

# City Manager's Weekly Update

August 13, 2021

## Planning and Community Development

**415 Natural Bridges Drive:** Late last year, our department received a pre-application submittal from the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz for a 20 unit, 100-percent affordable housing development with 20 Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units to be constructed within a three-story building on a vacant lot located at 415 Natural Bridges Drive. In accordance with the City's Community Outreach Policy, the applicants hosted a community meeting on June 28 to solicit feedback on their design. Nine members of the public attended the meeting and their responses to the project were supportive. On July 20, the applicant submitted a formal development application for the project. The entitlements requested include a Lot Line Adjustment, Coastal Permit, Design Permit, and a Planned Development Permit to allow variations to development standards with regard to the number of parking spaces, building height, and side-yard setback setbacks. The project qualifies for a categorical exemption under CEQA as an infill project. The formal application includes a few small changes from the pre-application, including:

- Acquisition of additional land from the adjacent parcel and provision of two additional parking spaces (though the total number of spaces proposed is still less than the standard requirement),
- Removal of four Heritage-sized trees instead of one, and
- Slight modifications to the driveway width and proposed side yard setbacks.

The application requires a recommendation from the Planning Commission and final action by the City Council, which is appealable to the Coastal Commission. Clara Stanger is the planner working on the project.



**Front Riverfront Mixed-Use Development:** On July 23 the Planning Department received an email from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) granting Section 408 permission to construct levee improvements associated with the project commonly known as the Front Riverfront Mixed-Use development located at 418, 428, 440, 504, and 508 Front Street. The Downtown Plan requires that the project included the placement of fill between the landside slope of the San Lorenzo River Levee

and the new building to expand the area adjacent to the Riverwalk and provide landscaping and commercial uses to activate the Riverwalk and the river as an amenity of the downtown area. As a part of the Section 408 review process, the Army Corps reviewed an Environmental Assessment for the project and made Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSI) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. This milestone represents an important step toward construction of the project. The applicants have indicated that they are likely to submit a building permit application within 4-5 months.



**314 Jessie Street:** On July 29 the Planning Department received an application for the construction of a 50-unit 100% affordable and supportive multifamily rental housing development on a site in the R-L (Multiple Residence-Low Density) zoning district, located at 314 Jessie Street. The proposal includes demolition of the existing buildings, including 14 apartments and accessory structures, and construction of a 50-unit, four-story apartment building with 40 studio and 10 one-bedroom units ranging from 316 to 459 square feet. The proposal also includes an adjoining two-story building featuring reception, office, and administrative support functions. The project includes approximately 2,581 square feet of open space, including a second-story uncovered terrace. The first two floors include vehicular parking below a raised podium, bicycle parking, and a community recreation room and office space.

A pre-application review of the project was completed earlier this year, and a web-based community meeting was held on May 5 pursuant to the City's Community Outreach Policy for Planning Projects. Forty-one people attended, including City staff and the applicant team. Staff received feedback from and provided information to members of the public in attendance.

The applicant has invoked State legislation to pursue the proposed development, including Assembly Bill (AB) 1763 and Assembly Bill (AB) 2162. AB 1763 allows up to an 80% density bonus for 100% affordable housing projects restricted to occupancy by low-income households. Through AB 1763, any project located within a half-mile of a major transit stop is not subject to maximum density controls and is provided a height increase of up to three stories or 33 feet above the standard maximum threshold allowable by the Municipal Code. Under AB 1763, a qualifying project may receive four incentives or concessions pursuant to State Density Bonus Law and is not required to include vehicular parking. Further, AB 2162 allows by-right affordable housing projects with on-site supportive services of 50 units or fewer in residential and mixed-use zoning districts, prohibits local jurisdictions from imposing minimum parking requirements for units occupied by supportive housing residents located within a half-mile of a public transit stop, and eliminates the requirements for environmental assessment through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for qualifying projects. In August of 2020, the City Council authorized this project to include up to 100 units by right, though the applicant has since opted to pursue this 50 unit design. The resolution adopted by City Council

confirmed that a Design Permit is required for all qualifying supportive housing projects on land not owned by the City.

In addition to a Design Permit, the project requires approval of a Coastal Permit by the Zoning Administrator at a public hearing. The Zoning Administrator's decision can be appealed to the Planning Commission but not to the Coastal Commission. Timothy Maier is the planner reviewing the project.



