



CITY COUNCIL

		<u>Term Expires</u>
Adele Della Santina 2704 St. James Rd. Belmont, CA 94002	595-3551 (home) 699-8150 (voice mail) 595-3551 (fax)	11/99
Coralin Feierbach 3206 East Laurel Creek Rd. Belmont, CA 94002	593-3550 (home) 593-0542 (fax)	11/99
Nancy Levitt, Mayor 2580 Somerset Dr. Belmont, CA 94002	508-8340 (home) 857-6868 (work) 593-6310 (fax)	11/97
Gary M. Harris, Vice Mayor 2007 Forest Ave. Belmont, CA 94002	595-4923 (home) 508-8259 (work) 594-0748 (fax)	11/97
Pamela Rianda <i>Brianna</i> 4217 Skymont Dr. Belmont, CA 94002	591-3810 (home) 638-8989 (pager) 508-2100 (fax)	11/97

The City Council meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.
in the Twin Pines Senior and Community Center, 1225 Ralston Ave., Belmont.

City Manager: Damon B. Edwards

595-7408

Rev 11/95

1365 Fifth Avenue
Belmont, California 94002-3893
TDD (Hearing or Speech Impaired only)
(415) 595-5606

City Hall project gets go-ahead

Additional funds may allow for new council chambers

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

The Belmont City Council last week voted unanimously to go ahead with a \$9.7 million plan to remodel City Hall to include a new police headquarters and a seismic retrofit.

Approved at the council meeting Aug. 24, the agreement will pay San Francisco-based Ekona Architecture \$691,600 for architecture and engineering design work for the first two phases of the project, and for negotiations with contractors for the project's first phase.

The amount is in addition to \$67,000 paid earlier to the firm to create some preliminary design options.

"We're all real excited because we now have a package...to go forward with to give the police a new facility and assure that (City Hall) is going to be a safe building for all the employees that work here," said City Manager Susan Westman.

The first phase of the project, estimated to cost approximately \$4.5 million, will include a new lobby area, landscaping, changes to parking lots around City Hall, and moving the police from their current small quarters in Twin Pines Park into facilities on the first and second floor of the building.

To deal with concerns that the L-shaped structure could buckle inward from an earthquake, the plan creates a new lobby area to act as a wedge to stabilize the wings of the building.

Recalling plans created several years ago to upgrade the building, Councilmember Adele Della Santina questioned why they were abandoned, and whether the city was shelling out money to pay for what it had already received.

Other council members and city staff were quick to point out that the earlier plans did not address seismic issues, and that it was not initially known that the structure did not meet earthquake safety standards for an office building.

"The fact that this building was unsafe



SUSAN GARRISON

The Belmont City Hall building is about to undergo major retrofitting and remodeling to allow for expanded usage.

had never been brought out," said Mayor Coralin Feierbach of the earlier project. "The amount that was going to be spent was going to be spent for cosmetics, not for retrofitting."

Westman added that one of the first things she was given when she became city manager a couple of years ago was a set of the earlier plans that called for a separate police facility next to City Hall.

"There were considerable discussions taking place about how far that building had to be from the existing City Hall building because the existing City Hall building didn't meet current earthquake standards," she said.

Though she did not have the figures on hand, Westman estimated that the earlier

\$400,000 and \$500,000.

"As a city manager, I have great anxiety that I have my employees working in a building that I have been put on notice is unsafe," she said. Moving the police department into City Hall proved more cost effective than building a new police building, she added.

"The solution we have come up with, which will move the police in on the first and second floor and do the retrofit of the existing building ... is an excellent solution," she said. "It's only been able to come about because the police department has been extremely cooperative and willing to compromise on a number of issues."

Westman added that, in the coming months, the architect will work out some

City Hall that will be reviewed by the planning commission.

The second phase of the project includes upgrades to city department areas and improvements to spaces in the building that are leased by outside tenants. These improvements, however, could still be years in the making and dependent on when funding becomes available, according to city officials.

Renovations to the council chambers weren't included in the original plans, but the subject was recently broached as a possible third phase. Funding for the new chambers could be acquired through refinancing old city debts, city officials explained. The issue of a third project phase will be brought to the City Council

City Council meeting Aug 31 - 11:30 AM
City Hall Boardroom

City Council
The Independent
Aug 4, 1999

Councilmember will not run again

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Surprising a small audience that had stayed to the close of a Belmont city council meeting July 27, two term Councilmember Adele Della Santina announced that she would not be among those running for political office this fall.

Della Santina, who had taken out candidate papers from the city clerk's office, said she made her announcement early in an effort to draw out other potential candidates, who might have been inhibited by running against two incumbents for the two council seats that are up for grabs this November.

"It's been a tremendous learning experience," said the realtor of her eight years on the city council. Della Santina, who joined city council in 1991 after a nine-year stint on the city's planning commission, said that among the highlights of her time in office have been involvement in Bay Area transportation and working on housing issues.

The current chair of the SamTrans Board of Directors, Della Santina was selected as a



Adele Della Santina

representative to the district six or seven years ago, a role she said she quickly found that she loved.

"My friends tell me I light up when I talk about transportation," she said, adding that she'd like to continue to be involved in transit issues in some capacity after her term ends.

"I'm not getting out of the whole picture," she said. "I hope to share what I know with people."

Belmont Chamber of Commerce President Tom Diridon said that Della Santina offered a strong voice for business to the city council, one that will be sorely missed.

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COUNCIL: Not running in November

Continued from 1A

"She's always been a big supporter of business. I think she brought a lot of wisdom to the board," said Diridon, who added that its well known that the rest of the council is not particularly pro-business and development. "I'm sad to see her leave."

Originally from Petaluma, Della Santina moved to Belmont in the mid 1970s to raise her two children, who are now grown - a task she had to take on alone after the death of her husband.

"My first profession was being a full time mom and dad," she said, adding that as her kids grew and learned to drive, it freed her up

for other ventures such as a career as a realtor.

The more than 20-year Belmont resident, recalled though that making up her mind to first run for city council led to a little queasy uneasiness.

"I made the decision and got really sick," she said, adding that her intent was to fill a void on the council, offering up experience from her years on city's the planning commission.

Despite the many hours she put in, Della Santina she could not take credit for any one achievement accomplished by the city during her time on the council.

"Every decision had so many par-

ticipants," she explained. "I would be remiss in saying that I personally affected something."

Della Santina's advice for future successors?

"Be a good listener," she says. "Assess all the information."

"City government should be all about 'Let's get along and (move) forward.'"

At press time, incumbent mayor Coralin Feierbach, planning commissioner Dave Warden, and resident Paul Wright had all taken out candidate papers for city council, according to the city clerk's office, though no one had returned them. The filing deadline is Friday.

Della Santina announces she won't run again

By Jessica M. Scully
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Councilwoman Adele Della Santina announced Tuesday that she would not run for re-election in November.

"By announcing I was not going to file, I'm hoping that other candidates that weren't going to run because I was there might come forth," Della Santina said.

In the past, Della Santina has been in the minority vote on several issues.

Her vote blocked an attempt in December to put a \$10 million bond to buy open space in the San Juan Canyon on the ballot.

Della Santina said opposition from other council members isn't the reason why she was leaving, and that recently council member votes have been more evenly split.

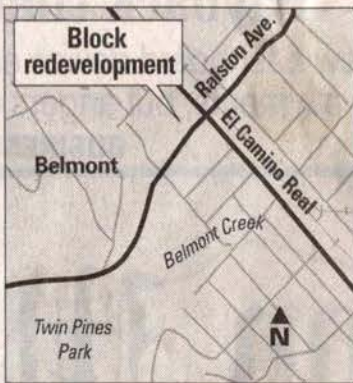
"I think we're all over the board right now," she said.

Della Santina has been on the council for the past eight years and was a member of the city's Planning Commission for nine years.

She said she is most proud of her work in transportation as a member of the San Mateo County Transportation Authority and a Caltrain joint powers board.

Aug 18 - 1999

Downside of a face lift



STEPHEN REICH - Staff

Businesses in Belmont wary of El Camino plans

By Jessica M. Scully
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — City officials are considering ways to redevelop a block that they hope will one day be part of a vital downtown.

But business owners in the block are worried that they might not be a part of the new plan.

Located on El Camino Real at Ralston Avenue, the area is known to many in the city as "the Walgreen block" for the drugstore that is its most visible tenant.

Other tenants and owners include a printing shop, a dry cleaner, a restaurant and a security guard company.

The block is considered an eyesore by some, who feel that the owner of part of the block has been slack on upkeep. Some think that a Blockbuster Video store in the block is unsightly.

Upgrading the block "has been a priority as far as the whole downtown is concerned for many years," Vice Mayor Terri Cook said. "It's kind of the last block right in that major core intersection that needs to be looked at."

The Planning Commission has been examining ways to redevelop the block, commissioner and city council candidate David Warden said.

One scenario is for the city to buy the property and then to sell it to a developer at a lower cost, he said.

Some of the current buildings could be razed and new development added, he said. The Blockbuster Video building could be integrated into the development and its facade improved, he said.

