

# Belmont building protests

Special consideration  
comes under attack

By John Raess  
Times Tribune Staff

BELMONT — The city should give special consideration, in granting building permits, to builders who give generously to the city's open space fund, the Planning Commission decided Saturday.

But that decision came over the protests of some commissioners, who felt it would give the advantage to well-funded, large-scale contractors instead of the private home builder.

Using voluntary contributions as a criterion was tantamount to "blatant municipal blackmail," according to Commissioner Bill Moore, who joined Commissioners Alex Fletcher and Janet Collins in voting against the special consideration motion.

The open-space decision was the first phase of the commissioners' attempt to develop a method of complying with the new limit of 56 building permits a year in the city.

Belmont voters overwhelmingly approved the limit in a special election last July, and the City Council has given the Planning Commission the task of developing a system of evaluation for new building permits.

Two proposed systems have been submitted for the commission's review.

From the discussion Saturday, it appeared that the commissioners would select neither one entirely but attempt to strike a compromise between the two.

It is expected to be a long, dreary process, but the City Council has asked for the commission's report by next week so that it can complete it work on the evaluation system by February.

No proposed housing developments may be accepted by the city until an evaluation system is intact.

The first of the two proposed methods was forwarded by the Citizens for Orderly Growth (COG), which is the organization that sponsored the original growth initiative.

COG's plan gives each proposed project a number of points, then adds to or subtracts from that total depending on the desirable features of the building.

How many points are added or subtracted depends on a series of equations that juggle various environmental factors.

The other plan was submitted by Neal Martin and Mac Carpenter, who are the city's planning consultants.

With their plan, each proposed project would start with no points.

The plan has a list of 40 categories considered beneficial to the city where points could be added.

There was general agreement among the commissioners that some sort of point system was necessary to cope with the limit. But they refused to commit themselves to either plan.

Instead, they took each factor separately to determine whether it should be part of the point system.

For many of the criteria, such as police and fire protection, water and sewage service, they determined that a letter from the appropriate agency was necessary to determine whether there was adequate service available.

As it turned out, the only factor that the commission agreed should be subject to the point system was the contribution to the open space fund.

The commission will take up the rest of the factors for consideration at a 7:30 p.m. today at the civic center.



BELMONT CITY GOV'T.  
(GENERAL)  
REDWOOD CITY TIMES -  
TRIBUNE  
JAN. 17, 1981

# San Carlos to sue Belmont for sewage fees

By Terry Robertson  
Times Tribune staff

The city of San Carlos is going to sue Belmont for more than \$44,000 in payments for sewage treatment fees.

The decision to take action against its northern neighbor was made unanimously by the San Carlos City Council in a closed-door session earlier this week after months of futile negotiations between representatives from each city's council.

San Carlos' city attorney notified Belmont's attorney of his council's decision Thursday and said the suit would be filed in

## Belmont denies it used more than its share of plant capacity

San Mateo County Superior Court early next week.

Belmont's attorney, Kenneth Dickerson, said he relayed the message to Belmont City Manager James DeChaine, who notified his City Council.

Dickerson said no action will be taken until the council sees the official complaint.

The San Carlos City Council's decision came after a settlement offer by Belmont

for the sewage treatment fees that San Carlos Mayor Patricia Bennie said was "such a small amount compared to what they owe us, that it wasn't even a consideration."

"I don't want this to look like a feud between the two cities," she added. "It's just a disagreement over a contract.

"We signed a contract with them. Does it hold or doesn't it?"

408,000 gallons a day of the plant's capacity than the city agreed to pay in a joint contract agreement signed by both cities in 1958, according to San Carlos officials.

Belmont officials believe the contract does hold, but interpret its language differently and refuse to acknowledge San Carlos' claims.

Belmont is accused of using more sewage capacity from the Belmont-San Carlos Sewage Treatment plant from July of 1978 to January of 1980 than they were paying for.

During that time Belmont, apparently unknowingly, had been using about

The agreement for use of the new sewage treatment plant in San Carlos was signed when there was no way of measuring the dry weather flow of Belmont's sewage capacity. To make things simpler, billing was based on population — Belmont would be billed for 35 percent to San Carlos' 65 percent of sewage capacity.

(OVER)

(The dry weather flow is a term used to describe the average amount of sewage flow used by each city during July, August and September. Those three months are the only ones on which sewage treatment plant sewage charges are determined.)

In 1978 Belmont opened the new Shoreway pump station, which pumps their sewage to the treatment plant and measures dry weather flow. However, it wasn't until the beginning of last year that engineers determined through a series of tests that Belmont was using 43.5 percent of the treatment plant's 4.8 million gallons of sewage that go through the treatment plant each day.

San Carlos' administrator sent Belmont's city manager the bill, including interest, for the excess sewage after the alleged oversight was uncovered.

Belmont officials claim a clause in the contract between the two cities says they owe nothing to San Carlos.

"We were billed retroactively," said Belmont Councilman William Hardwick, who was in on the months of negotiations. "A clause in the existing contract says that when bills are submitted, they are correct. The bills were paid on that basis."

That makes no difference, claimed San Carlos City Attorney Anthony Lagorio.

"They used the services and our people have been paying for it," he said. "There's no question about that."

(OVER)



# San Carlos sues Belmont over sewer charges

J M Jones  
1-28-81

By KAREN PETERSON  
Times Staff Writer

Disputed sewer fees the City of San Carlos claims are owed to it by Belmont have become a matter to be decided by the courts.

San Carlos City Attorney Anthony Lagorio filed suit in San Mateo County Superior Court to collect more than \$40,000 in sewer charges the city says Belmont owes for its portion of operating expenses of the joint sewage treatment plant utilized by the two cities.

According to the lawsuit, Belmont's proportional share of the cost went up in July of 1978, based on meter readings at that city's pumping station, but that Belmont officials

failed to inform San Carlos officials of the change.

San Carlos city officials discovered early last year that Belmont's proportional use of the sewage treatment plant had risen from 35 percent to 42 percent, and in May notified Belmont and demanded payment of the difference. Despite repeated requests for payment, Belmont had continued to dispute the charges and refused to pay the bill, the suit alleges.

That refusal, and Belmont's failure to notify San Carlos of the change in its proportional use of the sewage treatment plant, constitutes a breach of the 1951 contract which established the joint usage of the treat-

ment plant, according to the lawsuit.

Under terms of that agreement, San Carlos has borne the cost of maintaining and operating the sewage treatment plant, billing Belmont for its proportionate share of the cost each month. That bill must be paid within 15 days, according to the original agreement.

Belmont's proportion of the cost is determined by the quantity of sewage from that city entering the treatment and disposal plant. That quantity, the contract states, "shall be determined at any time at the request of either city by mutual agreement." Originally, the share of cost was based on population and it was agreed that San Carlos would

pay 65 percent and Belmont 35 percent.

The contract said that the proportion of payment could also be determined by "any other reasonable criterion, or upon mutual agreement by appropriate devices and implements for measurement of sewage."

In 1975, a pump station was installed in Belmont to pump the untreated sewage to the joint treatment plant. A meter on that pump station initially did not function, the lawsuit said, but in 1978, the meter became operational and Belmont was able to determine how much sewage was coming from their city.

