

# Belmont considering flouridating water

## Agencies unsure of health benefits of treating city's water supply

By Wes Bowers  
Staff Reporter

BELMONT — The Belmont City Council met with the Mid-Peninsula Water District Jan. 10 to consider flouridating the city's water supply.

"I would prefer that our water not be flouridated because there are health issues involved," said Mayor Eleanor Hahn. "Sure, putting fluoride in the water is good for growing kids, but it's not good for other people because of things

like MTBE [that could be in the water supply]."

All Peninsula cities north of Belmont are receiving flouridated water, but Belmont itself hasn't been receiving it since 1957, when the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission began reorganizing some of its systems and flouridating certain areas. The commission currently designates flouridating water for 65 percent of their customers.

"In 1998 a state law was

enacted that said that any system serving more than 10,000 people will put fluoride in the water," said Mid-Peninsula Water District General Manager Paul Regan. "Now, San Francisco must serve Belmont with flouridated water."

The SFPUC notified customers last September that it is considering three sites for a new water treatment plant in the Bay Area, with two of those sites planned for the Peninsula. One site being considered is off Polhemus Road just south of the Crystal Springs Reservoir, and the

other is off Edgewood Road in Redwood City.

If a plant is built on the Peninsula, construction wouldn't begin until at least 2002.

But, if the SFPUC decides to build a plant in Sunol across the Bay, construction on that plant wouldn't begin until 2003. Each plant would take at least two years to complete.

The SFPUC is currently discussing where to build the new plant, and should have a final decision sometime this year.

Either of these plants would provide the city of Belmont

with flouridated water.

"I have some concerns as well," said Councilmember Terri Cook. "A college instructor told me once that in some areas, fluoride occurs naturally, and if you put fluoride into the water, you're only replacing it where it should be. Is it good or bad?"

"I've read three reports that say the fluoride is good, and I've read three reports that says it's bad, so you just don't know," said Regan.

Opponents of flouridated water, such as the Citizens for Safe Drinking Water, claim

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that fluoride can lead to arthritis, kidney and bone problems and dental fluorosis.

However, fluoride supporters say that research shows clear benefits to flouridating water, such as reducing tooth decay.

There are currently 16 districts served by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission that don't receive flouridated water and don't wish to. One of those is Sunnyvale, which recently had a city ordinance prohibiting automatic flouridation repealed by the state Department of Health.

Sunnyvale voters rejected a November measure that would have given the city flouridated water from the Public Utilities Commission, Sunnyvale Public Works Director Mark Dettle said.

He added that the Sunnyvale City Council voted to allow the city government to add fluoride to the water if they so desire.

*Belmont City Council  
The Independent  
Jan 16, 2001*

# Traffic Study planned

## 'Video checkpoints' to be set up at corridors

By Wes Bowers  
Staff Reporter

BELMONT — The city will soon begin conducting traffic studies in an attempt to determine traffic patterns throughout Belmont.

City Council voted 5-0 at last week's meeting to begin a traffic study by videotaping license plates of vehicles at various checkpoints in key intersections entering town.

The main goal of the study is to determine what percentage of traffic passes through town — not who lives in Belmont or patronizes local businesses. It will also determine what kind of timing city stoplights should have to keep traffic flowing smoothly.

There is a great amount of traffic on Ralston Avenue, Old County Road, Alameda de las Pulgas and El Camino Real. And much of it passes through Belmont to avoid the heavy traffic on Highway 101 and Route 92.

Video-camera checkpoints will be set up on Ralston just before the Route 92 and Highway 101 on-ramps, as well as on Alameda de las Pulgas at both the north and south city limits.

Cameras will also be set up on Old County Road and El Camino Real at the north and south borders, and the southern ends of Hastings and Chula Vista Drives.

The license plate for each car entering and leaving Belmont will be filmed with the date and time at peak traffic hours in both the morning — 8 to 9 a.m. — and evening — 5 to 6 p.m.

The procedure will also be conducted during peak traffic hours on the weekends, which according to Assistant City Engineer Duncan Jones is about 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"The study will miss the people who go through Belmont on the smaller streets (and don't use major arteries like Ralston or Chula Vista, but that's just a small percentage," he said. City officials have long been asking that commuters not use major Belmont roads as ways to

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bypass congested highway traffic, and this study will help them determine which vehicles are doing that.

"There are mornings where eight or nine of us are waiting to get onto Ralston while all these cars pass through," said Councilmember Pam Rianda, a resident of the Skymont neighborhood which is just off the Route 92 junction. "I want to see that residents have a fair share of getting onto Ralston rather than wait for transient traffic to go through Belmont."

Vice Mayor Dave Warden suggested setting up a checkpoint on the eastern side of Highway 101 to determine how much traffic is from Redwood Shore

**'There are mornings where eight or nine of us are waiting . . . while all these cars pass through.'**

Pam Rianda,  
Councilmember

as well.

"I think we should consider one between Oracle [on Redwood Shores Parkway] and the east side of 101 to see how much traffic is from 101 to Oracle or 101 to Belmont," he

said.

Jones said that Public Works will take it into consideration.

The study will cost the city approximately \$30,000, with \$5,000 to be used for both Hastings and Chula Vista Drives, and \$20,000 to be used for the major arteries.

Funding for Hastings will come from the city, and funding for Chula Vista will come from the \$170,000 Transportation Fund for Clean Air traffic calming grant awarded to Belmont in October. The major artery studies will be funded from the city's engineering/architectural budget.

City Council  
San Mateo Co Times  
Jan 23, 01

## Belmont to discuss bridge plan

By T.S. Mills-Faraudo  
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Belmont city officials are looking at the prospect of making travel safe for pedestrians and bicyclists on the Ralston Avenue interchange by building a bridge for them over U.S. Highway 101.

The Belmont City Council is scheduled to discuss the bridge plan at its regular meeting at 7:30 p.m. today in the Twin Pines Senior and Community Center, 1223 Ralston Ave. The city staff wants council members to address any concerns they have with the concept.

Currently, there are no bike lanes on the interchange, and if they were to be built, the road would have to be expanded, said Duncan Jones, assistant city engineer.

The easier solution would be to build a pedestrian/bicyclist bridge that would primarily benefit Belmont residents who work at Redwood Shores businesses such as Oracle, Jones said.

"I'm a bicycle-rider and I know the interchange isn't safe for riding," Jones said.

When the city gets further into the project, he said, it will conduct studies to see if there have been any pedestrian accidents on the interchange.

Jones said Oracle has provided some statistics that show the bridge will be well-used.

This project also includes trails from the bridge to connect to downtown, the Caltrain station, and Nesbit Elementary School on the west side of Highway 101, and to the Sports Complex and the Redwood Shores office parks on the east side of the highway.

The bridge would probably come with a price tag of about \$2.5 million, he said. Of that, \$1.3 million in state, federal and regional grants has been secured, Jones said. The city has committed \$100,000 to the project so far. City officials want to begin work on the trails that will lead to the bridge by summer, but Jones said it will probably be a couple of years before construction on the bridge begins since it's more complicated.

# Belmont looking to establish trench-cut law

If enacted, city would be only one in county to do so

Wes Bowers  
Staff Reporter

BELMONT — The city is considering a trench cut ordinance for utility companies wanting to tear up recently paved roads.

City Council voted 5-0 last week to hold a three-year moratorium in an effort to look at possible ordinances and the reactions certain utilities will have when city streets are opened up for maintenance.