Two business owners in the block say they would be happy to join a new development, but are worried they may not be included.

"I believe that there is an opportunity, if properly implemented, to greatly improve the sense of downtown on this block," said Brad Clore, owner of Belmont Hardware, a 60-year-old business.

"I hope it can be accomplished in a way that allows us

to stay and to stay in business," he said.

Clore said he hopes to expand his business' building. But if a new development that would demolish the building were approved and the business had to help pay for a new building and relocation, "it would be devastating," he said.

Clore said city officials have given him verbal assurances that they want Belmont Hardware to be part of any new development. But a verbal guarantee, he said, can't be taken to the bank.

"I would love to stay," said Moe Azadan, owner of Royal Printing. "But the point is, if they take the building apart, I have to go."

The idea is still very much in planning stages and the block could be redeveloped in many

different ways, said Dan Vanderpriem, director of the city's planning department.

Each individual lot could be redeveloped, a partnership could be created through a number of different property owners, or a master developer could be brought in to develop the whole area, he said.

You can reach staff writer Jessica Scully at 348-4341 or by e-mail at jscully@angnewsapers.com.

*The Independent
July 29, 1999*

City of Belmont is focus of local television show

Documentary is part of series about Peninsula

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

San Mateo County television viewers are getting a glimpse into the goings-on of Belmont, thanks to a new public access show that offers weekly profiles of local cities.

The first program in the series, a magazine-style show called "@ Your Service," focuses on an emergency simulation exercise that

was held at the city's College of Notre Dame, but also touches on current issues in Belmont.

The segment on Belmont aired on Peninsula TV several times last week and will be shown two more times this week.

"The show each week will originate from a different city," explained Bob Marks, interim director of Peninsula TV, who acts as producer for the program. Segments are based on one central event in a community, but the program also offers interviews with local officials and views of city sites.

The 30-minute program will pro-

file the city of San Mateo, Redwood City and Brisbane in the coming weeks.

"We'll get to everyone eventually," said Anne LeClair, director of the San Mateo Chamber of Commerce, who also acts as host for the program and interviews guests. She said the city segments filmed so far have gone smoothly and that acting as host of the show has proven an easy way to get to know local officials.

"It's fun because in a situation like that you really get to talk to (people)," she said, adding that suggestions for future shows keep coming in.

The show focusing on Belmont highlights an emergency tactical exercise that was held last May to help prepare area law enforcement and emergency crews for a potential terrorist attack or other emergency crisis.

The exercise involved a total of 175 police, fire and medical personnel from throughout the county, as well as college personnel helping to unravel a tense hostage situation. Local students volunteered to play hostages and victims wounded in the simulated attack while a handful of Marines volunteered to play gunman and attempted to foil the efforts of law

enforcement groups in the county.

In addition, the segment features an interview with the Belmont Mayor Coralin Feierbach, views of Belmont's Twin Pines Park and a discussion with Sheriff Don Horsley following the emergency simulation.

Marks said that while the recent exercise provided prime subject matter for the first show, the city has also been a strong supporter of public television. "Belmont has had a major role in taking local television to this point," he said.

The show will be presented July 13 and 14 at 7 p.m. on cable channel 8.

*City of Belmont
July 14, 1999*

City Council
The Independent
Aug 4, 1989

Council puts brakes on ongoing

Survey examines problems on Ralston Avenue in Belmont

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Questioning whether the city is getting all that it's paying for, the Belmont City Council decided last week to hold off granting additional funds to complete a traffic study of a portion of Ralston Avenue.

The study, which is currently being reviewed by the planning commission and has sparked contention at two public forums, examines possible solutions for traffic problems on the street.

But City Council members said that among other things, they are disappointed

with a lack of input from residents in creating the initial report.

"I did go to the presentation at the planning commission," said Councilmember Eleanore Hahn, who initiated discussion of the issue at a council meeting July 27. "One of the things I was a little discouraged about in the presentation was they came up with an awful lot of things people in Belmont were very displeased with.

"It led me to believe that maybe they were pulling some solutions out of a canned package ... and weren't really looking at the uniqueness of the community and our needs."

Dan Vanderprie, director of planning and community development, said that various, although not necessarily popular, ideas were presented so that the commissioners and residents could look at all pos-

sible solutions.

"We know that people don't want major changes on Ralston, but how can you discard an option without ever having evaluated it?" he said.

An analysis of traffic on Ralston Avenue between El Camino Real and Alameda de las Pulgas, the study is intended to glean ideas for improving safety on the thoroughfare without compromising its scenic nature, according to city officials.

The study, which is the first major analysis of the street since the 1970s, looks at ways to improve access from Ralston to the Carlmont Village Shopping Center. It also accounts for traffic and potential problems that could be spurred by expansions planned by College of Notre Dame and Notre Dame High School.

The Ralston entrance to the college was

traffic study

discussed during recent presentations, including measures to slow traffic on the street, such as signals, speed humps, raised crosswalks and electronic speed enforcement signs.

While some residents criticized the analysis' lack of focus on bicycle riders and pedestrian safety, others suggested taking a gentle approach, and cautioned against changes that could bottleneck the flow of traffic and make the vital street difficult for city residents to use.

In light of the new concerns and various suggestions brought up in public discussion, city staff recommended increasing the contract of the consultant hired for the study, Wilbur Smith and Associates, from an original \$15,000 to no more than \$24,140.

TRAFFIC: page 4A

TRAFFIC: Study on hold

Continued from 1A

Councilmembers argued though that at least some of the questions, concerns and ideas brought up in the recent forum should have been included in the study or easily answered by the consultant.

"I don't know who they spoke to but for \$15,000, I would have hoped they would have at least spoken to neighborhood associations or neighbors in the area..." said Councilmember Pam Rianda. "If they don't

have these answers, how could they possibly make recommendations that they brought forth in this report?"

"I really don't see any reason to spend the next \$10,000 on this," added Mayor Coralie Feierbach, who has expressed her dismay over the status of the street, charging that a glut of out-of-town commuters use the road as a conduit between Highways 280 and 101.

"People just don't want an awful lot of change on Ralston," she said.

Belmont City Council
The Independent
Aug 7, 1999

Belmont measures

By Jessica M. Scully
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Eight months ago, residents and city officials were worried that two citywide ballot measures would compete on the November ballot, dooming one of the measures to failure, according to residents and officials.

But Friday was the deadline to get a measure on the November ballot, and organizers say Belmont will have none.

Organizers maintain, however, that proposed measures to raise money to replace the city's cramped, outmoded library and buy and preserve open space in San Juan Canyon aren't dead.

But if they do reappear, the mea-

asures could look much different, organizers say. And they could be joined by a measure to raise funds to repair the city's sewer and storm drain infrastructure.

A library task force has been meeting since December to figure out what the community wants from a new library.

But as the deadline neared, members soon realized they didn't have enough time.

"If you want a good facility, there's nothing wrong with taking time," said former task force member Marc Sola. "We just decided we had to take it at whatever pace it occurred."

The city has set aside \$40,000 to

pay for a library consultant. Task force members still aren't certain how big a new library should be, how much it could cost, and how to pay for it, City Manager Susan Westman said.

But at least one task force member hopes for a library about three times larger than the current library's tiny structure, which is located on Alameda de las Pulgas. Member Ray Burger hopes for a library of that size and estimates that a bond measure of about \$8 million could pay for it.

Westman said it is still not clear whether a bond measure would be the best way to fund a new library. Other statewide measures on the November ballot could provide part of the funding, she said.

miss deadline

Last fall, supporters of a \$10 million bond measure to buy land in San Juan Canyon and preserve it as open space worried about competing with a bond measure for the library.

But the San Juan Canyon bond supporters have had to rethink their approach since the measure was killed by one council member vote in December.

A private nonprofit, the San Juan Canyon Preservation Trust, has sprung up to try to raise funds for the canyon.

Now organizers are contemplating a smaller bond, perhaps \$3 million.

For many residents, "Ten (million) was giving them sticker shock," said Eric Dentler, a longtime supporter of buying the canyon for open space.

Supporters will now focus on buying

the flatter properties in the canyon that would be most attractive to developers, Dentler said.

Trust members may also use part of the organization's \$30,000 in seed money to educate residents about the value of open space and alert them to possibly increased traffic if the canyon is developed.

Residents need to learn "that it's not just a tree-hugging campaign," Dentler said.

Fixing the infrastructure and making improvements to the plant would cost \$2 million, Fil said.

You can reach staff writer Jessica Scully at 348-4341 or by e-mail at jscully@angnewspapers.com.

City Council
The Independent
Jan 13, 1999

Belmont and San Carlos prepare for Y2K

Cities map out what they are doing to get ready for the millenium

By Amy Wallace and Amy Yarbrough
Independent Newspapers

As the clock struck midnight on Dec. 31, many people's thoughts immediately turned to the coming millennium and what changes it would bring.

Government officials and computer specialists have predicted, for a long time now, that major problems could occur when the internal dating systems on millions of computers and computer chips flip from the year 1999 to 2000.