The lawsuit alleges that Belmont officials either "intentionally or negligently," failed to inform San Carlos of the correct meter readings at that time.

The lawsuit contends that Belmont's share since July of 1978 should be 42 percent of the cost of operating the treatment plant.

The difference between that percentage and what Belmont had been paying amounts to \$43,268, for services up through June 1980.

The lawsuit says that San Carlos billed Belmont for that amount in May and on June 26 notified Belmont officials that 1.5 percent interest would be charged monthly until the bill was paid.

The lawsuit seeks to collect the \$43,268 plus interest of 1.5 percent per month and an additional 7 percent interest on the unpaid money.

Although Belmont has since begun paying the increased percentage of costs, that city's officials have refused to pay the back charges which San Carlos contends it owes.



# What the state budget cuts <sup>(1)</sup> mean to <sup>(B)</sup> cities

\* JUL 02 1982

Times Tribune staff

For varying reasons, some California cities will do better than others under the \$25.2 billion state budget approved Wednesday.

California cities will lose \$221 million in state funds under the budget. For most of the cities, the cuts will equal the bail-out funds the state has given since Proposition 13 was passed in 1978.

Some cities, those with a high property tax burden before Proposition 13, will escape some, though not all, of the cuts.

Some cities can cushion the budget cuts with other income. Commercial or industrial sections provide many cities with a more stable source of income, although the economy's general malaise also has hurt them.

Taxable sales, one source of income for many cities, declined an inflation-adjusted 2 percent last year, according to the state Board of Equalization. It was the second consecutive yearly decrease in taxable sales.

Smaller cities that have depended mainly on the property tax probably will have a difficult time finding means to offset their losses, said Hal Stemmler, spokesman for the California League of Cities. Many of those municipalities have relied on state help since Proposition 13 reduced their property tax revenues.

The \$221 million in state aid taken from cities this year comes from fees refunded to municipalities from auto registration. Almost two-thirds of the money usually given back to the cities will be kept by the state.

During protracted state budget negotiations, many city officials had voiced the fear that the Legislature would keep as much as \$500 million of the state fees normally returned to the cities. Many cities had been bracing for more extensive cutbacks.

Following is a city-by-city breakdown of state budget cuts:

- Redwood City will receive a cut of \$1,038,000 in state funds.

Though a large reduction, the amount is still \$68,000 more than the city had pessimistically projected.

"It has to do with how they play with your brain," City Manager James Smith said. "In a reverse way of thinking, you could say, 'Gee this is terrific. We got \$68,000 more than we thought we would.'"

"The cut will have a tremendous impact on the city," Smith continued, "and, although we will maintain services this year, there will be substantial reductions in 1982-83 in all city departments — police, fire, parks, library, maintenance, the whole enchilada."

- Belmont's Finance Director Michael Shelton said his latest figures show the city losing \$201,793 under the new state budget. That is relatively good news.

"We were looking at more like a worst case of over \$600,000," Shelton said.

With "only" the \$200,000 loss, Belmont probably will be able to get by with a "baseline" budget for 1982-83 with no layoffs or cuts in service, Shelton said.

Shelton said the city probably will transfer funds from its self-insurance, capital improvement or revenue sharing accounts to close the \$200,000 gap.

- San Carlos will lose about \$308,000 in state funding, but a \$600,000 "cushion for economic uncertainty" will see the city through, according to Warren Shafer, assistant city administrator and finance director. The \$600,000 carryover has been saved over several years in anticipation of the end of post-Proposition 13 bailouts, Shafer said.

Shafer described the tentative 1982-83 budget as "hold-the-line with no new programs or major cuts either."

"Compared to some cities, we're in good shape," Shafer said. "But we'll have a tough time (in the future) depending on the economy with the Lenkurt thing on the horizon." GTE Lenkurt, San Carlos' lar-

Please see FUNDS, B-4

OVER

BELMONT  
(GENERAL)  
TIMES-TRIBUNE  
JULY 2, 1982



REIMBURSEMENT  
GENERAL  
TOWN OF WOODSIDE  
JULY 2 1982

gest employer and sales tax producer, plans to close its plant and lay off half of its 2,000 employees starting in August.

● Woodside will lose \$33,203 under the new state budget. Some of that represents increases in state funding over last year that the town was not counting on.

The town, however, will lose \$4,000 in motor vehicle in-lieu fees, the amount it received last year.

Although that loss is comparatively minor, it comes at a time "when every penny helps," Woodside Town Manager Bob Myers said.

Woodside in the coming year will be forced to dip into its reserves to help pay part of the estimated \$350,000 to \$450,000 needed to repair several roads damaged in mudslides last spring.

The town will have \$500,000 in reserves during fiscal 1982-83 year.

● Atherton Town Manager Ross Hubbard said Wednesday afternoon that the town will lose about \$140,000 in state aid. It will be able to launch a major capital improvements project — the resurfacing of Middlefield Road — only because it has saved up for the project for several years.

Hubbard said the town's tentative operating budget is \$2 million.

\* JUL 2 1982

OVER



BELMONT CITY GENERAL  
REDWOOD CITY TIMES-TRIBUNE  
JULY 18, 1983

# CHANGE

\*\*\* JUL 18 1983

Continued from B-1

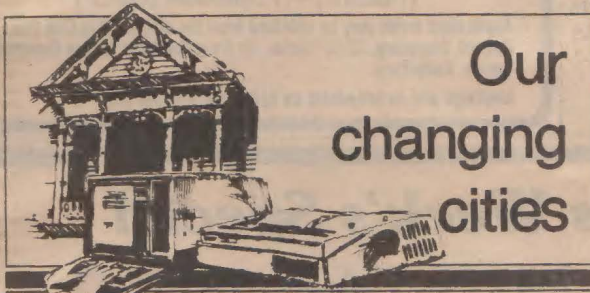
## Belmont has grown despite attempts to stop the clock

This is the ninth of 15 articles on changes in the Peninsula's cities, in the past 10 years. Today: Belmont.

By Janet Reinka  
Times Tribune staff

\*\*\* JUL 18 1983

**BELMONT** — It's hard to think of a city on the Peninsula that has resisted change as doggedly as



### Our changing cities

Belmont has during the past decade.

Voters have gone to the polls repeatedly to limit growth, electing "no-growth" City Council candidates, approving moratoriums and building permit limits, and, most recently, waging a battle royal over a large development that is proposed east of the Bayshore Freeway.

Nevertheless, Belmont is not a carbon copy of the town it was 10 years ago despite the efforts to stop the clock.

The main change in this tree-studded, hillside town known for its spectacular views has been the development of areas in Belmont's western hills. Big expensive single-family houses have been built in the Belmont Heights neighborhoods off Ralston Avenue and Hallmark Drive.

The second major area of development — which remains one of Belmont's thorniest political issues — is the San Juan Canyon neighborhood. Building moratoriums have been imposed and lots "merged" and then "unmerged."

Planning Department Director Jerome Podesta estimates that 70 percent of the canyon area already has been developed.