**130 Center Street, “Calypso” Development:** Earlier this year the Planning Department received an application from Swenson Builders to redevelop the property at 130 Center Street with a six-story, mixed-use development consisting of 2,618 square feet of ground floor retail and 233 residential single-room occupancy (SRO) units (rental units with a maximum of 400 square feet and an average unit size being no greater than 345 square feet, some common facilities, and on-site management). In accordance with the City’s Community Outreach Policy, the applicants hosted a community meeting on August 3 to solicit feedback on their design. Approximately 25 members of the public attended the meeting, with questions and discussion items involving traffic, parking, electric vehicle charging stations, water consumption, and property management and leasing restrictions regarding the number of tenants per unit and vacation rentals. The developer received a number of supportive comments, specifically related to the design, the addition of high-density housing in the South of Laurel corridor, and the provision of very-low income units. The application includes a request for a Non-Residential Demolition Authorization Permit to demolish the existing commercial buildings with evaluation by a qualified historian, as well as a Special Use Permit, Coastal Permit, and Design Permit. The applicant indicates that the project consists of 155 base units, which is the number of units that can be provided in a fully conforming project. Of the 155 units, the city zoning ordinance requires 31 units, or 20%, to be provided as inclusionary units restricted to Very Low Income (50% Area Median Income). However, the project also includes a request for a Density Bonus under AB2345 to allow for a 50% bonus of market rate units. As part of the Density Bonus request, the applicant is seeking to utilize two incentives/concessions: 1) Exceed height limitations with a building that is approximately 70-feet in height and six stories; and 2) Reduce required setbacks. The application requires a public hearing before the City Planning Commission, which is anticipated for the fall. Ryan Bane is the planner working on the application.

## Police

### OPERATION SIT THE BENCH | Maximum Criminal Enforcement

The week of Wednesday, August 4, the Santa Cruz Police Department deployed OPERATION SIT THE BENCH; an SCPD initiated a Multi-Agency Response to address criminal violations in the encampment along the San Lorenzo River & HWY 1. Probation and Parole Checks were also conducted at the San

Lorenzo Park Benchlands. SCPD has received increased complaints from residents regarding open drug usage and sales, threatening behaviors, stolen property, loud explosions, and environmental damage.

## **RECAP | OPERATION SIT THE BENCH**

21 – Misdemeanor warrants

5 – Felony warrants

1 – Felony loaded gun possession

7 – Misdemeanor drug offenses

7 – Infraction violations

12 – Field Interviews

**Drugs Confiscated:** Methamphetamines, heroin, fentanyl

**Notable Arrest:** Gang member on parole with a loaded handgun

**Top Questions & Complaints** from our community is, why a person who was recently arrested is not in jail? And, why did the officer 'cite and release' when the offender was caught red-handed?

**Answer:** The consequence of AB 109, Prop 47, Prop 57, and Jail Covid Policy: aimed to curb recidivism and reduce the inmate population by making nonviolent, non-serious property, and drug crimes misdemeanors unless a person has prior convictions for serious offenses. That means crimes like drug use/sales, shoplifting, grand theft, and receiving stolen property earn the offender a citation instead of jail time.

Sentencing guidelines for jail time and rehabilitative programs are determined by state and federal criminal justice systems.

**Supporting Agencies in OSTB:** SCPD is thankful for the extra workforce behind OPERATION SIT THE BENCH from allied agencies, including Santa Cruz County Gang Taskforce Probation, Parole, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Santa Cruz Fire Department, and City Code Compliance. Chief Andy Mills is proud of the successful collaboration and appreciative of everyone's extraordinary service.

## **New Officers to Our Ranks!**

Officer Brandon Pratt, Officer Weston Piper and Officer Salvador Luna. This week, they took an oath to serve and protect our city supported by friends, family, and SCPD peers.

Good people and problem solvers, we are proud to have them as part of our SCPD team.

Join us in welcoming Officers Pratt, Piper and Luna as they embark on a career in public safety at Santa Cruz PD!





## Water

As the drought continues, [people are paying closer attention to their water use](#). Customers typically track their use by the amount that they're billed for, or by tracking their meters. In some cases in Santa Cruz, customer's meters aren't 100% accurate. Unfortunately, our metering system is aging out at the very same moment that we're experiencing drought and asking our customers to read their meter and stay below their allotment. Simply put, the timing is awful, and a few of our customers are cranky about it.

The *average* age of a Santa Cruz meter is 18 years, with a total useful life of 20. Water meters are mechanical, and some of ours are slowing down (or stopping altogether) as the internal parts wear out. This degradation is what we call "under registration." Some years ago, when we first detected above-normal meter failures, we started to attack the problem in-house with existing staff and increased meter purchases. At the same time, we also started work on a feasibility study that ultimately found that the best path forward was a system-wide meter change out. The inefficiency of chasing down random meter failures throughout the system, coupled with the retail cost of small batches of meters, was way more costly than getting everything done in one fell swoop with a wholesale purchase of new equipment. This is still the case today--which is why the meter replacement project is slated to kickoff installations this fall. (But, boy, do we wish that it was done by now as we deal with drought.)