The idea of enforcing such an ordinance stems from recent talks with cable provider RCN Corporation, which plans to install underground cable television wiring when and if a franchise deal is closed with the city.

"Sometime over the summer we decided not to go ahead with an ordinance, but with recent companies wanting to provide service — mostly fiber optics — we've begun to look at possible trench cut ordinances," said Public Works Director John Curtis.

In March 1999, Belmont and other cities in San Mateo County started investigating the impacts of trenching local streets, and one of the major concerns was pavement degradation. The county then began organizing an ordinance that would require outside facilities to pay for the excavation and degradation of trenched streets.

However, the county last June decided not to go forth with the ordinance, and other cities such as Foster City and San

Carlos chose not to proceed as well.

"We're looking at forming an agreement with the utility companies rather than enforcing an ordinance and a fee," said San Mateo County Public Works Director Neil Cullen. "We looked at various options in finalizing an ordinance, but PG&E wasn't in favor of it."

The county's decision to not go forward left only Belmont in the process of adopting an ordinance. The city's legal counsel has advised in recent weeks that if the city were to go ahead at this point, it could mean possible legal action from some utilities, which happened in Union City.

Union City has had a franchise agreement with PG&E since 1959, and in recent months amended their street repair ordinance to charge utilities a certain fee for repaving an entire street.

PG&E refused to pay the \$17.35 per linear foot, and said that all they should do was restore the street to what it had been, and to do that all they need to do is lay down a new patch of pavement over the cut.

Litigation over the matter is still pending. According to Belmont City Attorney Jean Savaree, the case won't go to trial until the end of 2002.

An attorney for PG&E told council at last week's meeting that the company supports making repairs to affected

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areas, but does not support having to pay fees until the cities are satisfied.

"If we don't properly restore a trench, we will fix it," said attorney Robert Ricket. "There is no need to impose a fee on us, because we're already on [the repairs]. If a gas line has a leak, we are obligated to fix it within a certain amount of time."

Ricket added that a utility's main concern is to maintain the structural integrity of a road, not the difference in color between patches and the rest of the road.

"There is no way to match the color of the rest of the street once we've repaved," he added. "You will always see patches until they weather out and begin to fade in color."

RCN, which is slated to begin installing fiber-optic lines sometime this year, has six years to complete the work. In

the later stages of construction, they will begin trenching city streets, which has sparked discussion as to whether or not the city should draft a trench cut ordinance.

The city's franchise agreement with RCN that was approved at the Nov. 28 City Council meeting states that the firm will repair the street to the city's satisfaction and pay with their own funds.

At that time, city council expressed concern regarding the conditions of repaved streets. Council said that they were uneasy about trenching streets that had just recently been repaired.

Carl Pilnick of Telecommunications Management Consultants, who helped RCN and the city draft the franchise agreement, said that the only way to make sure the roads are properly repaved is to enforce a trench cut ordinance.

"We have to look at the

inconvenience that trenching the roads will have on both our residents and our business owners," said Councilmember Pam Rianda. "It seems like every time they turn around the streets are being dug up."

If the city were to enforce an ordinance now, it would be the only one in the county to do so. According to last week's staff report, Belmont has approximately 70 miles of road, and if 10 percent of them are trenched within the next five years, it could cost the City up to \$740,000.

A three-year moratorium, which council approved, could reduce the figure by 50 percent. But, if the only streets to be trenched for buried cable had 10-year-old surfaces, there would be no cost to the city.

City officials are now looking at the possibility of drafting an ordinance and the possible legal challenges that might arise.

City Council  
The Independent  
Jan 30, 2001  
cable TV

# Traffic consultant gets green light on study

## City wants to analyze cars on Ralston Avenue

By Wes Bowers  
Staff Reporter

BELMONT — For anyone who has been frustrated with the amount of traffic around Belmont, relief could be just around the corner.

The City Council voted 5-0 to hire traffic consultants Kimley-Horn and Associates to find out what percentage of motorists are just passing through town. Officials hope the traffic study will lead them to possible solutions to

the city's heavy congestion.

Discussion of conducting such a study has been in development for some time, but the City Council had concerns with the originally proposed method of recording vehicles.

"I'm willing to go along with this study, as long as we can be assured of having a normal day when we do this," said Vice Mayor Dave Warden.

Under the approved plan, checkpoints will be set up at the Belmont borders on Ralston Avenue, Old County Road, Alameda de las Pulgas and El Camino Real. At those checkpoints, two people will

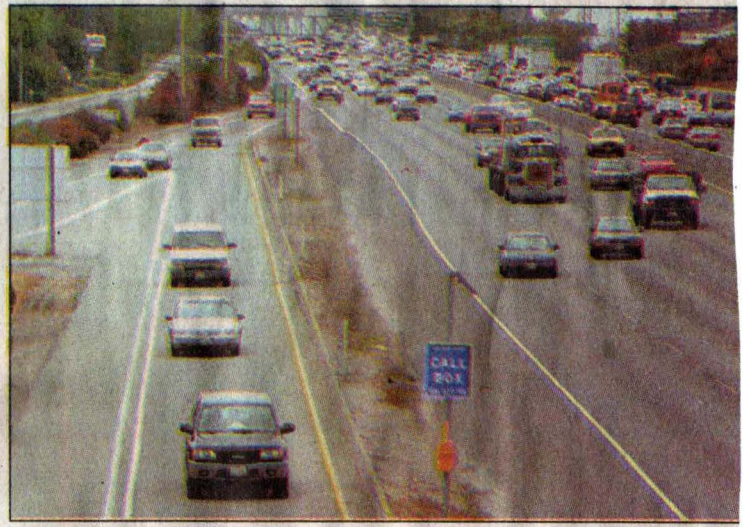
record the last four digits of each license plate of every white car that passes into and out of town a day.

To provide more concrete data on the amount of traffic passing through, the consultants will also set up video cameras on Ralston Avenue to record license plates that pass through at those peak traffic hours.

That information will be compared to the manually recorded data, which some councilmembers thought would have a greater amount of error.

In an effort to count traffic at peak hours, the study will

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SUSAN CALDWELL

The city will study traffic coming on and off of Highway 101 at Ralston Avenue.

*City Council  
The Undersecretary*

# TRAFFIC: Study goes forward

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be conducted in the morning on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 to 9 a.m. and in the evening from 5 to 6 p.m. — times that city staff considers peak traffic hours.

"We found that Tuesday or Thursday would be good days to do this," Warden said. "I know some elementary schools let out at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, so we've taken all of the council's past concerns into consideration."

Assistant City Engineer Duncan Jones said that if something were to happen that would cause abnormalities in traffic, such as an accident, then the firm would do the study again on another day.

"If something pops up that one day there was 25 percent more traffic than normal, then we'll go out and do the study again," he said.

Brian Sowers, a consultant from Kimley-Horn, added that the extra day would not cost the city any additional amount of money for services.

Sowers also said that taking down only the last four digits of license plates is more accurate than taking down an entire plate number.

"We chose to record the last four digits of the plates to reduce any sort of error," he said. "If you are watching traffic and trying to record license plates, it's very difficult to collect all the digits."

He also explained why the firm had chosen to record

only white cars as opposed to the original plan, which was to record all cars coming through Belmont.

"White cars are easier to distinguish," he said. "It's a lot more difficult to distinguish from a dark blue and a black car. We've done this type of method for quite a few years and over time we've learned that white is just easier to pick out. And, for someone to collect every car that goes by is hard too. They're more likely to miss a good percentage of cars that pass through the checkpoint."