Most personal computers use programs that use two digits instead of four to designate the date — for example, "99" instead of "1999." So when the date changes to 2000, it may read the last two digits as "00" and could interpret it as "1900."

The cities of Belmont and San Carlos have both been working on making sure their computer systems are updated to be able to read the Year 2000 correctly.

The City of Belmont is taking on the long process of testing computers in eight city departments to identify and correct potential computer glitches before the year 2000.

"I haven't run into any problems so far," said Valerie Harnish technology specialist for the City of Belmont who heads up the city's fight against the "Y2K bug."

Harnish estimated that so far 35 to 40 percent of the computers in city departments have been checked. Testing of the computers will determine whether or not the computers' internal clocks will

recognize the year 2000 and whether the software the computers are using will be compliant. Harnish said that testing of the city's computers should continue for the next month or so.

"It's more time-consuming than it is costly," she said.

For computers that may not recognize the year 2000, software will be installed that will trick the computers internal clocks into recognizing the new millennium. Harnish added, however, that it is also important that software programs like spreadsheets also be able to recognize the new millennium.

The city's departments have also begun to send out letters to software vendors that provide programs that are used on city computers, asking them whether their product is year 2000 compliant and, if not, what steps vendors are taking to prepare them.

Belmont's Finance Department has already taken some preparatory steps of its own, according to Finance Director Thomas Fil.

"We've already had our software provider come in and do an update," he said.

Fil added that city officials are also working to create the technology plan that will not only address the year 2000 compliance problem but also identify the city government's technology needs for the next five years.

Harnish said that although the City of Belmont is using steps that are similar to what other cities are doing and taking all the known

Y2K: Getting prepared

Continued from 1A

precautions to date to prepare the city computers for the new millennium, all of the year 2000's effects will remain to be seen.

"None of us really knows what's going to happen when the date rolls over," she said.

SAN CARLOS

The City of San Carlos has been working on its Y2K problem since last summer, beginning with its major computer systems.

"We have been looking into this and have determined that we are in pretty good shape," said Brian Moura, assistant city manager for San Carlos. "We tend to keep our software very up to date which helps us avoid problems."

Moura explained that the city does not write its own software for its computer systems, it contracts out its software from other companies.

"By getting our computer software from other companies, we are able to write language into the contracts that require the software we buy to be Y2K compliant," said Moura.

He explained that some of the larger governmental agencies

such as the Internal Revenue Service write their own computer software programs so in order to make them Y2K compliant they have to rewrite their software which could take a long time. That's why most federal agencies have been working on this problem for several years already but smaller cities that do not write their own programs do not need as much time to work on the problem.

According to Moura, the City of San Carlos began its Y2K computer bug work by first contacting utility agencies the city uses such as Pacific Gas and Electric Co., Pacific Bell and TCI Cable to make sure that all the agencies had a plan to fix the Y2K computer problem so it would not effect the cities they serve.

"All of the utilities stated that they had a plan they were working on for the Y2K problem," said Moura.

The next step was to work on the city's computer systems such as the finance department system and the recreation department system.

"Some of the areas we are focusing our attention on include the

registration software for the Recreation Department," said Moura. "Also, updating software in the Finance Department as well as desktop computers for city employees."

The next phase after working on the city computer systems is to look at other areas such as traffic signal controllers and emergency generators.

"From what we've seen so far, there does not look like there will need to be a lot of changes in these areas," said Moura.

The another phase of the plan is a community outreach program.

"We want to educate small businesses and residents on making sure their computer programs are Y2K-compliant," said Moura, "and also get the word out on what areas could possibly be effected by a Y2K computer glitch."

According to Moura, the city is concerned about its small businesses that have small staffs and may not have the resources or knowledge on how to fix their computer systems.

Finally, the city will check back with the utility companies to get updates on what their plans are and how the progress is going.

Belmont City Essence
The Independent
Jan 20, 1999

JANUARY 20, 1999

THE INDEPENDENT SERVING BELMONT AND SAN CARLOS

New design review ordinance slated for Belmont

Council votes to introduce plan for stricter standards

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Stressing that neighbors should have a say in safeguarding the character of their neighborhoods, the Belmont City Council introduced an ordinance last week that would require new homes and some home additions to meet design review standards.

At its meeting Jan. 12, the Belmont City Council voted 4-1 to introduce the design review ordinance. The ordinance sets aesthetic standards which would be used by the Belmont Planning Commission to evaluate all new single-family homes and home additions greater than 400 square feet.

"It's a tool for citizens to give input when large additions or new houses come in their neighborhood," Belmont Mayor Coralin Feierbach said at the recent meeting, adding that she thinks resi-

dents should be given a voice when they think the design of a new house or addition conflicts with other houses in the neighborhood.

Design review fees would be \$178 for both new homes and additions. The ordinance, however, must be brought back for a second reading and a public hearing at future meeting before it is adopted. If passed, the ordinance would be effective 30 days after it is adopted.

Among the new standards that the design review ordinance spells out are that when new homes or certain additions are built, materials that blend with the surrounding neighborhood and natural environment of the property should be used.

The ordinance also stresses that developers should take efforts to protect existing trees on the property, that measures should be taken to control erosion during construction, and that the building of level-lot-type homes on lots with greater than a 30 percent slope should be avoided.

Critics, however, argue that the

city would be going too far with the ordinance and that it could stifle the creativity of homeowners.

"We have so many custom-built homes in Belmont, and that's what makes us so unique," said Council Member Adele Della Santina, who voted against introducing the ordinance.

"When we start saying we need this or we need this or so much of that, what we're really doing is homogenizing," she added. "We really should very, very careful about that."

Robin West, a Belmont resident who said she plans to eventually build an addition to her 700-square-foot home, argued that she wouldn't want to make her addition to look like her neighbors' homes because she doesn't care for the design.

"(We want) to have our chance at creating the cutest little dream home that we can come up with," West said, speaking before the City Council.

She added, "I want you to leave the idea of creativity alone."

Dennis Pantano, of Pantano

Properties in Belmont, said he thinks the ordinance will "pit neighbor against neighbor" and that it's too difficult to define what look is compatible in certain areas of the city.

"I think what you're going to end up with (is) people that have an opinion that sit on the Planning Commission designing someone else's home," said Pantano. "I would love to hear one of the five council members define what is compatible in San Juan (Canyon) or any one given street."

However, Gloria Purcell of the Belmont Planning Commission stressed that the design review ordinance was created to give builders an idea of what the Planning Commission expects, ahead of time, and that the group would take care to weigh the interests of involved parties.

"I'd like to point out, first of all, that the Planning Commission serves the city and serves our neighbors," she said. "We are neighbors for each other in Belmont and certainly we mean to do our very best."

City Council
The Independent
Feb 3, 1999

Council to renew curfew

Revisions sought to deter teen loitering

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

The Belmont City Council voted to reinstitute the city's curfew ordinance last week, continuing an effort that police say is working to deter youths from cutting class and mingling on the streets at late hours.

The ordinance – Article III of the Belmont City Code – now also includes new provisions aimed at curbing teen smoking and prohibiting hotel and motel owners from letting rooms to minors, was originally adopted in December 1996. However, due to a clause in the ordinance which set it to expire in December 1998, it had to be renewed.

"We found it to be a (valuable) tool," said Sgt. Patrick Halleran of the Belmont Police Department, who said it is designed not only to prevent juvenile crime but to protect minors from becoming victims of crime "We'd like to continue to use it."

Under the ordinance, juveniles under 18 are prohibited from loitering or remaining in public places from 11 p.m. on any day to 6 a.m. the following day, without being accompanied by a parent or other adult guardian.

In an effort to prevent truancy, the ordinance also sets daytime curfew hours under which students cannot linger in public places from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on days when school is in session, or when school hasn't been dismissed early.

The ordinance sets punishments for citations which may impose varying degrees of fines and community service depending on whether the incident is a first offense or a second or third offense within a year. Police also have the option of giving minors a warning and contacting their parents.

New, however, are sections dealing renting or letting rooms to minors and possession of tobacco for use by minors.

"We had a number of cases where juveniles will secure a room with a friend's (credit card) in order to have a party," said Ivan Grosshauser, a detective/juvenile officer with the Belmont Police Department.

The ordinance now states that anyone who rents or lets a room or rooms to a minor under the age of 17

CURFEW: City ordinance renewed

Continued from 1A

who is not accompanied by a parent or legal guardian must call police immediately and provide a written report within 24 hours to the Belmont Police Department.

The section pertaining to tobacco reiterates that it is illegal for people under 18 to have tobacco in their possession, intended for use.

This, according to Halleran, gives local police more flexibility in determining the punishment for kids who are caught smoking or in possession of tobacco products. Previously, he said, an offender might have just received a citation to appear in juvenile court.

Shawna Warneke, a 17-year-old Carlmont High school student and city resident, said that from her experience, a curfew in Belmont doesn't make much sense, "particularly if you are just standing there and not doing anything wrong."

Warneke was recently cited in Burlingame for violating the city's 10 p.m. curfew. Recounting the incident, she said that she was

standing in front of her car at approximately 10:15 p.m., preparing to leave, when police cited her. Warneke later fought the citation, which would have imposed a fine, and won.