But, as is true everywhere, the best, most easily developed lots were built upon first. The San Juan Canyon area has steep lots, unstable soil, drainage problems, small parcels and "paper" streets, some with no access.

With the possible exception of Pacifica, no city on the Peninsula has fought so hard to put a limit on new housing. Political pressure to limit development in Belmont's hillsides resulted in passage in 1979 of Measure A by a 2-to-1 margin. Measure A put a quota

Please see CHANGE, B-2

of 56 units a year on building permits for housing, through 1990.

The first two years, there were more applications than permits. But the past two years, applications have been so low that the City Council recently extended the application period through Sept. 15, Podesta said. He blames the economy.

In the past 10 years, El Camino Real has seen some changes, with a new shopping center opening near Davey Glen Road and other commercial buildings being added along that thoroughfare.

A project for undergrounding utilities along Ralston Avenue started years ago at Shoreway Road, where the Holiday Inn is located, City Clerk Jim McLaughlin said. Then the stretch to North Road was added. Just recently, unsightly utility poles and lines came down when the undergrounding on Ralston was extended through Belmont's downtown.

"We still have a ways to go to make Ralston as beautiful as we'd like it," he said.

Belmont politicked and managed to get the state highway department to landscape the Ralston Avenue cloverleaf at the Bayshore Freeway with flowering iceplant. Belmont, McLaughlin noted with pride, has one of the best-looking "entrances" of any city along the freeway.

Signals were improved during the last 10 years at Old County Road. That has improved traffic flow. In the past decade, the police and recreation departments also moved into Twin Pines Park, which is used as an arts center and has elevated Belmont as a focus on the Peninsula for arts.

Fire Station No. 1 was closed and has been leased to the Center for the Independence of the Disabled, which serves handicapped people in Belmont and surrounding cities.

The Belmont library has also been expanded within the past 10 years. But the community also lost a major asset, when Belameda Pool was closed. Its filtering system was antiquated and the city did not have the money to repair and update the pool.

McLaughlin can take a share of credit for a change that has been unique on the Peninsula. During the nation's bicentennial, which coincided with Belmont's 50th birthday, all the fire hydrants were painted to resemble characters from America's early years. The painted fireplugs have faded but the characters are still recognizable.

McLaughlin was chairman of the celebration, during which a monument about Belmont's history was also installed at Twin Pines Park.

During the recent past, three schools in Belmont — Cipriani, McDougal and Barrett — have closed. The district last week solicited the community's opinion about what kind of uses would be preferred in the schools if they are leased or sold.

Looming on the horizon is Island Park, the huge Kumam Corp. project, which has also been the subject of a special election. The project, which would be located east of the Bayshore Freeway at the Ralston Avenue interchange, would add a 300- to 350-room hotel, about 220 condominiums, 700,000 to 800,000 square feet of office space and some commercial space.

The city would get some ball fields but, more important, it expects to receive more than \$1 million a year in hotel taxes. In a city that now faces an estimated \$15 million need for an overhaul of its storm drainage system, that bonus is one that some city officials say is hard to ignore.

Tuesday: Atherton.



Redwood City Times  
Tribune

Storm News 1983



Times Tribune staff photo by Joe Melena

Like many residents of Belmont, Margaret Moran and her father, Ray, 87, resist change. They've lived in Belmont since 1961 and still drive their 1956 Ford. Despite residents' efforts to keep things the same, developments continue to dot the Belmont hills as seen from Highway 101 near Ralston Avenue.





BELMONT (GENERAL)  
REDWOOD TIMES-TRIBUNE  
AUG. 14, 1983

# City ponders ways to make lake safer

\*\* AUG 14 1983

Times Tribune staff

*(Notre Dame)*  
*(P)*  
BELMONT — The drowning of a 16-year-old San Mateo youth at Water Dog Lake last Sunday may prompt the city to reduce the dangers of swimming in the weed-filled pond.

No decision has been made on what can be done to improve safety conditions at the lake. But Michael Shelton, acting city manager, said he believes something should be done.

Water Dog Lake is on land owned by the College of Notre Dame and leased to the city for open space or recreational uses, Shelton said.

"It is certainly a concern for the city. (The drowning) was a devastating thing to have happen," Shelton said. "If there is something that we could do to prevent this kind of tragedy, the city will make every

## Belmont

effort possible to do so."

The victim, Robert Jaurigui, may have become tangled in weeds on the lake bottom. A diver who helped search the lake bottom for the body himself became tangled briefly in the weeds, but he was able to surface.

The rectangular lake is at the end of a winding trail off Lyall Way in the western foothills above Belmont.

Shelton said swimming in the lake is not prohibited, but those who swim do so at their own risk.

Water Dog Lake has been a hazard for some time. Charles Eaton, battalion chief of the South County Fire Authority, said two swimmers in the lake this year suffered broken bones.



BELMONT CITY (GENERAL)  
REDWOOD CITY TIMES-TRIBUNE  
AUG. 30, 1983

# Neighbors go to court over Belmont footpath

By Anne Houghteling  
Times Tribune staff

\* AUG 30 1983

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**BELMONT** — A footpath children use as a shortcut has become a battle ground between a former construction supervisor, an elderly widow and the city.

One Belmont city official describes the dispute as "just a fight between two neighbors."

At the very least, it is the subject of a lawsuit, not to mention an example of a resident taking on City Hall with rare persistence.

(Hartley Postlethwaite, 50, left work as a construction company supervisor last October because of a back injury. Since then, he has spent scores of hours studying the squiggles on zoning and subdivision maps and the fine print in legal books with the support of his wife, Janie, and many of their colleagues in the Upper Hillman Homeowners Association.

The subject of all the research is a path that runs between Postleth-

waite's Hillman Avenue home and houses on the street owned by Margaret Ching, who wants to subdivide her property. The city will not let her subdivide until she moves the path about 10 feet, so it will not be blocked by cars in a parking area.

In several rounds of debate this summer before the City Council and Planning Commission, Postlethwaite and neighbors have argued that the new location is dangerous, because it would be closer to an enclosure where Ching keeps an excitable German shepherd.

The neighbors want the city to admit it owns the path, though Belmont officials say it is an easement on private property for public use. The neighbors say that under city ownership the public will have more assurance that the path will be usable.

To block abandonment of the path, the homeowners association

morning to research in the San Mateo County Records Office.

"I'm considering work as an investigator. What I've learned is how to investigate and where to look and why," Postlethwaite said.

The matter recently took a disturbing turn. Postlethwaite said he had received threatening phone calls.

"The last was a voice that said, 'Postlethwaite is dead,'" he said. "I can't tie them (the calls) with anything, but I don't have any controversy going" beside the path issue.

Ching, for her part, feels frustrated by the injection of Postlethwaite's concerns into her petition to subdivide her property.

"People are making all kinds of trouble for me," she said by phone. "Give him (Postlethwaite) enough rope and he'll hang himself. He's just harassing me."

As for the phone calls, she said, she suspects Postlethwaite is making it all up.

Whatever the truth, the path issue promises to surface again.

The homeowners association's legal action is scheduled for a hearing Sept. 8.

recently brought suit against the city.