A date has not been set for the study, but Kimley-Horn and Associates would like to get it underway before the schools have another holiday or summer vacation.

Like the original plan for the study, determining who is just passing through will remain the same.

If a car enters Belmont and leaves after a short period of time, then it will be considered just going through. But if a car enters and does not

leave for an extended period of time, it will be determined as a resident or a commuter patronizing local businesses.

In addition to studying major arteries, checkpoints will also be set up at the ends of both Hastings and Chula Vista drives to see what kind of traffic calming devices need to be installed there.

City officials believe that the heavy traffic on Ralston Avenue is due to commuters trying to avoid the congestion on Highway 101 and Route 92. Since the Belmont Caltrain station was raised above Ralston Avenue, officials believe that commuters are taking advantage of that fact by using the road as a shortcut between freeways.

The cost for the study is estimated at \$61,900, with \$50,600 to be used for major arteries like Ralston and El Camino, and \$11,300 for Hastings and Chula Vista drives.

All costs will be funded from the city's architectural and engineering budget.

Belmont City Council  
The Independent  
Jan 31, 2001

# Belmont should start 'visioning' process, city manager says

By T.S. Mills-Faraudo  
STAFF WRITER

**BELMONT** — Belmont is at a crossroads and it needs a vision, new City Manager Jere Kersnar told the City Council at a special meeting Tuesday night.

Kersnar, who was hired in August, gave council members a list of 29 recommendations that could change the face of Belmont. Some of the suggestions include delaying all projects until the city comes up with a vision, improving council-staff relations and making staff training a priority.

With a management consulting background, Kersnar said this was a project he wanted to do to ground himself in the community. He based his recommendations on the history of the community, his observations and citizen's opinions.

The keystone of Kersnar's recommendations is that the city embark on a "visioning" process before it goes forward with any more projects.

He explained that the city is going through the redevelopment stage of its evolution and economic forces are conflicting with citizens' desires.

"We should take the time to make sure the paths we choose are the ones we want," Kersnar said.

Based on his observations, he said he believes the community does have a vision that is widely shared — it just hasn't been articulated.

Kersnar said he's not suggesting the city produce a thick document but rather a few words that define this vision.

Once a vision has been developed, Kersnar suggests the downtown plans be re-examined.

He said that when the Redevelopment Agency's and city's plans for the downtown area were approved, neither took into consideration that the grade-separation project would be completed. In light of that completion, Kersnar said they should look at the possibility of including the other side of the tracks in the plan.

"When the tracks were at grade, connecting that part of town was not a choice," he said. "But

now you can safely walk and drive under the tracks, so maybe we should look at a way of knitting that part of the community into the plan."

In addition, Kersnar recommended that the general plan update wait until a vision statement is finished. As part of the update, he said residential neighborhood plans, a traffic management study and open space community strategy should be completed.

He suggested the city also continue to deal with the problem of turnover within departments.

"Turnover is debilitating. The general feeling I've gotten from staff is there's no incentive to be aggressive, and I know it's related to turnover," he said.

Kersnar advised that a project status report system be retained to improve the communication between the Council and staff.

"We are already taking steps to improve relations," he said.

Better staff training is also one of Kersnar's priorities.

"We've done a crummy job of customer service training," Kersnar said.

He noted that applicants for building permits usually have to go to several people in different departments. Kersnar said he wants this to be simplified.

For the most part, the council was impressed with Kersnar's report. They accepted it with the understanding that most of the recommendations will have to receive the Council's approval before they can be implemented.

"For the first time in a long time I feel like we have a captain," Councilwoman Pam Rianda said.

Some of the council members were concerned with Kersnar's request to put everything on hold until they come up with a vision.

"I agree with 80 to 90 percent of what we have here," Councilman Dave Warden said. "I am a little bit concerned about putting everything on hold. I would rather we parallel this with everything else and keep moving forward."

City Council  
The Independent



City Council  
The Independent  
Feb 7, 01

# Kersnar says Belmont needs

## City manager proposes putting redevelopment projects on hold for now

By Wes Bowers  
Staff Reporter

BELMONT — In a recent address to the City Council, City Manager Jere Kersnar said Belmont needs to establish a vision of how the city operates before it can move on with any redevelopment projects.

At a Jan. 30 special meeting, Kersnar presented a list of 29 suggestions to the council that he hopes will ultimately change the way Belmont does business.

"Belmont citizens fundamentally agree on what they want their community to be," Kersnar said. "But they

haven't articulated a vision, something that the community grabs hold to and that will provide the framework for what Belmont will be in 20 years."

He added that a common vision would serve as identification of the views of community members, the focus of the mayor and City Council on development policy and a framework for future policy discussions.

Once a vision is developed for Belmont, Kersnar suggested that the city re-examine plans for downtown, including such tentative plans as building a five-story parking garage and a possible retail or residential

complex at the corner of Ralston Avenue and El Camino Real. The city has dubbed the project "Block 4."

"I think we should suspend the Block 4 project for a while, which would have taken away most of the \$6 million the city has available for redevelopment projects," he said. He also suggested putting the Ralston/Old County Road Plaza and possible developments on the east side of Ralston on hold as well.

Instead, the city should focus on using its limited redevelopment funds to knit the different parts of downtown together into one cohesive district.

Kersnar also noted that communications between City Council and city staff need to be improved, and that the turnover rate within the depart-

## vision to grow

ments needs to be decreased.

"We've had an awful lot of turnover, especially on the council level, and it's a problem because it's very debilitating to an organization," he said. "But I know that council is committed to stabilizing the situation, and we're already looking at improving relations between city and staff." Kersnar has instituted more discussions between council and staff since he came aboard in October.

Kersnar said that one of the main reasons relations between council and staff have been strained in the past is an overall lack of training.

"With all this staff turnover, we're limited in our resources and training," he said.

The council was generally impressed with the detail and the thorough

nature of Kersnar's report, considering that he's only been in the position of city manager for three months. Certain members were concerned, however, with his proposal of putting redevelopment projects on hold.

"I'm very supportive of establishing a vision, but I feel we need to keep moving forward as much as we can [on redevelopment]," said Vice Mayor Dave Warden. "I'm concerned about the amount of time we've put into projects. It's been about a year and a half with the Block 4 project, and I'd hate to see it just suddenly stop."

Councilmember Terri Cook agreed, but acknowledged that the city should consider taking a step back and looking at the big picture.

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# KERSNAR: A vision for Belmont

*Continued from 1A*

"I'm struck by the excellent assessment you've done in such a short amount of time that you've been with us," she said. "You've been able to assess who we are and who we are not, and I'm impressed. Although everyone knows I hate putting anything on hold, I think [redevelopment] is one thing we might want to consider and look at."

Councilmember Pam Rianda agreed and said that taking a

step back on redevelopment projects could help the city move forward in the long run.

"To put things on the back burner is difficult, but things sometimes go wrong if you don't take a step back," she said.

"We haven't had anyone care as much about the staff or the community as much as you have," she told Kersnar. "For the first time in a long time we have a captain who is leading our ship rather than pushing it."

Mayor Eleanor Hahn agreed

that a vision would "definitely" help Belmont's image, and acknowledged that Kersnar is the man to get one for the community.

"We have a vision, but [some] projects we try go awry, and you've brought the talent to get the job done," she said.