"To a point, they are a good idea," Warneke said, adding that curfews could be useful for some cities but that Belmont doesn't offer much in the way of evening activities for teens.

"Nobody really stays in Belmont who lives in Belmont," she said, adding that because there is not much for teens to do at night in the city, most of her peers opt to go to nearby cities like Burlingame and San Mateo.

Belmont police, however, contend that department records show the roughly two-year-old truancy and curfew sections of the ordinance are working.

According to Belmont Police Department reports, from Feb. 1, 1997 — when enforcement of Article III of the Belmont city code began — to Dec. 31, 1998 there were 44 reported instances of truancy.

Of those cases 36, or 88 percent, were first-time warnings; six, or 14 percent, were second warnings; and only two, or 4 percent, of the students were given citations.

Police records also indicate that during the same time period there were 20 cases of curfew violation, 19 or 95 percent of which were first warnings and one or 5 percent of which was a second warning. There were no curfew citations during this period.

Grosshauser, who deals mainly with student truancy and contends that truancy can lead to further criminal activity, said that when parents are sent letters regarding their child's truancy or are notified that their child had been approached by officers for violating curfew — it can often be an eye opener.

Most parents, he said, are unaware their children are cutting class or are out past curfew. "Some of them were less than happy with this," Grosshauser added, but they are mainly angry with their children and not necessarily police.

copy received
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Feb 17, 1999

Belmont one step

Bicycle/pedestrian bridge would allow access over Hwy. 101

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Last week may have proved a boon to Belmont's bicycle riders. At a meeting Feb. 9 the Belmont City Council approved a resolution needed to pursue a grant to build a bicycle and pedestrian bridge above U.S. Highway 101 and create a city bikeway. City officials anticipate that the project will help to ease congestion and increase safety for bicyclists. "Several months ago the city had

the dubious distinction of being listed on the top 10 most treacherous bike routes in San Mateo County," said Leslie Hopper, senior planner for the City of Belmont, referring to a study conducted by the San Mateo-based Mid-Peninsula Bicycle Coalition last August. "The finger was pointed at the Ralston overcrossing at (U.S. Highway 101)," she said. In an effort to remedy the situation, the proposed bicycle and pedestrian bridge - which will

closer to bike bridge

located above U.S. Highway 101 north of Ralston Avenue - will connect the west side of Belmont with the Belmont Sports Complex located east of the highway and join together segments of a proposed bicycle route. In addition, the accompanying bikeway - which will call for creating new bicycle lanes and paths - will enable riders to travel from the train station at Old County Road along the Sterling Downs neighborhood toward Nesbit Elementary School on Biddulph Way, said Hopper. Riders will also have access to bicycle lanes on Oxford Way, which would lead over the new bridge and onto a path to the

Belmont Sports Complex and the proposed Oracle development. "We've done quite a bit of talking about this in Homeview and Sterling Downs (neighborhood associations)," Gloria Purcell of the Belmont Planning Commission said at the recent meeting. "Everybody feels very strongly about the safety of children going over to the sports complex. This will free them up to take their bicycles where they couldn't before because of fears for their safety." In order to finance the project, which is estimated to cost \$2.5 million, last November the city applied for a grant from the City/County Association of Governments.

In addition, the city had to complete an environmental review of the project in order to apply for the grant. While initial plans had to be modified to move the bikeway off Masonic Way and Granada Street, due to neighbors' concerns about traffic and the potential loss of street parking, Hopper said the environmental review of the project concluded that the project would have no significant impact on the environment. Taking the next part of the necessary procedure to go forward in the grant approval process, the Belmont City Council adopted a declaration last week stating that

BIKE: page 9A

BIKE: Bridge planned

Continued from 1A
the project wouldn't have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

"As the group that initially pushed (for this), we're very pleased to see it arrive at this point," Scott Mace of the Mid-Peninsula Bicycle Coalition said at the meeting, but he added that the project is not a final solution to improve local bicyclists' safety. "I hope it's clear to everyone that Ralston Avenue will continue to be used by bicyclists," he said. "We hope that over time Ralston (Avenue) can be kept as safe as possible."

While the city is seeking funding from a variety of funding programs to cover a majority of the project's costs, the city may also have to pay for a percentage of the costs itself - money that could be set aside when the city irons out next year's budget, according to Belmont City Manager Susan Westman.

City Council
The Independent
March 17, 1999

Neighborhood Associations voice concerns

Feierbach met with groups on solutions

by Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Hoping to encourage dialogue between Belmont's residents and city officials, Mayor Coraline Feierbach recently began meeting with the city's various neighborhood associations to address comments and concerns about the area.

Feierbach began what she said will be a series of meetings by recently sitting down with members of the Cipriani and Plateau Skymont neighborhood associations. She also plans to meet with the Central and Hallmark neighborhood associations and members of other groups, including local condominium organizations, in the near future.

"I believe in total participation," Feierbach said, explaining her motivation behind the meetings. "...I've never known the mayor to go to each homeowners' association."

At the recent meetings, the mayor fielded questions and told residents how to keep in contact with her as future issues develop. Among the concerns brought to Feierbach were traffic, the grade separation and the appearance of downtown Belmont.

Feierbach stressed, however, that the meetings were not idle talk

and she would seek solutions to residents' concerns.

"It's not all input — there's going to be something done," Feierbach said, adding the sessions unleashed both angry and constructive comments from residents.

"What I can do is try to take genuine citizens' concerns about their neighborhood and try to bring (them) to the forefront so that the (city) staff knows about it and ... can do something about it," she said.

Cipriani Neighborhood Association

At a meeting held Thursday March 11, Feierbach — who was accompanied by the city's code enforcement officer as well as a police officer — met with roughly 40 members of the Cipriani Neighborhood Association, whose area borders Alameda de las Pulgas, Sugar Loaf Mountain and San Juan Canyon.

To the 350-member association, President John Boykin said the issues of parking and traffic are paramount.

"Speeding drivers is the single biggest concern here," said Boykin, adding that he has also been compiling a list of traffic hazards and dangerous intersections in the area brought to him by neighborhood residents.

For example, Boykin said, some neighborhood residents contend that on-street parking presents a traffic hazard to drivers in the

neighborhood.

He added, "I live on San Juan and the street lights work about half of the time."

As a result of the meeting, Feierbach said she would discuss solving the traffic hazards mentioned by residents with city staff and promised to pass on such suggestions as placing speed bumps on particular streets where drivers are prone to speeding.

Feierbach admitted the problem of traffic in the city is a tough problem to tackle.

"People have to realize ... more growth equals more traffic," she said.

Feierbach added that she heard complaints regarding the recent closure of Harbor Boulevard to eastbound traffic as part of the grade separation project.

It was also suggested that the city remove the barrier between Belmont and San Carlos that exists on Hallmark Drive to alleviate traffic congestion — an idea Feierbach said she definitely does not support.

In addition, the mayor addressed comments from the neighborhood's residents, who were upset with the way the downtown looks.

Feierbach pointed out, however, that progress had been made with the recent opening of the new shopping plaza — which now houses Peet's Coffee and Tea — near Safeway on El Camino Real.

Feierbach added there are plans to resurface the portion of El Camino Real that runs through Belmont and would like to look

into additional landscaping and greenery in the downtown area.

"There's going to be a downtown that we can all be proud of," she said.

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At another recent meeting Feierbach spoke one-on-one with Jess Jones, president of the Plateau Skymont Neighborhood Association, an organization that represents 375 families in an area located north of Ralston close to the western boundary of the city.

Overall, Jones said the meeting was useful. Though not all residents' concerns in his neighborhood could be easily solved, he said it gave him the indication that Belmont City Council is listening.

"We want the City Council to listen to our needs." He added, "this kind of communication is essential."

Among the biggest issues for residents in his neighborhood, Jones contends, are traffic safety and the condition of certain roads in the area.

In addition, Jones said residents are concerned that building and city codes be strictly enforced in their area.

"Most of us would like to see the San Juan Canyon (issue) get settled," he added.

Belmont, RC enter agreement

Cities to share cost of direct access construction

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

In a joint effort to ease traffic jams during peak hour in Belmont and Redwood Shores, the Belmont City Council voted recently to enter into a cost sharing agreement with Redwood City for roadway improvements around Island Park and the Ralston Avenue connections with Highway 101.

The agreement will split the estimated cost of \$8 million to design and construct a direct access route to Island Park and improvements at the Ralston Avenue and Highway 101 Interchange in Belmont.

City officials anticipate the project will also help lessen traffic woes when the Oracle Corp. adds another 1,300 employees to its Belmont operations.

"This would be a project in Belmont's interest for the Island Park direct access... but also in Redwood City's interest (for) the interchange at Ralston and 101," said Belmont Public Works Director John Curtis at the city council meeting March 23. The council also selected Mark Thomas and Co., Inc. of San Jose to serve as consultant and to design the project.

The Ralston-101 interchange improvements, which will be funded by Redwood City, will eliminate half of the looping cloverleaf of on and off ramps that currently connect Ralston and 101. Plans include adding right and left turn lanes at the 101 south off ramp connection to Ralston, and adding a signal to the intersection so that cars leaving the freeway can go either direction on the street.