Postlethwaite, who is secretary of the homeowners association, has presented city officials with a small library of information covering everything anybody could ever want to know about pathways.

"The more (research) I did, the more I understood," Postlethwaite said recently, after devoting a

(OVER)





Times Tribune staff photo by David Nuss

**A homeowners association in Belmont has filed suit to block relocation of a footpath off of Hillman Avenue. Hartley Postlethwaite (inset) is arming the homeowners with the statistics and legal research to fight City Hall.**

(OVER)



BELMONT CITY (GENERAL)  
REDWOOD CITY TIMES-TRIBUNE  
NOV. 2, 1983

\* NOV 2 1983

## Belmont City Council to discuss controversial tree-law proposal

By Phyllis Brown  
Times Tribune staff

(3)

BELMONT — A controversial proposed law that essentially would prevent homeowners from having trees that block their neighbors' views will be discussed and possibly acted upon by the City Council Tuesday night.

(Belmont)

The proposed ordinance has pitted against one another those who feel their views have been blocked unfairly and those with trees. Spokesmen for both sides probably will present their views in the Tuesday public hearing.

Many who support the ordinance say they chose their homes for the views they provided, only to lose them to thoughtless neighbors. The loss of their views also has diminished their property values, they say.

Those who oppose the ordinance say the city cannot dictate where they may plant a tree or the tree's height, any more than it can dictate what color to paint their homes.

The disputed measure is the "preservation of views ordinance," approved by the advisory Planning Commission in late September and proposed for final approval by the City Council.

The law would establish a city-run media-

tion service for hillside residents' complaints that their views of the San Francisco Bay have been blocked by neighbors' shrubbery.

If enacted, the law virtually would prevent views from being blocked because, if mediation does not work, the foliage could be trimmed with city approval.

The council meeting, which normally is held at 8 p.m., will begin at 9 p.m. because of the elections. The meeting will be held in the City Council chambers in City Hall, 1365 Fifth Ave.

Under the measure, a property owner whose view is being obstructed can file a complaint with the city manager's office. The city manager's office notifies the tree owner that a request for mediation has been filed with the city.

The mediation panel would have three members, a representative for the claimant, one for the tree owner and a third neutral party. The panel would decide what action should be taken in the matter, and its decision would be final.

Any cost involved in the arbitration process would be shared equally by all parties involved. There would be a \$200 fee for filing a complaint.



# Foster City will seek aid to build span

\* SEP 20 1983  
City Council to consult  
Belmont, Redwood City

By Phyllis Brown  
Times Tribune staff

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FOSTER CITY — The City Council will seek support from Belmont and Redwood City for construction of a bridge that would cross the Belmont Slough and connect Foster City with one of the two communities.

The council decided Monday night to seek a joint meeting with the neighboring cities to see which would support a connection with their city. The meeting could take place within the next month.

The bridge is proposed to link southern Foster City with southbound Highway 101 traffic and bypass Hillsdale Boulevard and Highway 92 traffic. The two routes are the only ways to enter or leave the city.

One possible connection would cross the slough and join Edgewater Boulevard in Foster City to Marine World Parkway in Redwood Shores, city officials said.

Another would connect Foster City to a road in the proposed Kumam Corp. development in Belmont, they said.

The bridge could be up to six lanes wide, 20 feet tall and a mile long, depending upon where it crossed the slough, a shallow waterway that snakes through land bordering the bay.

Its construction probably would cost up to \$5 million, David Miller, public works director, said.

City officials have considered for several years constructing a bridge to provide a "southern crossing" into the community and link it to surrounding cities.

But recent discussion of specific plans was spurred by plans for building 1,200 new homes on land near where the bridge would be built.

The Shorebird housing project is planned for southern Foster City near where Edgewater Boulevard ends. Its builder, Grupe Development, must know

\* SEP 20 1983

where the bridge would be built to plan a right of way for it.

The city wants to build the bridge to ease its traffic problems. But council members said Monday night the deal must be sold as a "two-way street" to be attractive to either Redwood City or Belmont.

Discussions with Redwood City staff members have not accomplished that goal. Foster City Councilman Ken Broomhead said Redwood City's staff has "not been too keen" on the idea of the bridge.

Councilman David Kruss said the city should bypass the staffs and go directly to each city's council members.

"For seven years, we have heard the objections of the staff of Redwood City. It is obvious that the staffs of Redwood City are not interested in an overcrossing. If we ever are going to get one, we'll have to do it through the political process," Kruss said.

"We have been talking about a southern crossing since Foster City was developed," Kruss said. "It's time to get this thing out in the open."

Foster City's problems apparently aren't just with the staff, however. Brenton Britschgl, who is Red-

BELMONT CITY (GENERAL)  
REDWOOD CITY TIMES-TRIBUNE  
SEPT. 20, 1983

wood City's vice mayor, said his city already faces heavy traffic from Redwood Shores and would have some "real problems" with adding traffic from Foster City, which could take a shortcut to the freeway through Belmont or Redwood Shores if east-of-the-Bayshore connectors were available.

"We have our own traffic problems from Redwood Shores and the Kumam project in Belmont," Britschgl said. "We are trying to get together with Kumam to talk to them about access to Marine World Parkway. We've written. We're still waiting."

"Now if you throw Foster City in there, it makes an equation that is just too much."

Belmont's mayor took the opposite view.

"The traffic is there," said Mayor Bill Moore. "It's a question of how best to handle it. Potentially, it's a heck of a good idea but I want to emphasize that it would take a lot of study."

If a southern crossing is built, Foster City probably would have to pay for it. Because it would not directly connect state or federal roadways, no outside funding likely would be available.

But Miller said that, though it has been discussed for years and would be costly, the bridge isn't just an item on the city's wish list.

"The only way out of Foster City is to go west on Highway 92 or go out Hillsdale Boulevard. The city needs another means of access to Highway 101," he said.



**A (book) <sup>3</sup>**  
\*\*\* MAR 11 1984  
**inspires**  
**a city** <sup>2</sup>

Times Tribune staff

A best-selling book, "In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best Run Companies," has changed the way a lot of companies conduct business since it was published in 1982.

The impact from the book now is sending shock waves into the public sector, shaking the foundation of Belmont City Hall.

City Manager Ed Everett, who was hired in January, is unabashedly devoted to the book by

## Belmont

Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman Jr., which relates the management philosophies that have made 3M, McDonald's, International Business Machines Corp. and other companies successful.

In fact, Everett is so excited about the book he has made it required reading for city "management" — the heads of departments such as Planning and Finance.

Belmont's "executives" — City Council members — also are excited about the principles in the book. They have scheduled a study session to follow Tuesday's council meeting where they will discuss with Everett the principles in the book and how they can be implemented in Belmont.

"I am really wild about that book," Everett said last week. "It contains good guidelines for any organization to push itself toward excellence."

"In Search of Excellence" doesn't just list theories on how a company might become successful. Instead, it discusses how successful companies got that way.

"Excellent companies had a bias for action, they didn't study things to death. Mistakes were accepted and even encouraged in excellent organizations. If you are afraid of making mistakes, you won't get new ideas," Everett said.