Council accepted Kersnar's report with the understanding that many of his suggestions for improvement still need their approval and discussion before they can be implemented.

City Council  
The Independent  
Feb 20, 2001

# New care complex approved

## Church gets new facility in deal

By Wes Bowers  
Staff Reporter

BELMONT — The Belmont City Council gave its blessing to plans for an assisted living facility at the corner of Ralston Avenue and Alameda de las Pulgas, a victory for both Sunrise Inc. and the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church.

The council approved a 57,990-square-foot assisted living facility in place of a church rectory that has stood vacant for nearly four years, as well as new additions to the church campus including office renovations and a multi-use building.

"For nearly 40 years the people in our parish have needed better facilities," said the Rev. James MacDonald of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. "We didn't have the funds necessary to build, so we looked at possible ways to lease some [of our] property and found Sunrise could help us fund the project."

Construction for the church facilities is estimated to cost about \$3.6 million, and Rev. MacDonald said the church is hoping to break ground this fall. It is unknown when Sunrise Inc. plans to start or how much its facility will cost, but the church's plans cannot go forward until the assisted living facility is begun.

Proponents of the project filled the Twin Pines Community Center wearing huge red hearts to show their support.

"A considerable amount of time has been spent to make this a successful benefit to both the church and the community," said Belmont resident Don Oswald. His wife chairs the campaign to raise money for the project, which so far has collected \$1.8 million.

The church will be constructing a new 9,298-square-foot multi-purpose building on the 10-acre campus, complete with an elementary-sized basketball court, restrooms, kitchen, meeting room, after-school child-care room and kindergarten classroom.

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## COUNCIL: New care complex approved

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Additions to the church include living spaces for three priests in the rectory, new offices for church staff, meeting rooms for committees and groups and a small lunchroom. Sunrise Inc. will construct its three-story assisted living facil-

ity with 78 living units, a library, dining room, activity rooms and staff areas, and pay rent for use of the property.

"At first, I didn't like the look of the third story, but I went to the San Mateo facility and was very impressed," said Vice Mayor Dave Warden. "It looks like you've been listening to

the people in the community and I commend you for a great job."

"I too went to the San Mateo facility, and it didn't have the feeling of an institution, but more like a hotel, and I think this will be a great project," said Councilmember Paul Wright.

Sunrise Inc. has been in operation since 1981. It has approximately 150,000 beds nationwide, including a facility in San Mateo, which has 64 living units. Other facilities in the Bay Area are located in Sunnyvale, Danville, Oakland Hills, Santa Rosa and Walnut Creek.

City Council  
The Independent  
Feb 24, 01

# Council overturns commission's housing

## Applicant wanted three homes built on steep hill in Belmont

By Wes Bowers  
Staff Reporter

BELMONT — A Jan. 16 Planning Commission decision allowing three hillside homes to be built on Coronet Boulevard was overturned by the City Council.

"This was a rotten project to begin with. And I was going to deny it when it came before the Planning Commission two years ago, but I kept giving it a chance. But now I will deny

these plans because I just don't agree with it," said Vice Mayor Dave Warden. "It seems that when it came before the commission last month, they weren't into the project either. I don't know why they approved it."

At the January Planning Commission meeting, a setback variance and grading plan application was approved by a 4-2 vote, approving construction of three new homes.

Each home would have been built 14 feet from the street rather than the required 45, and the steep grade of Coronet and the surrounding landscape would have been flattened so homes could be built. Residents said the variance would set a dangerous precedent if the homes were allowed to be built.

"It's getting harder and harder to get out of Belmont now," said Joseph Ramirez of nearby Prindle Road. Ramirez submitted the appeal to the project on Jan. 24. "It takes me 15 to 20 minutes just getting out of my

neighborhood, and all the construction vehicles will make it even worse."

Prindle Road is just off Cipriani Boulevard, which crosses Ralston Avenue. Coronet Boulevard is on the southern end of Prindle. Ramirez's property is eight lots away from the proposed site.

Many construction vehicles would have to use Prindle Road to gain access to Coronet Boulevard, which concerned many residents who had children.

"Kids on both Prindle and

Continued from 1A

decrease the safety of these kids."

Motorists are already using Prindle and Coronet roads as an alternative route due to the heavy traffic on Ralston Avenue.

But Alan Schwartz, an attorney for project applicant Fred Voskoboynikov, said that the residents have nothing to be concerned about.

"These are three legal lots that my client has chosen for his project, and these homes will be a credit to the community. When all is said and done, no one will be the worse for it," he said. "Nothing has been done hastily or illegally, and this project is the best it can be as we see it."

Schwartz added that Ramirez had nothing to be concerned about in regards to property value or safety, and to go back to the drawing board — which is what the applicants would have to do if the appeal is upheld — would be devastating.

"I have been out to Mr. Ramirez's street,

looked the area over and found that there is no foundation to complain," Schwartz said.

Voskoboynikov bought the three lots two years ago and, according to Schwartz, went through a lengthy process in obtaining a construction permit, only to find out that it had expired by the time he was ready to break ground.

"We are victims of circumstance because someone gave us permits by mistake," Voskoboynikov told the council. "True, it is not the best project, but we are doing this legally."

Some residents presented materials stating that the applicants did not obtain the proper permits for cutting protected trees and relocating wildlife.

Others had different concerns.

"I'm concerned with the fact that this is not a flat lot with easy access in or out of Coronet," said Councilmember Pam Rianda.

Councilmember Paul Wright and Mayor Eleanore Hahn voted to reject the appeal,

## decision

Coronet play in the street. We have no sidewalks," said Coronet resident Angela Luster. "There will also be a great danger when I back out of my driveway with all this traffic going up and down the street."

"There are kids using the street for both travel and play, and building more houses will bring more than three people to each place, meaning more than two cars at each," said resident Robert Fuller. "Both the construction and post-construction traffic flow will

HOUSING: page 4A

## overturned

agreeing with the applicant's attorney that there wasn't substantial evidence for complaints.

"This project has been through the process of hell," said Wright. "I'm always uncomfortable undoing commission rulings, and these folks have a right to develop property, and I haven't seen a basis for overthrowing their decision."

"Health and safety issues cannot be created, they are set by the state," said Hahn.

But Councilmember Terri Cook pointed out the amount of time the Planning Commission spent deliberating the project.

"I sat down with the Planning Commission chair and city manager at the time when I was mayor a year ago, and we suggested that they sit down with the neighbors," Cook said. "Because the Planning Commission deliberated a great deal on Jan. 16, it shows they had trouble as well. And looking at the number of people here, it seems that they never sat down with the residents."

City Council  
March 6, 01  
The Independent

# Council to deliberate on parcel

## Decision on Harbor area could end long dispute

By Wes Bowers  
Staff Reporter

BELMONT — City Council last week voted unanimously to consider annexing the Harbor Industrial Area, a debate that began some 40 years ago.

The council will soon begin talking to representatives from the Harbor Industrial Association, San Mateo County and San Carlos in an effort to incorporate the industrial area on Harbor Boulevard into Belmont.

"We want to continue discussions with the city, and favor moving on with this proposal," said Edward Jones, vice president of the Harbor Industrial Association. "If we continue on with the discussions, it will lead to proper land use for that area."

The area in question is a 62-acre piece of unincorporated land bordered by Old County Road, O'Neill Avenue, Industrial Way and Quarry Road in the city's southeast quadrant. The idea of annexing the land started nearly 40 years when it was a 162-acre parcel.