Another major component of the interchange improvements will modify the northbound freeway off ramp so that cars entering its intersection with Ralston will be able to turn right or left on the street a new signal. This, Curtis said, should make it easier and safer for commuters from the south to reach Ralston and other businesses in Redwood Shores.

Belmont's portion of the project will be the creation of an overpass or underpass designed to provide residents of Island Park with quicker access to Ralston, and to and from 101.

While the roadway improvements involve separate

AGREEMENT, page 2A

AGREEMENT: Cities share cost for access

Continued from 1A

components, Belmont City Manager Susan Westman said it was logical for the design and construction to occur as a collaborative effort.

"The inconvenience to the people that live in Island Park as well as anyone using that interchange would be greatly exaggerated with two separate construction projects going on at the same time," Westman said. She added, however, that because the road work lies within Belmont city limits, Belmont will head up the project.

Engineering and consulting costs for the project are estimated at approximately \$272,900, which will be split equally by the two cities. Should the construction

costs of the portions funded by the cities vary greatly, the engineering costs will be adjusted to even out the differences, said Curtis.

Financing of Construction and Design

Belmont's funding for the project would come from an agreement forged with Oracle Corp. based on their planned expansion. The company agreed last October to contribute \$1 million and loan the city \$2 million to help finance the direct access improvements. In addition, the city could contribute \$1 million from traffic assessments collected on Island Park and potentially acquire an additional \$1 million

loan from Oracle.

To pay for Redwood City's portion of the project, city officials are taking steps to bring a bond measure to voters. The measure could require bonds of up to \$15 million, some of which could be used for road improvements beyond the project, according to Peter Vorametsanti, senior civil engineer with Redwood City. The bonds would be repaid through assessments on commercial property in the area of the road improvements.

Vorametsanti added that Redwood City officials have been meeting with the commercial property owners in Redwood Shores over the last six months and that there seems to be sup-

port for the bond measure.

"They recognize the need for the improvements," he said.

Curtis said time is of the essence in getting started because the cities are also working to acquire \$3.1 million in state transportation funding to pay for part of the project. Procuring the money, however, will require that a project report be approved by Caltrans and that Redwood City be able to make a financial commitment by August, he said.

Vorametsanti said, though, that everything seems to be proceeding on schedule. Redwood City plans to hold a public hearing on the bond issue April 26, he said, and could be put to a vote at the end of June.

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Belmont City Council
The Independent
April 3, 1999

SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 1999

City grapples over bond measures

Discussion centers around election versus special election

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Fearing that a \$10 million bond measure to purchase lots for preservation in San Juan Canyon will clash with future funding efforts for the Belmont Library, the Belmont City Council began discussing a plan last week on how to bring upcoming financial measures before voters.

The council is grappling with when to bring the controversial San Juan Canyon bond measure to voters. The bond measure, which seeks to tax residential property owners over a 30-year period to pay for the purchase of lots in the 171-acre canyon for open space, was originally slated for a special election last month, but stalled due to a split vote in the council.

"Everyone is aware that we have a library task force that is working right now," said Belmont City Manager Susan Westman, adding that other financial issues, such as storm drain improvements, could also be coming to the council in the near future. "At some point in time they're going to have a proposal to go to the voters to have a bond issue (for) rebuilding the existing library or building a new library."

City officials, however, want to ensure that voters are not overwhelmed by both issues appearing on the ballot in close proximity to each other. The city council opted to discuss the issue further at its April 13 meeting, when the council is scheduled to consider the

library task force's request to hire a consultant.

The council can bring the San Juan Canyon bond issue to voters in the November 1999 general election, the March 2000 primary election, or the November 2000 presidential election.

Westman added that a survey conducted by the city last June indicated that the issue of preserving open space is popular among the city's younger voters, and that the council might want to schedule the bond measure in an election where these voters are most likely to turn out.

"Younger voters tend to come out in presidential-type elections," she said. "One of the factors you might want to consider is going for the March (2000) primary."

"I don't want to see this issue get bogged down by other things that we need to look at," added Vice Mayor Terri Cook. "If we're going to put effort into putting something on the ballot ... we want to put it at a time when it's going to be most successful or what's the point?"

Council member Adele Della Santina, however, said that she saw no reason why the issue should not go immediately to the voters. "I was at the understanding that the task force wanted to get it to the voters as soon as possible," she said.

Former chair of the San Juan Task Force, Eric Dentler, explained that the group's main intent was

BOND: Election issue

Continued from 1A

not to see that the issue came to the voters quickly but rather that it succeed.

"It's easy to let this issue fall away and go on to the next crisis in Belmont." He added, "Who can argue with books for children — that's a great issue. Let's try to refurbish the library or rebuild the existing library ... and reduce traffic and infrastructure, all of the things we worked really hard on the task force."

Dentler added that he was frustrated with the makeup of the council that is allowed to vote on issues relating to San Juan Canyon, and he wondered if it would ever get to the voters.

Because four of the five city council members have potential conflicts of interest, only three members of the council have been allowed to vote on the issue. On some occasions, the procedures have required approval of all three council members. But while Cook and Council member Pam Rianda have routinely voted for the San Juan Canyon issue, Della Santina has not.

"It's pretty frustrating after working on this since the summer of 1997 to be divided because of technicalities and conservative legal advice," he said.

Dentler added that to make the measure more palatable to voters, the council should consider the possibility of lessening that amount of the bond measure by perhaps just targeting the canyon's prime, most buildable land for purchase.

Dentler added that the city could also look into helping to strengthen the San Juan Canyon Preservation Trust, a non-profit group recently set up to purchase land in Belmont for open space.

"Again, this is not tree hugging. It's traffic and a lot of fundamental issues," Dentler said.

City of Belmont
The Independent
March 6, 1999

Belmont steps up newsrack enforcement

Crews began removing racks that do not comply with the ordinance

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Following the lead of San Francisco, Redwood City, Menlo Park and other Bay Area cities, the City of Belmont is plucking miscellaneous newsracks off downtown sidewalks to enforce a recently adopted ordinance.

Adopted last July, the newsrack ordinance requires that all newsracks on private and public property in the city meet certain design and safety standards — including a stipulation that the racks must be bolted to the ground in some cases.

“Basically, the purpose of it was to clean up the city,” said Belmont’s Code Enforcement Officer Tyra Harrington, who took on the task of notifying publications of the changes. Harrington will also see to it that all of the unclaimed, freestanding racks are picked up this month.

A similar ordinance in San Francisco drew the ire of publishers who said that effort would drive smaller publications — which rely on newsrack distribution but cannot afford to purchase new racks — out of business.

City officials contend, however, that Belmont’s ordinance would not cut down on the number of publications distributed in the city “but would eliminate an unsightly hodgepodge of freestanding racks clustered in several business areas.

“We’re just requiring a certain type of newspaper (rack),” Harrington said. “We’ve limited

the design to a certain design that will ensure safety.”

Belmont Planning Director Dan Vanderpriem added that the ordinance was motivated by calls from residents complaining that the racks were unsightly or that they had fallen over during storms, blocking sidewalks.

“It was a mess,” he said.

The new ordinance specifies permitted styles for all newsracks in the city and mentions types that are manufactured by Sho-Rack, K-Jack and National Newsvend companies.

In addition, the ordinance requires that modular racks with two or more compartments be installed in places where there are five or more freestanding newsracks. In places where there are more vendors using a space than are allowed by the guidelines of the ordinance, priority is given based on how often the publication is printed.

The ordinance also sets up certain height and length restrictions for the newsracks, requires them to be maintained and kept clean, and stipulates that they must not obstruct the public right of way. Companies must also obtain free permits for racks on public property.

Standing in front of the Walgreen store at 900 Ralston Ave. where new, brown modular racks that comply with the ordinance have already been installed next to a cluster of old, multicolored racks, Belmont resident Helen



SUSAN GARRISON

A resident checks out a newspaper in one of the new modular newsracks in the City of Belmont. Old newsracks are being replaced with more uniform ones.

NEWSRACKS: Enforced

Continued from 1A

Widdra said she preferred the look of the new equipment.

Widdra admitted, however, that the aesthetics of the old racks were never a big issue for her: "I'm so used to having them, it doesn't bother me," she said.

Naehle Hadaet, an employee of Holiday Cleaners of America at 880 Ralston Ave said she had not given much attention to any of the newsracks although they stand in view of the business's front window.

"Personally, I think these ones are better," she said, motioning to the set of old racks.

The racks required in Belmont can cost anywhere from \$360 to \$425 for smaller ones, according to Lance Haag of the San Francisco Newspaper Agency, which represents the San Francisco Chronicle and Examiner newspapers. In some cases, he added, the group has paid up to \$1,600 to purchase a three-compartment modular rack and to cover installation costs.

Haag, single-copy sale supervisor for the newspaper agency, said his group has contacted other publi-

cations that maintain racks in the city to see if they would like to purchase space in modular racks the agency plans to have installed. He said he has received little response.