"Excellent companies stayed close to their customers. For Belmont, that would mean staying close to the needs of the citizens. You must make sure you hear what they are saying and pay attention to their needs and concerns," he said.

"If you are running a good organization, you shouldn't be overly centralized. Allow your department heads a lot of freedom. That freedom will motivate people to do a good job," Everett said.

Everett said excellent companies stress "productivity through people."

"People working in the organizations often know better than management how to best perform certain tasks," Everett said.

These and other management principles outlined in "In Search of Excellence" are well-known by now to people working in the private sector.

How will they be applied in Belmont? Everett said he is not certain.

"One of the concepts in the book is the 'MBWA,' or 'Management by Walking Around.' In all of the excellent companies, managers were out in the offices, talking with the employees, or citizens. That is something I will be pushing myself to do to find out how we can make Belmont government excellent," Everett said.

OVER

CITY GOVERNMENT GENERAL  
MARCH + APRIL 1984  
REDWOOD CITY TIMES-TRIBUNE



APR 7 1984

# (Belmont) seeks to place the principles into effect

By Julie Dart  
Times Tribune staff

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(Belmont) City Manager Ed Everett and the (City Council) are conducting an exciting experiment in city government: They are searching for excellence.

At Everett's urging, four City Council members attended a recent California League of Cities workshop on the best-selling book "In Search of Excellence," by management consultants (Tom Peters) and Robert H. Waterman Jr.

There, they traded ideas with officials from other Peninsula cities on how to run their (cities) in the

same fashion as the "excellent" companies analyzed by Peters and Waterman.

"We're all impressed with the book," Councilman Donald Heiman said. "The staff has been given the book as a bible because that's how Ed Everett wants to run the city." Even Everett says he is "a zealot" about the book.

Although "In Search of Excellence" was written to help private sector managers run their companies more effectively, many of the same principles apply to the public

## BELMONT

APR 7 1984  
Continued from A-1

sector, Everett said.

For example, the authors found that excellent companies communicate with their customers and tailor products to please them. After the League of Cities' workshop, held at Hewlett-Packard Co.'s Palo Alto offices, the Belmont officials decided to use that approach to improve relations with Belmont residents.

"It's easy to get so involved in your job that you forget what your job is. And in government, your job is to help people," Mayor Bill Moore said.

Everett agreed. "We wanted to get communication flowing a little better and be there to listen to what people have to say," he said.

Everett met with the City Council Tuesday, and the group decided on several plans to put their ideas into action.

"We'd like to have a monthly 'council column' in a local paper," Helman said. "Council people would write on a rotating basis about things of interest to the community."

The council also decided to let the chamber of commerce and other citizens' groups know that council members would like to attend meetings and answer questions on community issues. "Council members would also do this on a rotating basis," Heiman said, "not to save our positions on the council,

but as an honest effort at communication."

"We also want to write a set of values for the city, to be passed on from council to council," Heiman said.

Everett said the group picked out only a few ideas to work on, to be sure they would get done. "We don't want these ideas to be just flashes-in-the-pan," he said.

Councilman Bill Hardwick said the principles in the book also apply to relations between council members and staff such as the city planner and city manager. "A great deal of (being excellent) relates to relationships between people, human values, treating employees as they should be treated," he said. "If you have happy employees, you'll have happy customers."

Hardwick said one of the main characteristics of managers in excellent companies is that they recognize the accomplishments of people who do a good job.

On the other hand, "people shouldn't be criticized if something doesn't work," Hardwick said. "It's a general trait. We're all success-oriented, and if we make a mistake, we don't want to look bad. But if you have a fear of criticism, you're afraid to step out and try something new."

"The point is to stimulate people into thinking, into trying new ideas," Hardwick said. "It has to start with the council being willing to try new things. The city manager has to radiate (that willingness) and pass it on to his staff.

"Then it's going to overflow onto the public."



CITY GOVERNMENT  
GENERAL  
REDWOOD CITY TIMES-TRIBUNE  
JULY-NOV. 1984

# Hillside property owners look at land transfer rights

JUL 15 1984

Times Tribune staff

Owners of undeveloped parcels in the San Juan Hills area of Belmont recently were given a presentation by a Malibu consultant on the issue of the transfer of development rights (TDR) among property owners. *(San Juan Canyon)*

TDR is not a new idea to the property owners, who formed a task force about 1 1/2 years ago, according to Belmont Planning Director Jerry Podesta.

Podesta explained that there are many undeveloped lots in the northwest portion of San Juan Hills. "Some of them are not even accessible, making development of the parcels nearly impossible, and the parcels almost worthless.

"That's where the idea of TDR came in," Podesta said. "By transferring the development rights, it allows the property owners to realize the value of their property, and gives them the opportunity to purchase the development rights of that land and transfer it to a piece of land elsewhere that is able to be developed."

## Belmont

Podesta said the San Juan area poses many problems for landowners because much of the area was subdivided "without much thought given to the topography of the land."

According to Podesta, this left many of the lots unsuitable for developing, due to excessively steep slopes, inadequate sewage drainage and severe landslide possibilities.

Because the idea of TDR is still in the developing stages, Podesta could not comment on how the transfers will be accomplished or when the program will be implemented.

"We really can't say whether this will be included in the city's general plan or whether it will take on some other form. There are a lot of loose ends we must tie up before we're near completion," Podesta said.

# Belmont's flag flies high

Times Tribune staff

The flag of the city of Belmont may have been the first of any city in the nation to fly atop a mountain in the Himalayas, a distinction for which the city can thank resident Maria Althofer.

Althofer is a longtime mountain climber, having scaled the peaks of the Swiss Alps when she was a young girl. When Althofer learned that City Manager Edward Everett planned to scale Mount Nun, she took the initiative and made sure the city was represented on his journey.

Althofer devised a pocket-sized flag for the trek, perfect for attaching to the end of an ice ax and waving proudly from the top of the snowy peak.

"It is little, just big enough to fit on the end of an ice ax, about eight inches by five inches," Everett said.

Althofer's flag did indeed fly at the top of Mount Nun, Everett said.

But it did not remain there. Everett brought it back and will present it to the City Council for a memento in a meeting Tuesday.

NOV 11 1984

OVER



# Belmont plans own credit card

Will give discounts  
to senior citizens

Times Tribune staff

Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Diners Club, look out. There is tough competition on the horizon, and from one of the unlikely places: the city of Belmont.

That's right, Belmont is planning to establish its own credit card. But this one will not charge interest; it will give a discount to senior citizens using it at various Belmont business establishments.

The Senior Gold Card is the brain-child of city Parks and Recreation Superintendent Rick Haffey, the father of the Belmont Gift Catalog, which, like Sears, offers items for sale, with the sales price benefitting the city.

"It would provide discounts — 10 percent on your laundry, 20 percent on lunch — at businesses honoring the card," Haffey said.

The idea is only in its formative stages. The Parks and Leisure Services Department at present is approaching the city Chamber of Commerce and individual businesses to see if they would participate in offering discount goods or services.

But Haffey said he is confident it will be popular with local merchants. "It would benefit senior citizens and it also might promote business in Belmont," Haffey said.