Annexation of the area didn't become a major issue until 1997, when Belmont and San Carlos both sought to incorporate it. The Local Agency Formation Commission, which oversees annexation proposals, granted San Carlos some 100 acres, reducing Belmont's portion to the current 62 acres, along with a 3.5-acre trailer park on Karen Way.

The commission, which had revised the industrial area's sphere of influence, stipulated that the trailer park could not be included in any subsequent annexation of the industrial area because the trailer park is considered residential property. The trailer park can, however, be annexed as a separate piece of property.

There would have to be two separate processes for annexation," said Curtis Williams, a consultant hired to help with the process. "We can annex both, but they must be separate incidents, so you'd have to annex the trailer park at a later date."

Total one-time costs for the city would be approximately \$340,000, including a \$210,000 processing

## PARCEL: Industrial

Continued from 1A

and legal fee and environmental impact report. Annual costs are estimated at \$135,613 for roadway, sidewalk, drainage and sewer maintenance.

If the parcel is annexed, the city estimates revenues could total \$193,468 yearly, from a mix of property and sales tax revenues and other sources, or \$1,069,035 over a five-year period.

"This has potential for property owners to see some of the

area's advantages sometime down the road, like infrastructure improvements," said Williams.

Infrastructure improvements include solving the Belmont Creek flooding problem, improving the sewer service and upgrading roadways and traffic lights.

"The HIA Committee continues to provide us with ongoing direction as we maintain communication with them," said City Manager Jere Kersnar.

# Kersnar gives city council update on civic projects

## Manager given endorsement for work on many projects, programs

By Wes Bowers  
Staff Reporter

BELMONT — City manager Jere Kersnar presented an update to the Belmont City Council last week, outlining projects in various stages of development.

Kersnar's update sought to separate projects that have already been completed, ones that currently underway, and others which are still proposed.

These progress reports started last July, under the direction of then-interim city manager Tom Lewcock, when the city had 89

projects on its to-do list. Of that list, 21 projects have been completed in a little over nine months.

"I was very pleased to see that this system was in place by the time I arrived here," Kersnar said. "But while we completed 21 projects, we've added 20 more projects to our list."

These projects are a mix of commercial developments and improvements, as well as some in-house improvements the city has undertaken.

The 21 projects completed include the production of the

Belmont City News, a newsletter assembled by Interim Assistant City Manager Mike Bridges, a civic-oriented publication that

the historic Emmett House, the redevelopment of the Walgreens Block at the corner of Ralston and El Camino; the

time, they were not expecting that 20 additional projects would find their way onto Kersnar's list.

"We're always going to have a significant number of projects underway," Kersnar said. "There's always the feeling that 'Oh, we have to get all this done so we're not behind,' but we'll always be a little behind."

The 20 new projects Kersnar added — including the city's review of downtown planning, increased staff training and other in-house projects, stem from his community assessment presentation given at a Jan. 30 special meeting.

"This is a remarkable

**PROJECTS:** page 8A

## 'We're always going to have a significant number of projects underway'

Jere Kersnar,  
Belmont city manager

alerts the public to changes and happenings in their community, the cable franchise agreement with RCN Corporation and the Fox Community Park.

Projects that are still underway or in the planning stage include possible renovations to

Highway 101 bike and pedestrian bridge that could link an existing sports complex on the eastern side of 101 with downtown; the Ralston Avenue traffic study, even the new library.

Although council was impressed that 21 projects had been completed in such a short

# PROJECTS

Continued from 1A

accomplishment by staff in such a short amount of time," said Councilmember Pam Rianda. "Twenty-one projects may seem like a small amount out of 89, but 24 percent is a huge number."

Rianda also suggested that another project be put on the list — membership into the Peninsula Open Space Trust. Belmont is one of the few municipalities in San Mateo County that does not participate in the group.

"Many years ago we turned down a membership in the Peninsula Open Space Trust, and I'd like to add that to the list of projects, just to find historically why we're not part of it," she said.

City Council  
The Independent  
March 6, 01

*City Council  
The Independent  
March 13, 2001*

# Belmont presses on toward annexation

**By T.S. Mills-Faraulo**  
STAFF WRITER

**BELMONT** — The Belmont City Council Tuesday unanimously agreed to proceed with its fight for the annexation of the Harbor Industrial Area, land that many officials believe should have gone to the city many years ago.

It means the city will continue working with Harbor Industrial Association representatives, San Mateo County, the City of San Carlos, and the Council's HIA subcommittee to effectuate agreements regarding annexation.

"We want to continue discussions with the city," said Howard Jones, a property owner who was representing HIA. "We want to be friends with the city."

The annexation has been in dispute for more than 40 years. There was debate about it many times since 1960. But serious discussion didn't begin until 1997 when Belmont officials fought with San Carlos over the land, which they thought was in their sphere of influence. The County's Local Agency Formation Commission reduced Belmont's portion of land to about 62 acres, which includes a 3.5-acre trailer park, when it allowed San Carlos to annex the other two-thirds of the land. The LAFCO resolution stipulated that the trailer park not be included in any subsequent annexation of the industrial area.

The land in question is on the San Carlos/Belmont border between O'Neill Avenue, Old County Road, Industrial Way and Quarry Road.

To this day, city officials still don't understand why they were denied the property by LAFCO in 1997.

But with the support of most of the property owners, officials seem more confident this time around.

Curtis Williams, a consultant hired to help with the annexation process, also appeared hopeful at the meeting.

Among the benefits to the city, officials say, would be new revenue from property taxes, retail sales taxes and other miscellaneous taxes. City officials estimate that an annexation could bring in \$193,468 in revenue per year, or \$1,069,035 over a five-year period.

Annexation would most likely cost the city \$210,000 for application fees to The County, environmental impact report preparation and attorney fees.

The three largest parcels owned by businesses in the affected area include Harbor Park, a business/industrial development on 12.41 acres; the Wesgo Company site on 3.82 acres; and the Harbor Business Center on 3.82 acres.

"Can you tell me why a property owner in that area would want to be annexed?" Vice Mayor Dave Warden asked Williams.

He said that down the road, property owners could see infrastructure improvements, such as mitigation of the Belmont Creek flooding problem, as well as more land use options. "But it's really too early to tell what the benefits for property owners may be," Williams added.

# Future looks bright for Belmont, mayor says

## Hahn touts downtown rebirth and slew of projects in address

By Wes Bowers  
Staff Reporter

BELMONT — The city has a unique chance now to map a future for success, Mayor Eleanor Hahn said at the annual State of the City address.

"Today we are facing an opportunity to keep our heritage and develop a character," Hahn said. "It's a character that says, 'We want to change.'"

Belmont was incorporated as a city on October 25, 1926, and will celebrate its 75th anniversary

sary as a city this fall. During her speech, Hahn pointed out many of the changes that Belmont residents have seen over the years.

She cited the grade separation project raising the Caltrain tracks above El Camino Real, the development of downtown by the inclusion of new businesses and the construction of the Belmont Sports Complex across from Highway 101.

She said that Belmont wants to be different from surrounding cities, but different in a

good way, and also pointed out three main ingredients to Belmont's uniqueness — neighborhoods, commerce and the arts.

"Our neighborhoods are the foundation of Belmont," said Hahn. "They are the blocks that connect the residents to each other. The arts we have — like the Belmont Community Players and the theater department at the College of Notre Dame — are a special part of Belmont that separates us from other communities."