"Everybody lagged behind so long," he said, adding that it could soon prove problematic for publications that have neglected to get newsracks that comply with the law.

And while Harrington said she wrote to 60 different publications that already operate here or are expected to soon distribute in the area, warning them of the restrictions of the new ordinance, the city has only issued about 15 newsrack permits so far.

In all, Harrington said there are roughly 12 main sites that crews are concentrating on cleaning up. Beginning March 15, they will remove all racks belonging to companies that have not filled out an application with the Belmont Community Development Department. Harrington said the confiscated racks will be stored by the city for 30 days, and will be disposed of if no one claims them by that time.

Neighborhood Associations voice concerns

Feierbach met with groups on solutions

By Amy Yarbrough
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"I believe in total participation," Feierbach said, explaining her motivation behind the meetings. "...I've never known the mayor to go to each homeowners' association."

At the recent meetings, the mayor fielded questions and told residents how to keep in contact with her as future issues develop. Among the concerns brought to Feierbach were traffic, the grade separation and the appearance of downtown Belmont.

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*City Council
The Linda Rendert
March 17, 1999*

Belmont City Council
San Mateo County Times
March 19, 1997

Council considers raise for Belmont manager

2.7 percent hike would put salary at \$111,000

By Jessica M. Scully
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Council members will decide next week whether to give City Manager Susan Westman a 2.7 percent raise to \$111,000.

When Westman was hired about a year and a half ago, her starting salary was \$105,000 a year, and at her six-month performance review, Westman's salary was raised to \$108,000.

Council members are scheduled to vote Tuesday night on the proposed raise. The staff report on Westman's raise comes from her own office.

Westman said she is happy with the job and is confident with her performance.

"The last one-and-a-half years in Belmont have been real productive for me and the city," she said.

Westman said since she arrived, the city has sorted out funding for the project to raise the train tracks above El Camino Real, put together a plan to rebuild Fire Station 14 and reduced employee turnover.

In its past few meetings, council members have been debating in closed session Westman's performance review. Several council members were reluctant to discuss Westman's performance, saying it

was a personnel issue.

Westman said she understood when she was hired that her salary would be raised at her six-month review. But the council members had a different understanding, she said. Though they voted for half the raise she had expected, they said they would consider the remainder in November 1998.

From the Chamber of Commerce's point of view, Westman has done nothing but good things, said chamber president Tom Diridon.

"I've admired her since she's been here and I think she's been very good for business," he said.

Previous City Manager Damon Edwards resigned in February 1997, and longtime Palo Alto City Manager Bill Zaner filled in while the city conducted an extensive search.

After interviewing nearly 100 candidates, council members selected Westman, then city manager of Capitola, which has a population of 10,400. Belmont's population is about 25,000.

When Westman left, Capitola's budget allowed \$89,400 for the city manager's salary, said a member of the city's payroll department. The current city manager receives \$95,000 per year.

Michael Garvey, city manager of nearby San Carlos which is about the same size as Belmont, receives \$132,000 per year.

Belmont works to promote residential recycling

Proposal spearheaded by South Bayside Transfer Authority

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Faced with a state mandate that could slap fines on California cities that don't meet a recycling requirement by the year 2000, the Belmont City Council is looking into ways to promote residential recycling.

The council recently reviewed proposed changes to Belmont's existing yard waste recycling program. The proposal, spearheaded by the South Bayside Transfer Station Authority — a group of 10

Peninsula cities as well as the unincorporated area of San Mateo County — would provide residents with uniform, wheeled yard waste recycling containers.

At its Nov. 10 meeting, the council decided to review the matter further and look at other options to meet the mandate.

To date, however, the cities of San Mateo, Burlingame, San Carlos, Hillsborough, Atherton and the unincorporated portion of the county have all chosen to introduce the new 96-gallon containers

to their respective residents.

"(Belmont is) looking at putting an additional information packet together," said Kathleen Gallagher, recycling manager for SBTSA, whose member cities are Atherton, Belmont, Burlingame, East Palo Alto, Foster City, San Carlos, Menlo Park, Redwood City, Hillsborough, San Mateo and the unincorporated areas of the county.

Under California's AB 939 mandate, which was passed in 1989, all of the state's cities must be recycling 50 percent of their recyclable waste by the year 2000. Cities that don't meet the requirement can face fines of up to \$10,000 per day. According to Gallagher,

California mandated AB 939 because of shrinking landfill capacities. She added that Californians produce more waste than any other population, more than eight pounds per day and more than 40 million tons a year.

"Many cities in the Bay Area have taken aggressive steps to meet the state mandate and show good faith effort," she said.

In cities that choose to introduce the new containers, residents will be charged 60 cents per household per month for the container. The charge will be folded into residents' garbage recycling fees, although Gallagher added that some cities may not feel a rate impact because of operation effi-

ciencies or possible surpluses in their respective accounts with Browning Ferris Industries, which provides garbage service to the 11 SBTSA jurisdictions.

The California Integrated Waste Management Board found in 1991 that Belmont residents were recycling 40 percent of their recyclable trash.

Gallagher said that adding new yard waste containers to recycling programs would make it easier for residents to recycle their yard clippings and for Belmont to meet the extra 10 percent to comply with the California requirement.

Yard waste makes up more than 28 percent of what goes into

YARD WASTE: page 11A

YARD WASTE: Promoting recycling

Continued from 1A

California landfills, she added.

However Belmont Vice Mayor Coraline Feierbach said she still wanted to find out other

options for increasing Belmont's recycling, pointing out her concerns about the size of the recycling containers and the difficulty some might expe-

rience hauling 96-gallon trash cans full of yard clippings to curbsides.

"They need to give us different sizes," she said.

*City Council
for whole parcel
Nov 25, 1999*

City Hall retrofit would cost \$9.7 million

By Jessica M. Scully
STAFF WRITER

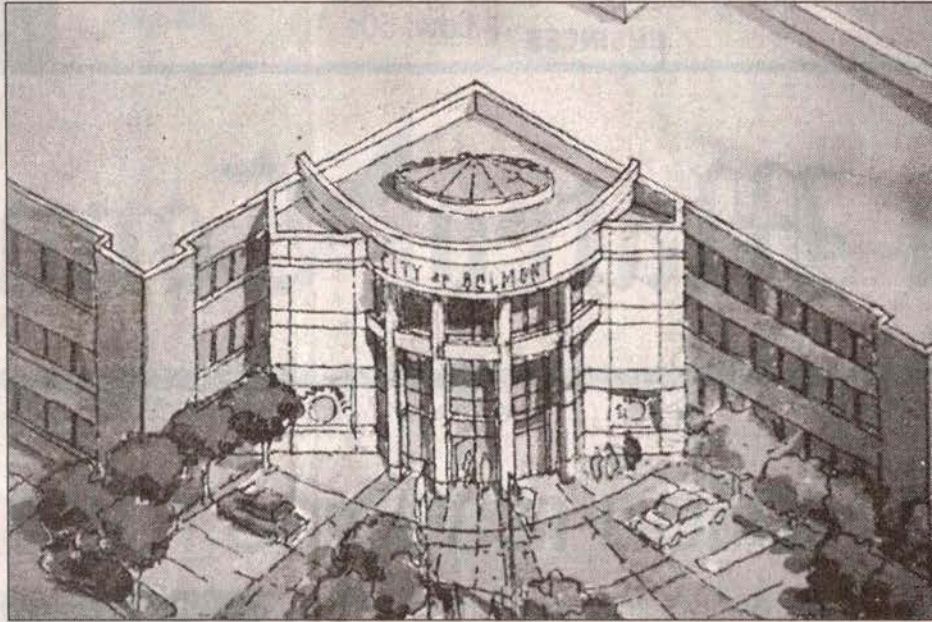
BELMONT — A renovated, seismically safe City Hall that would bring the police department into the main building would cost the city \$9.7 million, according to a design firm hired for the project.

City staff has been working on the project for about nine months and the city has a \$67,000 design contract with the San Francisco-based EKONA Architects and Planning. At Tuesday night's council meeting, the company revealed the preliminary plans along with a cost estimate on the project.

The project would be divided into several phases to give the city time to come up with funding. The first, which would cost about \$4 million, would seismically strengthen the building and move the police department from its crowded building in Twin Pines Park into vacant offices on the first floor.

The current seismic weakness of the building is its "L" shape, which could buckle during a quake, the architect says. The new design would add a lobby and other features to make the structure more seismically sound.

The second phase would complete the police headquarters on the second floor



Artist's rendition of proposed Belmont City Hall by EKONA Architecture and Planning.

and add common use spaces, such as exercise and conference rooms.

The final phases could include converting the current police headquarters into a council chambers, as well as land-

scaping.

Funding for the first phase is already lined up, and staff are searching for ways to fund the rest of the project, said Christ Kamages, a principal architect at

the firm.

City officials hope construction could begin in April 2000.

Updates to the building have been a long time coming. Remodeling and retrofitting City Hall has been used in many campaigns for City Council for several years, Councilwoman Pam Rianda said.

