



City Manager's Weekly Update

City of Santa Cruz

May 15, 2023

Let's Celebrate Public Service Recognition Month!

We appreciate the commitment and dedication that each of you brings to the City every day, and we want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate all of you. As part of Public Service Recognition Month, we are jumpstarting long-dormant staff-organized events such as our running and walking groups and lunchtime meetups. We hope to see these types of ongoing activities continue, so if you have ideas or would like to host a meet-up group, please contact Erika Smart at <esmart@santacruzca.gov>.

We will also have a picnic at Laurel Park (London Nelson Community Center) on May 31, 2023 from 11:00 AM–1:00 PM! Check out the [full calendar](#), and please RSVP! We will provide lunch and games for everyone to enjoy, so save the date and join us. Thank you for all that you do, and we hope to see you at these events!



Upcoming Events

- May 18 11:00 AM – All Hands Meeting (ZOOM)
- May 18 12:00 PM – Lunch Time Yoga
- May 22 12:00 PM – Lunch Time Walking and Running Groups
- May 31 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM – Picnic in the Park at Laurel Park (London Nelson Community Center)



Tuesday Night Live Summer Concert Series

The Tuesday Night Live Summer Concert Series at the Santa Cruz Wharf kicked off on Tuesday, May 9, 2023 with The Lost Boys band featuring James Durbin! It was a full two hours of singing and dancing with our community! Thank you to the Parking Department for selling local passes and the Police Volunteers for the watchful eyes in creating a safe space for all to enjoy. The next free concert will be on Tuesday, June 13, 2023 with Extra Large from 6:00 PM–8:00 PM! More information available [online](#).

Affordable Housing Month Kick-Off a Success!

On May 6, 2023, the Housing Division joined Housing Santa Cruz County and Santa Cruz Public Libraries at the Affordable Housing Month Community Conversation & Celebration at Cabrillo College. Participants were able to visit multiple booths from local organizations and learn about affordable housing in our community. Thank you to all who were able to attend! You can participate in many more events for Affordable Housing Month—more information is available [online](#).



Branciforte Branch Library Grand Reopening

The Santa Cruz Public Libraries is excited to welcome back to the community the newly renovated Branciforte Branch Library. As a result of the Measure S community investment, the Branciforte Branch has been reimaged to meet the needs of modern library users.

This 6,800 square foot renovation includes a new community room, a dedicated teen-only space, significant electrical and accessibility upgrades, and the Allison Endert Memorial Children's room and outdoor patio.

The Branciforte Branch will be open six days a week, Monday-Thursday from 10:00 AM-6:00 PM, and Friday and Saturday from 10:00 AM-5:00 PM. Branciforte Branch Library is located at 230 Gault Street, Santa Cruz.



Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program Update

Back in April of 2022, the Santa Cruz Water Department (SCWD) opted to participate in the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). The federally funded assistance program provides one-time payments to low-income households for past due water and wastewater utility charges, as well as funds for several future bills.

So far, 37 households have participated in this program, and 25 of those households have had their entire past due balances covered. The average amount of assistance received for participating SCWD customer households has been \$986. For the time being, this is the only low-income direct assistance program available to our customers, and with shut-offs for nonpayment beginning next week,

we are encouraging customers to take advantage of this program. Roughly 180 self-declared low-income customers have received direct outreach for this program, and our new [webpage](#) will guide inquiring customers to the program application.



Garfield Park and Playground Renovations Complete!

The Parks and Recreation Department celebrated the reopening of Garfield Park with the community. Lots of neighbors attended, and we officially cut the ribbon! The project was funded by a grant from the State of California's Prop 68 2018 Parks and Water Bond. The revitalized park features exciting new amenities for visitors, including playgrounds for younger and older children with innovative climbing features; benches, picnic tables, and other site furnishings; a new outdoor game area with cornhole, foosball, and tetherball; refurbished pathway; and water-efficient plantings. Make sure to stop by and check it out!



Outdoor Dining Parklet Applications Open



Applications are now open for the outdoor dining permanent parklet program. Businesses can choose between two pre-approved customizable designs, choose to retrofit their current parklet, or create their own design. For pre-approved designs, businesses will be eligible to receive up to \$10,000 in grant funds to

cover the cost of construction, but not accessories. Retrofit or custom designs are eligible for funds up to \$5,000 with the same constraints.

To apply with expedited review, applications are due June 30, 2023. This allows for transition time to a permanent parklet before the current temporary program expires on October 31, 2023. More information available [online](#).

The Santa Cruzer 2023 Season Launches Memorial Weekend

What is big, colorful, and an affordable, sustainable way to get to the beach this summer? The Santa Cruzer! The City's shuttle makes its debut this year, replacing the historic trolley for easy and convenient downtown-beach transportation. The Santa Cruzer shuttle is all-electric, eco-friendly, ADA-accessible, and an enjoyable way to experience what Santa Cruz has to offer for all ages.

Shuttle rides are \$1.00 and run Noon–8:00 PM on weekends and holidays between Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day, including 4th of July. The Downtown-Beach route stops at the Del Mar Theater, Locust Street Garage, and the Marine Sanctuary Exploration Center.