The Gold Card probably will not be available to seniors for another month or two, Haffey said. It will

Continued from Page 1

take about that long to line up participating businesses and prepare a catalog listing their names so seniors know where to use it.

Eligibility for owning a Gold Card won't require a pristine credit rating, Haffey said. All that will be needed will be Belmont residency and a verifiable age of 60 or over, he said.

Haffey said he would like to take credit for originating the sterling idea, but he can't he said several cities already have the cards.



## Series of controversies continues to plague Belmont

by Phyllis Brown  
Times Tribune staff  
\*\*\* AUG 27 1984  
No one knows how it started or why, but Belmont seems to be a city at war with itself, one where opposing factions constantly are at odds.

Russell Estep, recognized by some as the Peninsula suburb's

town historian, tells a true story that offers a tongue-in-cheek explanation.

The story goes that, back in the early 1900s, Belmont formed a volunteer fire department and bought an old-fashioned pumper truck.

On the night the city received the truck it got a fire call and rushed to the scene. After a long

search the novice firemen finally found a well, dropped a hose down it and put out the fire.

Unfortunately, the 'well' was a cesspool. The way Estep tells it, the contents of the cesspool have been flying ever since.

The story is apocryphal, but it illustrates what some city officials believe is a serious problem: In-

fighting that they say hurts the quality of life in the city.

What really created the contentious atmosphere, if there is one, no one is quite sure.

In the past year, Belmont has seen controversy after controversy, chief among them a move to recall four of five city councilmen in the November election.

Others include a heated debate over an assessment district to repair the city storm drain system and four tangled lawsuits involving trustees of the Belmont School District.

Recently, the administrators of two key city agencies, school Su-

perintendent Ron Gilpatrick and City Manager Edward Everett, both made unusual public appeals to end the bickering.

Gilpatrick and Everett stressed they are not singling out any individuals or groups as the source of the problem.

"I know neighborhood homeowner groups that don't get along well. Citizens generally do not trust business. I have talked to clergy folks who see it in their parishes. I know people in the community that simply could not sit at the same table. I could make four or five matches like that," Everett said.

Everett, who took his job in January, sees the constant infighting as a serious threat to the city's ability to develop its resources to serve its citizens.

AUG 27 1984

"If the city is going to build a senior center, buy parks, buy better police protection, the city needs resources. This isn't simply an question of how pleasant life in Belmont is. It's an issue of whether there is a park in your neighborhood," Everett said.

Ending the fighting is one of Everett's main goals.

"My vision for this city is that people would listen to each other, that they would respect one another. In this case, if you are not a part of the solution, you are a part of the problem. Status quo will not make Belmont an excellent place to live," Everett said.

Everett reached that conclusion after spending three months in private meetings with dozens of interest groups from throughout the city, among them homeowners associations, business associations, political and social groups.

He found a habitual suspicion and mistrust of the other side, and

especially of government, he said.

"Suspicion is acute in this community. You are generally guilty until proven innocent, instead of innocent until proven guilty. If everyone could admit that they are fairly suspicious about everyone else, maybe the level of suspicion could fall," Everett said.

Illustrative of his point is the fact that not everyone agrees that Estep is the town historian. And not everyone agrees on what is Belmont's history. There are two separate histories, each with its own adherents.

"I don't know of any other community that has fought over its history. That's a little bit like the Soviet Union. I mean, there actually are two different histories. Clearly, if we are fighting over our history, how can we ever not fight over where we are now or our future?" Everett asked.

Not everyone agrees with Everett that Belmont residents

tend to disagree.

Lida Paetzke is a member of the Alert Belmont Citizens, which is seeking to recall the four councilmen, and the Citizens for Orderly Growth, which has opposed Island Park, a massive mixed-use development proposed east of the Bayshore Freeway. To her, Belmont is not contentious.

"There are a lot of people in Belmont who really love this community. Belmont has one of the best informed and knowledgeable citizenries on the Peninsula. I am very proud of the number of active citizens here," Paetzke said.

Eve Sterry, also a member of the Citizens for Orderly Growth, a longtime Belmont resident and former city councilwoman, agreed with Paetzke.

"If the impression exists that there have been contending groups in Belmont, it is not so. Belmont people have opinions and they feel strongly and care about their city. I

OVER



think people in Belmont are a cut above the average, and thank goodness that we aren't all carbon copies," Sterry said.

Rose Ozwirk, a member of the Belmont Seniors' Club, is a City Council meeting regular and a member of Citizens Against the Recall Election, which supports the councilmen slated for recall. She thinks Everett is right.

"In my opinion, there are certain factions that Jesus Christ couldn't come down and correct. Even He couldn't say, 'Let's just come together and work for the good of the city.' There are too many people who dislike each others' personalities or views," Ozwirk said.

Densel "Denny" Lawhern, chairman of the Planning Commission, said he thinks Everett's assessment of life in Belmont is "pretty square."

"Unfortunately, I have seen a lot

of cases where, if you disagree with somebody, you not only have disagreement, you have an enemy. It's really hard to say where it started or where it came from. I don't know how it to get a handle on it," Lawhern said.

Like Lawhern, few of those who believe the city is a contentious one know how to remedy the problem. One of the few with a suggestion is David Frydenlund, a member of a task force developing a solution to the city's storm drain problems. Frydenlund also is a member of the Park People, an ad hoc group working for passage of a November special tax measure that would finance the purchase of park land.

"I think it is safe to say that Belmont is an inharmonious community. Harmonious communities don't recall their City Council. But, if we work at it, it is possible to change that," Frydenlund said.



CITY GOVERNMENT-GENERAL  
AUG. 1984  
TIMES-TRIBUNE

**\*\* AUG 15 1984**  
**Belmont lists values it considers important for local government**

Times Tribune staff

**A**ll communities have values, intangible beliefs that do much to give each town its own character.

The city of Belmont made an uncommon effort to express the intangible values that are the basis of city government at the City Council meeting Tuesday.

The stated values are a result of discussions of the best-selling book "In Search of Excellence: Lessons From America's Best-Run Companies," by Thomas J. Peters of Palo Alto and Robert H. Waterman Jr.

The discussions, prompted by City Manager Edward Everett when he took over the city administration in January, were to develop a philosophy to guide the work of city government.

Mayor William Hardwick presented the ideas, which are to be the cornerstone of city government, at the beginning of the council meeting.

"These are a set of values we can use and follow as a council, as a city, and as city administrators," Hardwick said.

3

The companies discussed in the highly regarded book have concrete products they provide. "Our product is service," Hardwick said.

The city government's values as defined during the past eight months are:

- "Personal integrity as a mandatory ethical standard for staff and council.
- "Excellence and pride in providing quality service, which is the product of this city.
- "Respect for all individuals regardless of their viewpoints.
- "Open and honest communications with all individuals, emphasizing the need for people to listen to one another.
- "Develop the potential of staff members and recognize and reward competence and dedication."

A sheet listing these values will be attached to each agenda for City Council meetings, Hardwick said. "The adherence to these values will improve Belmont city government and make it a positive role model for the community," he said.