Several projects make Belmont different from other communities in the county, Hahn said. These include the

College of Notre Dame Master Plan, which will include addition of new dorms and classrooms and a general remodel of the campus; the Highway 101 bike bridge that will span Highway 101 and connect the eastern part of town; the success of the election to pay for a new library, plans to rebuild Fire Station 14, and the Masonic Way building that is being torn down.

"Anyone driving along 101 will know they are in Belmont when they see the bike bridge," she said. "And Fire Station 14 is closer to construction. It will be demolished next month, council will see a development plan

in the fall, and construction should take place shortly thereafter."

She said that the new library will bring visitors from neighboring cities in the north, south, east and west who will patronize the businesses in the Carlmont area, adding to the importance of Belmont's commerce.

"Volunteers have worked hard for two years to improve life and produce something the community can use," she said of the proposed library, which will replace one that's 40 years old and has long since outgrown its usefulness. "[The new library] will enhance the

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# BELMONT: Mayor gives State of City

Continued from 1A

community and I think it will almost definitely increase property values. Our overall goal is to make sure that the services we provide are quality services, and we're focusing on a plan for success."

Other projects Hahn mentioned that will help improve the character of Belmont are the City Hall remodeling and the building of a new police station. Construction on the new civic center begins in June.

There are also plans to put a five-story parking garage on one corner of Ralston and El Camino, which will replace a Walgreens and other businesses there. The Belmont Theater on El Camino was just recently approved as the site for a state-of-the-art rock climbing gym.

But Hahn said that what really makes Belmont special is the city's variety of arts and culture.

"The arts that we have, continue to contribute to making Belmont a well-rounded community," she said, "from the

[College of Notre Dame] Theater and the concerts and plays they perform, to the Greek Festival, to our Art and Wine Festival at Twin Pines Park."

She concluded by stating that Belmont needs to define itself so well that they are a good example to other communities.

"Belmont is not an island, but part of a bigger picture," she said. "We can't ignore our neighbors to the north, west, east and south. We will map our future, not just let it happen."

*Mayor in dependent  
March 20, 2001*



City Council  
The Independent  
April 3, 2001

# Stops planned along Notre Dame Avenue

## Concern for safety leads to approval at two intersections

By Wes Bowers  
Staff Reporter

BELMONT — Residents of Notre Dame Avenue successfully urged the Belmont City Council last week to approve the placement of two stop signs to keep speeds down in their neighborhood.

Ten residents from Notre Dame Avenue and nearby streets expressed their concern, prompting the council to place a stop sign at the corner of Notre Dame and Valley View avenues, and another one just a block away on Notre Dame Avenue and North Road. Both intersections are in residential neighborhoods approximately a half-mile from Notre Dame de Namur University, formerly known as the College of Notre Dame.

"My concern is that it is extremely dangerous on Notre Dame," said resident Barry Rosenburg, a resident of Notre Dame Avenue. "When I'm pulling out of my driveway, I nearly have an accident two or three times a week. My kids don't play in the front yard because of the high speeds. I'm afraid eventually there will be an accident, and I want to prevent it before it happens."

The two corners in question are both three-way intersections, with stop signs on North Road and Valley View Avenue.

Residents say that one sign on each of those streets is not enough.

The council unanimously voted to put stop signs at both intersections after hearing the debate.

Residents of Notre Dame Avenue were pleased their concerns were being heeded. Many of those who spoke have young children who play around the areas being considered for stop signs.

**'I'm afraid eventually there will be an accident, and I want to prevent it before it happens.'**

Barry Rosenburg,  
Notre Dame Avenue resident

"My neighbors and I were extremely overwhelmed and delighted when we were told that Mr. Curtis and Mr. Jones [John Curtis and Duncan Jones, public works director and assistant city engineer] said they would put stop signs there," said Christopher Scallon. "But the very night they were installed on Valley View and North, a child riding his bike was hit by a car on Notre Dame and North, on the very spot that a stop sign was installed. We need more than one at both intersections."

Scallon added that he has clocked some cars to reach speeds up to 80 miles per hour on Notre Dame, and some residents said

that they have already been visited by cars swerving onto their property because they are speeding.

"The cars go really fast, and sometimes they have to swerve into my driveway," said Notre Dame Avenue resident Michelle Reed. "They nearly hit my kids who are playing in the yard."

Jack Starkey, who lives on the corner of Williams Street and Notre Dame Avenue, said speeding cars are a constant problem for him and his neighbors as well.

"I've been the recipient of three cars in my yard, and my neighbors have had to replace their fences a couple of times," he said.

Residents also suggested placing a sign on Middle Road and Notre Dame Avenue for extra safety, something that Public Works Director John Curtis had been presented with through letters and e-mails from residents who were opposed to signs on Notre Dame.

"There are a few people who have suggested putting a stop sign on Middle Road, but these are folks who don't live on Notre Dame," Curtis said.

But the council found that safety is a major issue on Notre Dame, and voted to put the signs up as soon as possible.

"If a neighborhood wants a stop sign, that's fine. No one wants an accident," said Vice Mayor Dave Warden.

Money from city gas taxes will pay for the signs.

www.bayareaindependent.com

# City not sure how to proceed with traffic

## idea of 'video checkpoints' could be dropped

By Wes Bowers  
Staff Reporter

BELMONT — City council members are still committed to conducting a city-wide traffic study, they just aren't sure how to do it.

Although the council unanimously approved the study in January, the implementation of the study will now be postponed because the prospective traffic agency offered an alternate method of tracking vehicles than what was originally proposed.

"I'd feel better if we could do this study for two days, and compare the

records," said Vice Mayor Dave Warden. "It would really nail down the proper results."

The city originally planned to use video checkpoints on certain streets at the city's borders to record license-plate numbers over the course of two days.

The city wants to find out what the most congested intersections of town are at certain times of the day. They also want to find out how long the people that enter Belmont's borders at these intersections stay within city limits.

Members of the council have suggested that conducting these video checkpoints could be one way to help solve the congestion problems at key intersections.

Traffic research firm Kimley and

Horn have proposed conducting a traffic study for one day at various checkpoints on the city's borders by having two people write down the license plates of white cars.

"The consultant feels that you need someone out there to make sure the camera works," said Assistant City Engineer Duncan Jones. "So if you're going to have someone out there checking up on the cameras, they felt you might as well have two taking down license plates."

Jones said that the firm has proposed to have the two people at each checkpoint write down only the last four characters of the license plates, rather than the entire sequence. He said the method was changed because of possible overlapping.

For example, a number of cars have

# study

he same sequence of letters like "UFS" on their license plate. Because many cars have the same or similar letter sequences, the firm has chosen to only record the last four characters.

The original record-taking method also called for recording the plates of all cars. Jones said that only white cars will be used now because "the firm thought they were the easiest to spot." Mayor Eleanor Hahn was concerned with the consultant's method of recording license plate numbers, as well as how long they have been conducting research in this manner.

"We thought we were going to be doing this with the use of video cameras and high technology back in January," she said. "I don't think this is the best we can do. We need more than

**TRAFFIC:** page 13A

## TRAFFIC: Video checkpoints axed

*Continued from 1A*

one day to do this if we're just going to have someone standing out there taking down numbers with a tape recorder."

Jones said he didn't know how long Kimley and Horn have used this and other ways of conducting traffic studies for several years.

