive, the less time you have to make a life-saving decision.

So remember to always drive a safe speed.

It's the Street Smarts thing to do.

SPEED MATTERS.

20 MPH

Street  Smarts

Water

The Water Department was a guest on KSCO during the lunch hour on Wednesday. We were invited to talk about the stage 1 water shortage, and how we plan for and respond to drought. As has been happening fairly frequently lately, we were asked why the City continues to approve new housing projects when we still have water shortages. People are surprised by our answer to the question of growth, because it's counter intuitive. But here are some surprising facts:

- In the past 40 years (1981 to 2021), the Water Department has seen a 44% increase in population served (68,000 to 98,000);
- However during that same period, we've experienced a 45% decrease in water demand (3.734 billion gallons in 1981 to 2.4 billion gallons in 2021)
- In 1981, average water use was 55 gallons per person per day;
- In 2021, average use is 25 gallons per person, per day.

Though the population served has almost doubled in the 40 years between 1981 and 2021, water use has basically remained flat. How can that be? Well, it's been accomplished by both technology and behavior - but driven by technology, beginning with national plumbing code changes in 1992. Water-related appliances have become so efficient that they now use barely a fraction of the water they used in 1981. And efficiencies continue; just 5 years ago the gold standard for low-flow toilets was 1.6 gallons per flush. Now the lowest flow toilets use only .8 gallons per flush. This is why we're confident that the modest growth that's planned for the community won't have much, if any, impact on our current water supply. Santa Cruz has had a water supply problem during dry years for decades – it needs to be solved regardless of any new growth.

Next week the Draft EIR for the Water Rights Project will be available to the public. This project has been a long time coming, and we're proud that our voluntary commitment to provide sustainable flows for fish is now being used by the state as a model. We're holding public meetings on the DEIR Wednesday, July 14, from 5 – 6pm, and Tuesday, July 20, from 6 – 7pm.

And speaking of public meetings, we held an open house for neighbors of the Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant Wednesday night to learn about the construction project to replace the three concrete tanks at the facility. The project is long and complex, so we were glad to have a good turnout. This was our first in-person meeting since early 2020 and it was a nice change to virtual meetings!