**BELMONT**

Belmont has about \$6 million invested, a sum that includes reserves of the Belmont Fire Protection District, along with the city's own money.

Belmont recently had \$2 million in the Local Agency Investment Fund and \$4 million in certificates of deposit, according to Michael Shelton, the city's finance officer. Last year's interest income was about \$600,000, the city's largest revenue source after sales- and property-tax revenues.

**\*\*\* AUG 26 1984**

Shelton said the city's investment policy "is to make sure we have secure investments, that they are liquid enough to meet our cash-flow needs and, third (in importance), that they get the highest yield possible."

City Treasurer Jean Zucca, an elected official, is in charge of the day-to-day investing.

The city came up with a formal investment policy about two years ago, and the city's investments are reviewed regularly by the Finance Committee, a City Council subcommittee that includes bankers, other financial professionals and a member of the City Council, Shelton said.

**\*\*\* AUG 26 1984**



# Belmont City Hall's 'revolving door'

## CITY

BY BRENDA JORDAN  
Staff Reporter

Recent resignations of a number of Belmont city staff members have caused community residents to question if there is something amiss at City Hall.

During the past half-year, five city employees have resigned, those being Public Works Director Peg Divine, South County Fire Chief Chuck Lowden, city planners Jim Rodgers and Allison Knapp, and the city manager's secretary, Sue Ellen Mallin.

While human resources personnel say Belmont's turnover rate is not abnormal,

Vice Mayor Adele Della Santina said it would serve the city well to take a close look at the workload and organization of the staff to determine if any blame can be placed on inside circumstances.

Council members were questioned about the turnover at a recent City Council meeting.

"What's going on with the city staff?" resident Denny Lawhern asked at the last meeting. "There has been a tremendous turnover in the last two years - we understand that some of it is natural - (but) we want council to come to terms with this problem and address it so we will stop losing valuable employees."

"If so many people are leaving, who's going to apply?" resident Elaine Farmer

asked. "I am concerned that council members are more concerned about their own agendas instead of ours."

Another man asked, "Why is everyone evacuating city hall?"

Mayor Gary Harris said he personally is not surprised by the turnover but said the council has asked the city staff to look into the issue.

"I'm not alarmed," Harris said. "Cities don't pay as well as the private sector, and the economy is quite good right now."

At least two of the employees who left took positions that were significant career steps (Lowden, Divine), another found a job close to home (Knapp), and one quit to go into business for himself (Rodgers).

However, Della Santina said she feels the

city staff is overworked and, in addition, the council makes too many demands upon them.

"Some council members are putting so many demands on the staff in a period when there is already so much work to be done," Della Santina said. "(They) are trying to please six people (council members and the city manager) and they're treading on eggshells because they don't want to irritate anybody."

She said council members have discussed this topic among themselves.

"We're very aware of the stress and workload of our employees. We are trying to work with staff to make it a better place to work," she said.

See RESIGN, page 14A

### Continued from 1A

In hopes of remedying the situation, the council and City Manager Damon Edwards are working on the possibility of restructuring staff positions.

Edwards recently completed a chart which depicts the current organization of staff members, based on who reports to whom.

"The chart is a big step," Della Santina said. "Now we can see where we can ease up on the staff's workload and also use this as an opportunity to save money (when hiring replacements)."

Belmont Assistant City

Manager and Finance Director Sandra Salerno said Belmont's rate of employee turnover, including retirees, for calendar year 1995 was 11.2 percent.

The personnel departments of nearby cities report turnover rates not that much different: San Carlos' rate of turnover is 9 percent; Redwood City, 11.8 percent; San Mateo, 6.7 percent; Millbrae 7 percent, and Burlingame 6 percent.

Several human resources personnel from neighboring cities said that the improved economy and retirement of baby boomers have increased the rates of turnover in recent years.

Enquirer-Bulletin

ENQUIRER-BULLETIN  
DEC. 11, 1996

CITY GOV. GENERAL



BELMONT CITY COUNCIL  
KEYS TO THE CITY  
REDWOOD TIMES-TRIBUNE  
MARCH 1986

**Belmont OKs rules for giving keys to city**  
 MAR 12 1986 Sm  
 By Robert Rudy  
 Times Tribune staff  
 A-1  
 (3)

Sometimes saying "thank you" just isn't enough.

At least that's what the Belmont City Council decided Tuesday night.

The council approved new guidelines for awarding the soon-to-be prestigious key to the city.

"We wanted to make it clearly the highest honor the city can bestow," said Mayor Donald Heiman.

Only three times in the city's history has the key to the city been given away.

One went to Belmont resident

Philip Habib, a presidential envoy who got the key in 1982.

Another went to Dusty Rhodes, the editor of the defunct Belmont Courier-Bulletin, in 1970.

And a third went to an unidentified one-legged man who walked through Belmont as part of a transcontinental fund-raising walk.

"The keys have been sitting around a long time and haven't been used much," Heiman said.

Assistant City Manager Rick Hafey said that in recent months, council members informally have spoken about some people who

**KEYS**  
 MAR 12 1986 Sm

Continued from A-1

they would like to honor for helping make Belmont a better place.

Thinking that the more-often used resolutions of appreciation were somehow inadequate, the council decided to key on a different form of thanks.

"We want to give them to people who've done something for the city of Belmont or the public at large through such things as good acts and acts of heroism," said Heiman, who initiated the review of key to the city guidelines.

More specifically, the guidelines allow the key to be awarded for heroism, generosity, invention, accomplishment and other deserving acts.

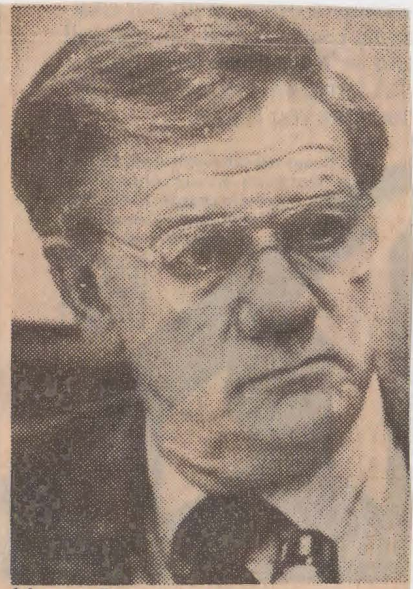
City staff members are not eligible for deeds performed as part of their regular duties. But a planning commissioner, for example, can earn the key to the city for an unusual act of bravery.

The key also is not limited to residents of Belmont.

In order to receive a key to the city, the council must approve the idea with a unanimous vote.

Heiman said neither he nor his colleagues have anyone specific in mind for nominating now.

Those who earn the now-coveted key to the city will be getting an old-fashioned style key made of brass and about 6 inches long. The key will be mounted on a piece of wood.



Mayor Donald Heiman ... "highest honor."



BELMONT (GENERAL)  
REDWOOD CITY TIMES-TRIBUNE  
JUNE 1989



Times Tribune staff photo by Ted Fink

### Outer limits

Dave Stevenson, a Belmont city equipment operator, puts one of the city's new signs in place

JUN 10 1989



## **Belmont**

### ■ **NEW CITY SIGN**

A new and brighter Belmont city limit sign is welcoming motorists along Shoreway Road.