We're concerned about not knowing how much water is passing through stuck and under-registering meters right now, as well as how this negatively impacts revenue. We estimate that around 5% of the system is experiencing under-registration with an approximate revenue loss of \$800K - 1M/year. That's a big number, but the analysis shows that the ad hoc "replace-upon-failure" approach is much more costly, which is why we're pursuing a defined replacement project over a short period of time.

The question of broken meters is on our [running list of drought/Stage 1 FAQs](#) to address questions and concerns expressed by the public.

### Lake Elevation:

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| Currently: | 554.15 ft |
| Last Year: | 572.50 ft |

### Rainfall:

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| For the season:         | 20.19 in |
| This point last season: | 28.96 in |

Every week we update [water conditions](#) on our website.



## Public Works

### Engineering

We are wrapping up our 2021 Overlay and 2021 Surface Seal projects with improved bike lanes on Delaware from Columbia Street to Santa Cruz Street and on Laguna from Santa Cruz Street to Bay!



### Resource Recovery

Most of the excavation equipment for the Cell 3B project has been delivered. Mass excavation is expected to begin this Friday.

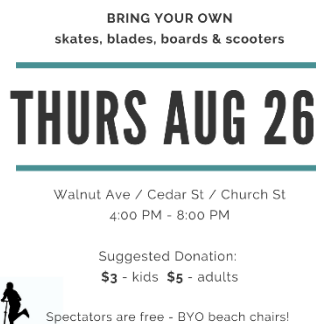


### Wastewater Treatment Facility

On Monday, operators assisted the Wastewater Lab with special sampling for the Whole Effluent Toxicity (W.E.T.) test. Sampling protocol for this test requires nearly three gallons of flow-weighted 24-hour composite sample to be shipped to a contract lab for analysis. The sample must be kept cold in shipment and arrive within a tightly controlled time frame for the test to be valid. The W.E.T. test is done to ensure that the facility is not discharging pollutants that may cause acute or chronic toxicity in marine wildlife.

## Economic Development

### Downtown Association Hosting Family Roller Party August 26!



Come have some family fun in the fresh air! Don't miss this special after-school ROOF DECK ROLLER PARTY in a giant downtown Santa Cruz parking lot! The event will be held on the top floor of the Cedar/Church Garage ([800 Cedar Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060](https://www.google.com/maps/place/800+Cedar+Street,+Santa+Cruz,+CA+95060)) Bring your own skates, blades, boards and scooters! Suggested donation: \$3 - kids / \$5 - adults. Spectators free and you're welcome to bring your own beach chairs!

### Midtown Fridays Featured in Lookout Local



The band Flaw performs at the July 23 event. Band members include Ted Weir, Don Caruth, Rob Chase, and Ryan Price. (Matthew Swinnerton)

#### **THE BLOCK IS HOT: Midtown Fridays turns a parking lot into a weekly block party**

PRESENTED BY [SANTA CRUZ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT](#)

[here.](#)

Learn more about the events: [www.eventsantacruz.com/event/midtown-fridays/](https://www.eventsantacruz.com/event/midtown-fridays/)

Economic Development has sponsored the Midtown Fridays events put on by Event Santa Cruz since May 2021. The department worked with Matthew Swinnerton of Event Santa Cruz and writer Mat Weir to chronicle how the event has come about and what it means for the Midtown Business Association and the greater Santa Cruz community to be featured in Lookout Local.

The following is a snapshot of the article:

“What comes to mind when you think of an oasis? A palm tree-lined, freshwater spring in the middle of the Sahara? Havasu Falls at the Grand Canyon? Liam and Noel Gallagher singing “Wonderwall?” All of these would be correct, of course, but when it comes to Santa Cruz a different kind of oasis pops up every Friday at 5 p.m.” [Read the full piece](#)



## Paint Party for Poet's Park Storm Drain Mural August 21

With funding from the City Percent for Arts Storm Water Fund and Public Works, Poet's Park is the next Beach Flats site for a Storm Drain Mural. Community engagement and environmental education activities are well underway! A preliminary session was held on June 10 and a neighborhood planning party took place on Saturday, July 10. Now the community is invited to help artist Irene O'Connell paint the new mural on August 21 from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

# POET'S PARK

MURAL PAINT PARTY | FIESTA DE PINTANDO DE MURAL

|                                  |   |                               |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>SATURDAY</b><br><b>SÁBADO</b> | <b>AUG 21, 2021</b><br><b>12 - 4 PM</b> | <b>@POET'S</b><br><b>PARK</b> |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|

Help artist Irene Juarez O'Connell paint a new storm drain mural!  
¡Ayuda a la artista Irene Juarez O'Connell a pintar un nuevo mural de drenaje pluvial!



Questions or feedback on the design? Contact Irene at (818) 383-2426.  
¿Preguntas o comentarios sobre el diseño? Comuníquese con Irene al (818) 383-2426.