Because they would only have one day to conduct the study, the council was concerned research might not be conducted on a "normal" day with the usual backups along Ralston, Alameda de las Pulgas and Old County roads.

"We're only getting one day out of this," said Warden. "How are we guaranteed a 'normal' day of traffic? What if there's a wreck on Ralston and there's a huge increase in traffic the day we decide to do this? Could we move the study to another day?"

City Manager Jere Kersnar's recommendation was to discuss the possibility of a second day of research with the firm, but it could possibly cost more money.

As the proposed agreement currently stands, Kimley and Horn would conduct their study for one day, at the cost of \$32,650. Another day of study could mean double the cost for the city.

"I'd be perfectly willing to go along with conducting a traffic study," said Warden. "But we've done similar studies in the past that just

haven't been up to our satisfaction. I don't feel that we have consistency with just one day."

The checkpoints where license plate numbers will be recorded are proposed on Ralston Avenue before the Route 92 junction in the west and the Ralston Avenue/Highway 101 ramps. There will also be checkpoints on the north and south ends of Alameda de las Pulgas, Old County Road and El Camino Real, as well as on the southern ends of Hastings and Chula Vista drives.

To determine which cars are merely 'passing through' and which are staying in Belmont for long periods of time, the city has determined that if a vehicle leaves Belmont after only being in town for the time it takes to travel between checkpoints, it is just passing through.

If the vehicle left after a certain delay, it is assumed that it stopped in town to patronize a business or visit a resident. If it entered city limits but did not leave - or vice-versa - it is assumed it was a resident.

At the January 9 meeting, Jones said that it would be impossible to log all the cars passing through using the unmanned video checkpoints.

"The study will miss the people who go through Belmont on smaller streets and miss Ralston or Chula Vista," he said at the time. "But that's just a small percentage."

City Council  
The Independent  
March 20, 2001  
April 17, 2001

# Station plans hashed out by Belmont council

## Construction could start by summer on fire house

By Wes Bowers  
Staff Reporter

BELMONT — Designs for the new South County Fire Station 14 could be reviewed by the City Council as early as July, according to city officials.

The original construction schedule for the new station at 601 Masonic Way called for development plans to be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council. The fire station's plans could be reviewed by the council July 24.

The 9,166-square-foot fire station will front Masonic Way to the north with trucks entering on that street, but will make exits onto Ralston Avenue to the south.

The first floor will have an office, fitness and training rooms, a laundry room and storage areas. The second floor will have a kitchen, dining room and dormitories for 15 staff members.

If approved at the July 24 City Council meeting, the station would house a front-line ambulance, a reserve aerial ladder truck and a front-line pumper.

Construction would begin soon afterward if approved, but neighbors of the proposed project were a little concerned with the revision.

"When talk of a revision came up, we thought the first plan would not be discarded," said Wilma Kartmann, a resi-

dent of nearby Mt. View Place and strong supporter of the original plans. "We thought that we'd be able to look at both the original and newly designed plans and be able to discuss them."

The station's original plan presented at the Oct. 3 Planning Commission meeting included three driveways on Ralston Avenue to the south, Granada street to the east and Masonic Way to the north. Emergency units would exit the station onto Ralston and enter the station from Masonic.

It was also suggested that Granada be converted into a one-way street, or even closing Granada down completely so only the trucks would use it.

But residents of the neighborhood said that closing down Granada would cause many traffic problems, such as forcing motorists to use Hiller street as a way to get into the neighborhood, clogging up traffic.

Mayor Eleanor Hahn assured Kartmann and other residents who were in attendance but did not speak, that their concerns and suggestions would be heard and taken into consideration when the plans were brought forth in July.

"Our communities will have chances to approach both the the Planning Commission and the City Council and suggest ideas and changes," she said.

city council  
The Independent  
April 17, 2001

# Reprieve for development

## Dwellings on steep grade will be reviewed

By Wes Bowers  
Staff Reporter

BELMONT — Developers looking to build three homes on a steep incline on Coronet Boulevard were given a 60-day reprieve by the City Council so they could revise their plans to make access easier to the homes.

Fred Voskoboynikov, the project's applicant, has been trying for the last two years to construct three homes on the very steep and narrow Coronet Boulevard. When his plans were approved by the Planning Commission on Jan. 16, nearby residents immediately appealed and persuaded the City Council to overturn the Planning Commission decision in February.

Voskoboynikov asked for a 60-day continuance to discuss the project with neighbors and revise the plans by building a new road from Coronet to Ralston Avenue for easier access.

"We really want to work with the city," said Mike McCracken, Voskoboynikov's representative.

But neighbors who live on nearby Prindle Road say that the applicant has not made any effort to talk with them, and they feel that allowing him 60 days to revise his plans

would nullify the appeal they made earlier this year.

"Please understand our concern," said Prindle Road resident Joseph Ramirez, who brought the appeal to council in January. "We appealed the Planning Commission's approval, it was upheld, and we feel it should be upheld."

However, the council assured Ramirez that they were only taking this route so both parties could come to some sort of an agreement.

"Your appeal was not a waste of time," said Councilmember Pam Rianda. "At the Feb. 13 meeting, concern was heard by both the applicants and council. The applicants are just trying to find an alternate route to take in order to make this a suitable project."

The council has expressed an interest in working with the applicant, members said.

The homes were proposed at the Feb. 13 City Council meeting to be built 14 feet from the street, rather than the required 45 feet, and the steep grade of Coronet would have been adjusted so the structures could be built.

At that meeting, residents of Prindle Road and Coronet Boulevard expressed safety concerns to the council including traffic, child safety and environmental issues.

Residents stated that many motorists are already using Prindle and Coronet as alternative routes, due to the heavy amount of traffic generated on

Ralston Avenue.

Residents also said that because construction vehicles would have to use Prindle Road as access to Coronet, many children who play or walk in the street would be in danger because there are no sidewalks on either street.

They also said that the excessive loads from the construction vehicles will affect the stability of the soil underneath Coronet Boulevard.

The new plan to build an access road from Coronet to Ralston would relieve Prindle of the heavy traffic that might be generated from construction vehicles, according to Voskoboynikov.

But Planning Commission Vice Chair Phil Mathewson said that building a new road will not alleviate safety concerns.

"If these plans come back to you with access from Ralston Avenue, I'd like you to look at safety issues," he told the council. "I've seen two very close accidents on that area of Ralston."

The council hopes that Voskoboynikov returns to the council with plans that he, the council and residents can all agree on.

"Council has heard the neighbors' concerns, and I wouldn't want another road built," said Vice Mayor Dave Warden. "But I hope that the applicant and the city staff can come up with something we all can agree on."

# Plan to replace pool with homes proceeds

## Developer plans 48 homes on site of PJCC

By Wes Bowers  
Staff Reporter

BELMONT — It took four presentations over a year, but Summerhill Homes will finally present its plans to the City Council for a 48-unit development on the site of the Peninsula Jewish Community Center.

The townhouses at 2440 Carlmont Drive are proposed to replace the PJCC after it moves

to Foster City later this year.

Originally, Summerhill had proposed 60 units on the site, but by last September they brought the number of units down to 52 and offered to pay \$500,000 to the city as compensation for losing a public recreational facility.

The commission wasn't happy with the proposal at the time. They complained there were too many units and not enough recreational areas.

Summerhill's revised plans now include 48 townhouses, along with a tot lot next to the existing swimming pool.

The pool, which is currently

open to the public during operating hours, will be purchased by Summerhill and only be open to townhouse residents after the development is finished.