The Santa Cruzer is a program of the Economic Development and Housing Department. Economic Development operates the shuttle; however, the program would not be possible without the generosity and commitment of our local Santa Cruz business and organization sponsors, along with an AB 2766 grant from the Monterey Bay Air Quality Control

District in cooperation with the City of Santa Cruz. The Santa Cruzer program is pleased to be working with First Transit, Inc., providing outstanding drivers and maintenance staff.

Learn more [online](#).



City Submits Housing Element Update First Draft

The Housing Element is a document updated every eight years to identify and plan for the City's existing and projected housing needs. It contains a detailed outline and work program of the City's goals, policies, and objectives for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing for a sustainable future. The Housing Element is reviewed and certified by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The City submitted the first draft of its Housing Element Update to HCD on May 10, 2023, and HCD will now have up to 90 days to review the draft and provide comments to the City.

Learn more about the process and view the first draft of the Housing Element Update [online](#).

The City is accepting feedback from the public during the HCD review period. Refinements to the Housing Element Update will be considered this summer based on feedback from HCD and the public. Please contact Principal Planner [Matt VanHua](#) if you have any questions.

Wastewater Treatment Facility

Our Wastewater Collection team has performed their annual storm water pump station cleaning as part of their flood control responsibilities. Some processes can be automated, but these require good old-fashioned human interface!



Small Business Office Hours Event Piloted

As part of small business week, the Business Services Team piloted Small Business Office Hours. The event was created to bring business services to the public instead of asking them to come to us. Small Business Office Hours was held on May 4, 2023 from 1:00 PM-3:00 PM at 11th Hour's Westside location.

During the event, individuals were given the chance to meet one-on-one with representatives from the Economic Development Department and discussed topics such as financing options, permitting and licensing, marketing and promotion, and business planning and strategy and were recommended to partner organizations and mentorship opportunities.

The Business Services team spoke with seven attendees whose businesses ranged from restaurant and shop owners to startup entrepreneurs hoping to learn about pathways to scaling up and opening a storefront.

Additionally, the Business Services Team spoke with those walking by who were curious to learn more about the efforts of the City to grow economic vitality and support every kind of business.



1800 Soquel Avenue Mixed-Use Development

Over the last several months, the Planning and Community Development Department has been processing an application to redevelop the property at 1800 Soquel Avenue with a four-story mixed-use development consisting of 1,497 square feet of ground floor retail and 84 residential units. A pre-application was deemed complete per SB 330 in October 2022 and is, therefore, not subject to the objective development standards for multi-family development that were adopted by the City Council in December 2022. The project includes a request for a Density Bonus involving incentives, concessions, and waivers to development standards, including exceeding height (by approximately six feet) and a reduction in parking and open space requirements. The plans illustrate that the project consists of 67 base units, which is the number of units that can be provided in a fully conforming project. Of the 67 units, the Zoning Ordinance requires 14 units, or 20%, to be provided as inclusionary units restricted to 80% Area Median Income (AMI). However, the project also includes a request for a Density Bonus to allow for a 32.5% bonus of market rate

units by restricting seven of the affordable units to very low-income households earning 50% AMI.

On May 3, 2023 a community meeting was held to present the project to the community and allow for the developer and the City to gather feedback, answer questions, and make potential alterations to the project design to address input received. Approximately 48 participants joined the Zoom meeting, with questions and concerns ranging from height and massing, parking, traffic, and impacts to the adjacent alleyway. Participants supporting the project recognized the need for housing, the elimination of the current uses on the site that have created nuisance issues, and the positive impacts of redevelopment in the area. Ryan Bane is the planner working on the application.





Back Yard Composting Workshop Held

Waste Reduction staff and a Master Recycler volunteer joined efforts with local community composters to offer a workshop on Back Yard Composting. Attendees learned ways to troubleshoot and mitigate common challenges like moisture levels, odors, and pests. They even got to examine beneficial microbes through the lens of a microscope!

25th Annual NOLO Cleanup Held

On April 29, 2023, Resource Recovery staff helped to collect items at the Neighbors of Lower Ocean (NOLO) Cleanup. This event was NOLO's 25th annual spring clean-up day held in partnership with the City Planning Code Compliance Division, Public Works (Sanitation), Parks and Recreation, NOLO neighborhood, and the Grey Bears nonprofit organization. The event encourages property owners, tenants, and business owners to keep their neighborhoods free of clutter and rubbish. Through the cleanup, useable/household items are diverted from the landfill by neighbors' exchange or by Grey Bears.



100 Attend Paper Shred Event

On Saturday, May 6, 2023, about 100 community members came out for the 2nd Annual Paper Shred Event held adjacent to City Hall. Paper documents were securely cross-shredded onsite.

Waste Reduction Staff Provide Outreach at Downtown Farmers Market

On Wednesday, May 10, 2023, Waste Reduction staff returned to in-person outreach at the Downtown Farmers Market. Interested community members took the Recycle Right Challenge and received answers to their questions about the City's Food Scrap Diversion Program.



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