The city purchased the current City Hall building for about \$6 million in 1995 so it could move from its cramped quarters on Fifth Avenue. Officials planned to seismically retrofit the building and to tinker with its design.

A developer was hired, and construction was expected to be finished in 1997.

Officials had hoped to move the police department to the main building and to create council chambers with a capacity for high-tech.

Some council members blame poor leadership for the plans falling apart.

"The last administrative group could not put the package together," Rianda said. "It's been a comedy of errors until we got this administrative group."

Though some council members said they would like to see more detailed drawings of the current project, several said they were generally very happy with the progress.

*Belmont City Hall
Ken Mateo's Annex
May 29, 1999*

Belmont sets civic spending level

By Jessica M. Scully
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — The city will earmark nearly \$170,000 for civic organizations in 1999-2000, council members decided Tuesday night during a preliminary budget discussion.

Potentially big cash recipients are the Belmont Chamber of Commerce at \$40,000; FACES, a nonprofit that provides counseling for children, \$35,000; and the Human Investment Project, a housing assistance nonprofit, \$20,000.

The Kollage Community School for the Arts, a program city officials decided to stop jointly sponsoring with San Carlos, was marked down for \$5,000.

Several businesses and a

high-tech organization, Joint Venture Silicon Valley, were turned down. The San Mateo County Convention and Visitors Bureau, which requested \$25,000, will get just \$10,000.

Councilwoman Adele Della Santina said she wanted to cap the amount the city would give organizations at \$150,000.

"We're doing everything piecemeal and (Tuesday) night was a perfect example of the piecemeal work this council is noted for," she said. "The way we're going, we're heading for bankruptcy."

The city also plans to give \$30,000 to the San Juan Canyon Trust, a recently formed organization that hopes to buy plots of land in San Juan Canyon and preserve them as open space.

Della Santina also questioned this expenditure. Members of the San Juan Canyon Trust have not filed a formal request for funds.

Vice Mayor Terri Cook said the amount for the trust will be discussed further once the group comes up with a plan on how it will use the money.

She added that one of the funding requirements is that it could not be used to buy land.

Cook said she had difficulty setting aside money for the convention bureau and other organizations because it is difficult to measure how much they do for Belmont.

"It's discretionary," Cook said. "It becomes a discussion with the personal philosophies of individual council members."

Working on Belmont's businesses

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

One of the city of Belmont's newest employees, Julie Woepke hopes to play a part in improving the look of the city's downtown, boosting existing city business and bringing in new retail.

A native of Chicago, Woepke, 39, moved to the Bay Area two years ago and was hired in mid-April as the city's Economic Development Coordinator, a position new to the city's Community Development Department.



Julie Woepke

"I'm going to be a liaison for the business community," said Woepke. The mother of two, who lives in Danville, telecommutes twice a week and braves what can stretch to a two hour trip to the city each way the remainder of her work week. Part of her job's responsibilities include contacting companies outside of Belmont, and letting them know that the city is interested in having new businesses in the area.

"My mission is to work with the businesses on Ralston and El Camino," said Woepke, who earned a bachelor's degree in Local and Regional Studies from a college in Chicago, and added that she is just beginning to get out into the local community and talk to merchants.

Prior to being hired by the city of Belmont, Woepke served as Economic Development Director in Bowie, a suburb of Washington D.C. which she described as similar to Belmont and as "basically a bedroom community looking for more retail development."

Among Woepke's primary goals: encouraging more of Belmont's downtown business to participate in the city's facade rebate program, a city endeavor that gives shop owners incentives, such as rebates on permit costs, in exchange for them sprucing up the front of their businesses. The program has been in effect for some time, she said, but there has not yet been a lot of effort concentrated on it.

Belmont, Woepke pointed out, is in a pretty prime location and boasts some valuable attributes.

"I think it's in a unique situation," said Woepke of the city, citing the benefits of having high-tech businesses nearby as well as resources that can be tapped from Belmont's College of Notre Dame.

NEWSMAKER: page 10A

City of Belmont
The Independent
June 2, 1999

NEWSMAKER: Woepke

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To that end, Woepke is currently working with representatives from the Belmont Chamber of Commerce, the city of Belmont and the College of Notre Dame to put the initial touches on a fall seminar aimed at giving a boost to small business. Called Soho (Small Office/Home Office), the forum will take advantage of the college and city's offerings, having speakers from the college and city staff, and takes place on campus, Sept. 22.

Woepke added that during her time working on the East Coast, she found that cities often held

these kinds of forums, though Soho, which she said will hopefully boost networking between the city's small and home-based businesses, appears to be the first of its kind for Belmont.

"Here it might be that people just go off and do their own thing," she said. To the West Coast's credit, though, Woepke said people here seem more apt to listen to new ideas.

"I think the people are open to change," she said, citing local's patience through the duration of the grade separation project at Ralston Avenue and El Camino.

Belmont approves 1999-2000 budget

Capital improvements are high on list of priorities for the city

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Continuing to place high priority on capital improvement projects in the city, the Belmont City Council last week approved a budget with combined appropriations of \$50 million for fiscal year 1999-2000.

The budget, approved unanimously by the City Council at its June 22 meeting, estimates combined revenues for the year at \$45.2 million and expenditures, including capital projects, at \$50 million. Some \$3.6 million of the difference will

be made up through other financing sources, such as loans, and the balance through the use of funds that were set aside for specific future projects, according to City Manager Susan Westman.

A total of \$19.5 million has been earmarked for capital improvement projects, although the majority of that amount — \$12.7 million or 65 percent — will be consumed by funds necessary to complete Belmont's portion of the grade separation project.

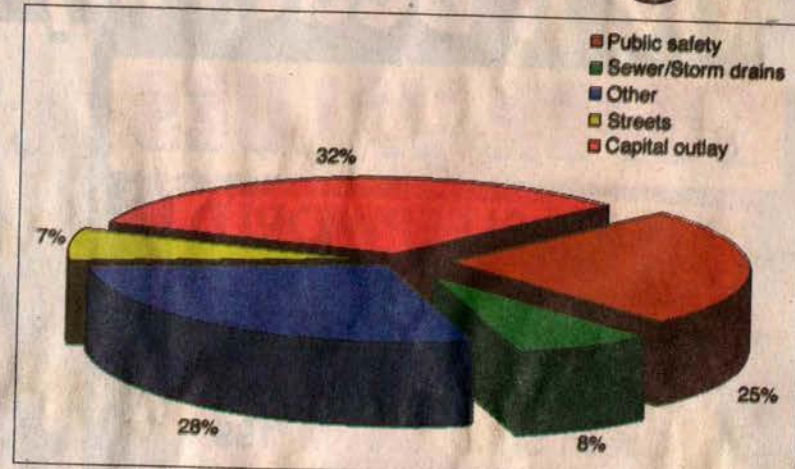
"We're in good economic times

and we're able to do a number of things we wanted to accomplish," said Belmont Vice Mayor Terri Cook, who added that a combination of city staff assistance and clear presentation of the budget made for a relatively smooth discussion of the matter.

"I think we're going to have (much) to show for it with all the road improvements."

Among the projects accounted for in this year's capital improvement program is \$2.4 million toward city street improvements and \$136,000 toward the Direct Access Project, a joint venture with Redwood City to ease congestion near Island Park and Ralston

BUDGET: page 4A



Source: CITY OF BELMONT FINANCE DEPT.
This graph represents where the money goes from the City of Belmont's fiscal year 1999-2000 budget.

BUDGET: Capital improvement project

Continued from 1A

Avenue and Highway 101.

Perhaps one of the most anticipated projects, however, will be renovations to Belmont's civic center.

"I think the biggest plan this year is going forward with the city hall project," said Westman.

Some \$2.1 million will be allotted in the upcoming fiscal year to begin the project's \$4.5 million first phase, which involves seismic work, the creation of a new entrance way for the building and moving the Belmont Police from

their current station in Twin Pines Park to new quarters in city hall.

Westman added that the amount expected to be spent on new capital improvements in 1999-2000 is in line with the \$2 million estimated to be spent for infrastructure improvements this fiscal year. In contrast, during the 1997-1998 fiscal year, Westman recounted, the city spent only \$450,000 in infrastructure improvements.

In addition to funding a variety of new infrastructure improvement projects this year, the budget sets up a new fund to cover repairs to

storm damage areas and other emergency situations, an idea that resulted from dealing with mudslides and other damage in the city that resulted from El Nino.

"Last year with El Nino we suddenly needed to do a fair amount of work immediately," she explained.

General fund

The city expects some \$11.9 million in general fund revenues for 1999-2000, up slightly less than 4 percent this fiscal year. Expenditures are estimated at \$11.5

million, also up about 4 percent.

"We're tracking right along," said Westman. "The amount of expenditures is in proportion to the amount of revenue coming in."

Some 55 percent or \$6.5 million, worth of general fund revenues accounted for in the new budget will come from sales, property and other taxes.

Included in general fund expenditures this year are \$5.7 million for public safety, \$2 million for parks and recreation, \$300,000 for engineering and \$3.5 million for general government operations.