This time around, Summerhill has agreed to pay \$1 million to the city — \$700,000 for improvements of existing parks and \$300,000 toward construction of a new pool. However, city planners aren't sure where a new pool could be built or how much it would cost.

"We have a list of potential parks that can be improved, and when it comes to an additional pool, we haven't done

research on it yet," said planner Carlos de Melo. "When you look at finding a site, along with facilities, and construction and security, it is an expensive endeavor."

Commissioner Gloria Purcell said the city should make an effort to talk with local schools about paying for public use of their pools.

"I'm very interested in contacting Carlmont High and Ralston Middle School," she said. "They already have the facilities, the pool and security, and it would be less expensive to the city."

Summerhill Development

Manager Craig Chapman said that each home will have three bedrooms and two bathrooms along with its own parking garage.

"Every unit has parking enclosed with the building," he said. "The detached garage is gone, and parking is now included with the home."

The previous set of plans contained 40 units with two bedrooms, and 12 units with three, along with a covered parking area.

The parking area was scrapped so all 48 units could have the same characteristics and dimensions.

*City Council  
San Mateo Co Times  
April 21, 2001*

# Belmont boosts opposition to airport

By T.S. Mills-Faraldo  
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — City Council members decided a letter won't be good enough to voice their opposition to The County's plan to add stop-ways on the San Carlos Airport runway.

After listening to several residents express their distaste Tuesday night, Council members decided to not to write a letter to The County, but instead asked city staff to write a resolution lambasting the airport's master plan in hopes that this would send a stronger message.

"I want you to amend the letter and

make it a resolution asking the Board of Supervisors not to pave the extension," said Redwood Shores resident Frank Deighan, a long-time opponent of the airport's plan to add 300-foot paved safety stop-ways at each end of the existing runway.

This would extend the paved surface of the 2,600-foot runway to 3,200 feet, according to the county's draft plan.

Many opponents fear airport officials aren't adding the stop-ways for safety reasons, but instead are making plans behind closed doors to start allowing larger planes to land at the airport.

But airport officials compare the stop-ways to having shoulders on freeways.

The County's plan says the purpose of stop-ways is to have an area beyond the runway threshold that could only be used during emergency situations such as an aborted takeoff or landing where an aircraft is unable to stop in time and overruns the end of the runway.

"If you package things right, you can sell anything, and that's what they're doing by saying this is for safety," runway extension opponent Gary Mogil said. "But we're thinking about our

## plan for runway extension

own safety. When that plane landed in the Belmont slough close to children and homes we were devastated. None of these plane accidents had anything to do with the safety of the runway. It was the pilots' error."

Councilman Paul Wright, who is a private pilot, said if The County accepts a grant to construct stop-ways, they can not be used as part of the runway. But despite his disagreement with some of the public comments, Wright agreed to support the resolution because of residents' concern for safety.

Councilwoman Pam Rianda was ad-

amant about sending the resolution instead of a letter to The County.

"We need to stand up for our residents," she said.

Other elements of the master plan include building a 42,000-gallon fuel tank; increasing the terminal building by 3,760 square feet, making it 11,000 square feet; adding hangar space; and upgrading landing aids and adding an automatic surface observation system.

The draft environmental impact report for the airport's master plan will be available to the public by the end of May.

The City Council will vote on the resolution at its next meeting.

*City Council  
Don Mates Co Turner  
Apr. 23, 2001*

# Belmont hires engineers to track Ralston traffic

**By T.S. Mills-Faraudo**  
STAFF WRITER

**BELMONT** — The City Council hired an engineering group Tuesday night in the hope that it will find out where the mob of traffic that travels on Ralston Avenue each day is coming from.

Council members unanimously agreed to pay Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. \$50,200 to determine who is using the road, as well as ways to make traffic run more smoothly through the area.

Some people, including city officials, believe much of the overflow of traffic is coming from commuters using the thoroughfare as a shortcut between Highways 92 and 101.

Furthermore, since there's no wait for trains to go by now because the tracks have been raised, it's believed that commuters are taking advantage by

using Ralston Avenue to go to and from those highways.

What city officials want to know is whether the majority of Ralston Avenue travelers are residents or commuters using it as a short-cut, as well as how many are stopping in town to patronize local businesses.

The council was presented with a number of alternatives for conducting the study. They voted to go with the one that will save the city money.

It will involve spending one day video-logging the peak hours on Ralston Avenue in the peak direction, allowing a direct comparison to manually collected data provided by people copying down license plate numbers off of white vehicles passing by as a representative sample. City officials say this alternative would avoid the high cost of video-logging all locations.

There was a question as to

why only the license numbers of white cars would be collected.

"White cars are more distinguishable," consultant Brian Sowers said. "For the person collecting data they have more probability for error if they're collecting numbers off of more than one colored car. We could collect numbers off of more cars, but it would require more people."

Several council members questioned how accurate the study will be, since the consultant plans on doing it in one day.

"We're potentially going to make policy decisions based on this study, so we want it to be accurate," Vice Mayor Dave Warden said.

Sowers said they've done studies in which they've collected information on different days of the week, and the volume of vehicles didn't change much.

*Van Haled to 1st  
City Council  
April 28, 2001*

# Layout changes delay move of Belmont police officers

**By T.S. Mills-Faraldo**  
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Plans to move police officials out of their cramped building with leaky ceilings into a revamped city hall have hit a wrinkle.

The latest delay in the \$6.55 million project was minor changes made in the layout by the Bureau of Corrections, since a holding cell is being built, said John Curtis, director of public works.

This could delay putting the project out to bid by about a month, he said.

"I don't think it's anyone's fault. This has just been a very long drawn-out process," said Vice Mayor Dave Warden, adding that planning for this began before he was on the City Council one and half years ago.

Plans include moving police operations out of the two-story building into city hall, which will have an atrium-like addition built on what is now the back side of the L-shaped structure.

The three-story extension to city hall will serve as an entrance with counters where citizens can ask questions. The first floor will be the main lobby. The second floor will be the police department lobby and the third will serve as the building and planning counter.

In this way, citizens don't have to go wandering around the building looking for the right department or person to talk to," Curtis said.

One drawback in plans is that buildings such as police stations have special requirements when dealing with seismic upgrades.

Right now police administration is in city hall and police operations is in a 50-year-old building which once served as a sanitarium. The building is plagued with leaky ceilings and has restricted space for the people there.

prices with the slowing economy," City Manager Jere Kersnar said. "We may get offers that go under what we budgeted. Who knows with this economy."

So what happens if the city doesn't find the price tag?

"If the bids are too high we'll have to see if the Council will approve more funds," Curtis said.

If the city finds a company

that will do the project, Curtis expects construction to begin by August.

Offices for the city clerk, city manager, finance director, human resources and information technology will be relocated to the lodge in Twin Pines Park until construction is completed.

Public works, community development and the police department will stay in city hall.

He expects the project to be completed within a year.

"They need to get out of that building," Curtis said.

Once the project goes to bid, the city must play the waiting game to find out if any offers fit its tight budget.

The city has been creative in how it has allocated money for the project. Finance Director Thomas Fil said the city is paying for the project thusly: a loan from Oracle, a redevelopment bond, deferring capital programs, the general fund, refinancing a note, accumulated interest and possibly money from the state.

Some city officials worry that if they wait too long to go to bid, they may not get any offers the city can afford.

"The big unknown is what's happening with construction