*with source
for the independent
June 30, 1999*

Chamber comes out on top of funding request

Belmont dishes out \$170,000 for various groups

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

The Belmont City Council recently approved nearly \$170,000 in funding requests for a variety of community groups in fiscal year 1999-00, with the chamber of commerce among the big winners.

Praising the chamber's recent community endeavors, the City Council granted \$40,000 to the organization at a meeting May 21 — \$10,000 more than the group had requested.

"The activities of the chamber have spurred...so much interest and vitality," said

Councilmember Adele Della Santina, citing among other activities the chamber's holiday fund-raiser that raised \$10,000 for the Belmont Library. "We're getting our money's worth," she said.

Other recipients included the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center, \$11,232; Jobs for Youth of San Mateo County, \$1,000; the Shelter Network of San Mateo County, \$10,000; and Friends of Kollage — the fund raising arm of Kollage Community School for the Arts, \$5,000. The city recently ended support for the program.

Although not all of the groups that requested funds from the city received them, the total allotted exceed the almost \$148,000 originally requested.

The San Juan Canyon Preservation Trust, which had not made a formal request for funding, was allotted \$30,000 - if it provides

the council with more detailed information on how the money will be spend, and the group's goals for the future.

Members of the group, which wants to acquire lots in San Juan Canyon and other areas of Belmont for open space, said it will need seed money to launch the new organization.

"We would like to put out a quarterly newsletter to everyone in the city to educate them about the (San Juan) canyon," explained George Kranen, president of the trust. Kranen added that the money would primarily be used for fund raising, but that the group was also hoping to purchase some office equipment.

The council specified, however, that the money can't be used for the purchase of open space.

"I myself would like to see something, not

just a formal request, but I think we need to see some financial information," added Councilmember Terri Cook.

"We need to see the budget, we need to see how they would earmark this request, and I think then we should have some further discussions."

Perhaps the most contentious request for funding came from the San Mateo County Convention and Visitors Bureau. The group requested \$25,314, but was granted \$10,000 because several council members said they are unclear about how much the city derives from the group's activities.

"I have a hard time measuring what it is the convention and visitors bureau does for Belmont," said Cook, adding that she was concerned that only 10 Belmont business belong to the group and that there is no

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Continued from 1A

clear way to tell how often the bureau recommends Belmont businesses to visitors.

Della Santina argued that the bureau supports the local hospitality industry, and that Belmont businesses often appear in the publications it produces, bringing visitors to the city.

"We should be looking at it as a draw for new money," she said. "It's not draining our facilities. It's not costing us money on our infrastructure. It's bringing new money in and there's no boundaries on that."

Belmont City Council
The Public Accountant
June 9, 1999

MAYOR: Ceremony held

Continued from 1A

Area elected officials and residents came forward with praise and proclamations for Feierbach, who was presented with a clock by city staff so she could "get her time back."

"I would be telling a lie if I didn't say I would miss my compadre as she leaves the City Council tonight," said Councilmember Rianda, pointing out that Feierbach helped to loosen the "log jams" on stagnant projects in the city.

Della Santina, who had elected not to run for another term, was read a proclamation by San Mateo County Supervisor Jerry Hill recognizing her for service with the San Mateo County Transit District, where she most recently served as chair. She called her eight years with the City Council an "incredible experience."

"The most exciting part of it all [was] being able to bring from all these different sources things to Belmont that would help shape

Belmont into the best place to live, work and do business by the year 2000," she said. The two-term councilmember also thanked family, fellow realtors and political officials for their support.

'I would be telling a lie if I didn't say I would miss my compadre.'

Councilmember Pam Rianda

Businessman Paul Wright, who reiterated that evening his campaign goal of representing a voice for families with school-age children, was joined at the swearing-in ceremony by his wife and two of his daughters.

"One of the things that I really didn't expect, and have come to appreciate, is ... what an incredible experience it is to have people invested in what you've talked about and what you believe and

believe [that] you can do a good job," he said.

Former Planning Commissioner Dave Warden thanked campaign supporters and his family, in particular his wife Lisa.

"I spent three months doing nothing but working on this election. I took so much time away from my wife. I hope she can forgive me," he said.

Suggesting that the new additions to the council might not be entirely equipped for the next four years, Councilmember Rianda unveiled "survival kits" she had created, complete with Pepto Bismol to wash back "rubber chicken" dinners and a framed photo for family members.

"You have to have a bottle of aspirin," she joked. "The headaches that come with this job sometimes are mind-boggling."

Belmont City Council
The Independent
Dec 18, 1999

Council picks new mayor, vice mayor

Ceremony honors outgoing members for years of service

by Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Belmont's councilmembers tackled a full plate last week, selecting a new mayor, welcoming two new members and recognizing the years of service of outgoing mayor Coralin Feierbach and councilmember Adele Della Santina.

The Nov. 30 ceremony attended by nearly 200 residents and county elected officials, saw newly elected Paul Wright and Dave Warden take their seats on the council, Vice Mayor Terri Cook selected as mayor and Eleanore Hahn as vice-mayor. Incumbents Cathy Kern and Howard Mason were sworn in as city clerk and treasurer, respectively.

"One of my pleasures as a city councilmember is to enter this room and see it filled with people who step up to the podium and tell the council what they think and want," said Cook, who was unanimously selected to head the council after a nomination by Councilmember Pam Rianda.

"And we sure know in Belmont that people do that," she said.

Cook listed among her goals in coming months working to beautify downtown areas north of the newly completed Belmont Village Center retail development at El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue,



Terri Cook

such as the nearby Bayview Plaza. The council will also work to bring to fruition designs for a planned retrofit and remodel of city hall and the long awaited "grade separation" project for train overpasses above Ralston Avenue and Harbor Boulevard, among other projects, she said.

With what she describes as a more amicable and cooperative relationship gelling with the Belmont-Redwood Shores Elementary School, the new mayor said she'd like to pursue a similar partnership between the council and Carlmont High School.

The lifelong Belmont resident also gave a nod to Feierbach who she said set the pace for her future on the council.

"I know I have some big shoes to fill. Coralin may be small in stature but she has a big heart for this community," Cook said of her colleague and friend. "She's set a great tone for me to follow."

Feierbach, credited by supporters with bringing more productivity to the council, joined the City Council in 1995 as the result of a write-in campaign. The former mayor and planning commissioner thanked city staff and her husband Gary, who she said often waited patiently for her to get home from city functions, greeting her with the words, "Well, what happened tonight?"

Belmont seeks public's help for general plan

Residents are invited to fill out applications

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Belmont's City Council is pulling together residents, business people and community groups for a two-year venture that could ultimately shape policies from how city officials look at land use to housing density.

City councilmembers voted recently to authorize city staff to begin distributing applications for participation in updating of the city's general plan. The document, which is required by law for cities, hasn't been updated in full since 1979.

"The general plan is the constitution of the city," explained Dan Vanderprien, Belmont's planning and community devel-

opment director, pointing out that the current document is more than 100 pages long.

While the city has modified certain sections of the document over the years, such as the city's noise ordinance, other areas, such as ones dealing with land use in the city, are in need of an update, Vanderprien added.

The task of revising the document might involve consolidating the city's downtown plan and looking over the city's key policies, such as traffic, parking, land use, housing and open space issues.

City officials are hoping to glean input from a wide group of participants, such as property owners, members of neighborhood associations, various city commissions, the school district and groups like the Belmont Historical Society as well as merchants.

Vanderprien said that city staff would encourage members of these groups to apply, and that applications would be brought to back to the city council for consideration.

"It's time to go back to the community and look at what it wants," he said.

Councilmember Dave Warden pointed out that with vacancies on the city's other commissions also opening up, including a seat he himself recently vacated on the planning commission to run for city council, the city should advertise for all of the interviews at the same time.

"It seems we could run a real big fire sale on openings," Warden said at the city council meeting Dec. 14.

Though city councilmembers were not initially included on the list of possible participants in the update plan, Councilmember

Pam Rianda added that she thinks it's important for the council to be involved throughout the process.

"It is a two-year process and for us just to get it at the end of two years is really very difficult and I would suggest that two members of the council be (involved)," she said.

"There really does need to be the input of council to reflect our philosophy. I'd also like to see some type of a monthly report so that the rest of the council can keep track..."

Rianda was also concerned about how city issues would be dealt with during the time the plan is being updated.

"What do we do with land use issues that come up that are pressing during those two years?" Rianda asked. "I see development in the canyon really sprouting, I see applications for roads. In two years who knows

GENERAL PLAN: page 10A

GENERAL PLAN: City

Continued from 1A

what kind of development could happen, for example, in the canyon. What do we do with those issues in the meantime?"

Vanderprien said the City Council does have several tools available during the duration of the process.

"Because those are legislative actions you have no requirement to act on them at any specific time," he said. "If there [is], for example, a proposal within a conforming zoning district that comes forward and ... you have the tool of an interim ordinance that would prevent that process from moving ahead until after the general plan is completed."

"You also have the opportunity to consider those individual requests and if they are pressing and something the city wants to have move forward you can act on those individually," Vanderprien added.

Belmont City Council
The Independent
Dec. 29, 1999