On Friday Belmont Mayor Dave Bomberger personally replaced the old green and white city limit sign on Shoreway Road at the border of Belmont and San Carlos.

In all, eight new signs will be erected around Belmont, Public Works Director John Hopkins said.

They will sport the town's two-year-old logo in blue on a white background, Hopkins said.

JUN 11 1989



CITY OF BELMONT  
SAN MATED TIMES  
FEB. 18, 1987

## Belmont 'comes clean'

By KAREN PETTERSON  
Times Staff Writer

**BELMONT** — The city has enacted a nuisance ordinance aimed at forcing property owners to clean up messy yards and get rid of junked autos.

The ordinance provides for enforcement on a complaint basis, but city officials will not be actively seeking out violators.

Public Services Director John Hopkins reported that City Hall had been receiving a growing number of complaints.

He said the nuisance ordinance, adopted with no discussion at last week's council meeting, is "realistic and addresses some of the concerns."

Under the ordinance, overgrown vegetation in yards could be classified as a nuisance or fire hazard. Also declared a nuisance would be abandoned or wrecked vehicles, discarded household furnishings or appliances and new buildings or homes under construction and "not completed within a reasonable time."

If a complaint is filed, the city manager will investigate. If it is determined that a nuisance exists on a certain property, the owner will be directed to abate the nuisance.

If that is not done within a reasonable time, as determined by the city staff, a public hearing will be held by the Planning Commission.

The commission decision can be appealed to the City Council. If both bodies determine a nuisance exists, and the problem is not taken care of by the property owner, the city can hire a private contractor to do the cleanup. The city can bill the property owner for the service.

When the ordinance was introduced, there was no community opposition. At the same council meeting, one resident had complained about an area on Pullman Avenue that he said was deteriorating.

The complaints included junked vehicles parked in front of homes, yards left untended and homes that had been neglected.



CITY OF BELMONT  
REDWOOD CITY TIMES TRIBUNE  
FEB. 16, 1987



Times Tribune staff photo by Joe Meleno

Nancy Hegarty and James McLaughlin and other Belmont officials are leaving it up to city's residents to decide what to do with the old Christmas decorations.

# Merry Christmas?

## Belmont has its out-of-season reasons

By Carl Lakey  
Times Tribune staff

What? Christmas — in March?  
Are these people crazy?

On March 8, downtown Belmont will become the scene of Christmas decorations — some nine months before the holiday.

Yuletide decorations in March might seem a bit ridiculous, even to those commercial-minded business people who insist on putting Christmas decorations up before the last Thanksgiving turkey is eaten.

"It's very, very weird," said Belmont Chamber of Commerce Director Nancy Hegarty, who has become involved in bringing an early Christmas to Belmont.

But Belmont has no intention of

keeping up the decorations until December. These decorations are merely part of a one-week test.

Between March 8 and March 13, a selection of Christmas decorations will hang from light poles on the 1000 block of Sixth Avenue. Belmont residents can look up to see bows, bells, glitter, wreaths and various other ornaments.

The early Christmas is designed to raise money for decorations for Christmas 1987. The ultimate goal is to make Belmont the "1987 Christmas city of the Peninsula."

That will be no mean feat.

For more than a quarter of a century, Belmont residents have had to put up with old stars and 1-foot red and green bells, which have faded to orange and white since they were first hung from

light poles.

"They look pathetic," said Jim McLaughlin, a former city clerk who is one of the people responsible for bringing an early Christmas to Belmont.

Yet, each year, the city dusts off the bells and hangs them from the poles.

The old decorations prompted McLaughlin, known to many as the poet laureate of the city, to compose a poem before Christmas 1986 that started with the lines:

*When Santa comes around this year, he'll say 'Oh, what a pity.'*

*The decorations are so poor to greet me in this city.*

This year, McLaughlin and

others would like to see holiday decorations lining Raiston Avenue, the city's main east-west thoroughfare, McLaughlin said.

Of course, that doesn't explain why Christmas must start in March — or whether the city is setting itself up for an embarrassing number of guffaws from their municipal neighbors.

"It is unique," McLaughlin responded.

"People are going to say, 'What's going on?'" said Dave Kelley, the owner of Kelley Display Co. in Sacramento, which will put up the decorations.

"I can see how people wouldn't understand it," he said. "But they've had trouble raising money for Christmas decorations in Belmont, and I think it will help the city get some money."

McLaughlin said in coming months he and others will be looking for donations for the decorations. McLaughlin said he hopes to raise at least \$10,000.

He said several merchants have expressed interest in donating raffle prizes so money can be earned to purchase the decorations.

"It's really kind of strange, but the trouble is, if you're going to raise money, you have to start early," said Hegarty.

She said she isn't worried about shocking Belmont residents.

"In Belmont? God knows how people will react. Anything can happen here," she said.



# San Juan on agenda in Belmont

By Shannon Rasmussen  
Times Tribune staff

After having held six public hearings, the Belmont City Council Tuesday may adopt a plan that would restrict future growth in the San Juan Hills area.

Since November, the council has been reviewing the controversial San Juan Hills Area Plan. The review involved studying land-use policies, the area's geological conditions and infrastructure and roadway requirements.

The council is scheduled to vote on the document, which could be incorporated into the city's general plan, at its 8 p.m. meeting in the council chambers, 1365 Fifth Ave. The council also plans to consider certifying an environmental impact report.

A series of study sessions also were held while the council "fine-tuned" the plan, which was endorsed by the Belmont Planning Commission in October.

The Planning Commission held about 10 public hearings before making its recommendation, coming under fire by some property

## AGENDA

Continued from A-3  
owners during the long process.

In recent months, some property owners have said they will take legal action to protect their rights against a plan they claim places "unfair" restrictions on development.

The San Juan Hills are bounded by the San Mateo-Belmont border, Ralston Avenue, Cipriani Boulevard and state Highway 92.

Mayor Gary Orton said the plan is a general statement to be followed by a series of more restrictive ordinances.

"It helps us to understand the various tools to address some of the problems," Orton said.

The Planning Commission already has recommended approval of ordinances dealing with the geologically hazardous areas and grading requirements. It currently is working on another ordinance dealing with the construction of roads in the hillsides.

The San Juan Hills Plan governs the size of homes based on the property's size and slope.

Property owners have criticized that requirement, saying it would reduce their ability to build on their property.

Some of the Hills' subdivisions were created in the 1920s, with smaller lots measuring 6,000 square feet, said Elaine Costello, director of planning and community development.

The plan also encourages preserving open space by clustering residences in certain areas of the hillside.

In the Laurel Creek Canyon, some lots average about 5 acres or more, Costello said. She said the plan promotes clustering in that area, to preserve open space, creeks and trees.

"I don't think we're going to have any problem with that," Costello speculated.

The city also will encourage property owners with more than one undeveloped lot on an unimproved road to merge their properties, Costello said.

Property owners have criticized a section of the plan that requires them to resolve the design and financing of road improvements along the entire unimproved road before being granted a building permit.

The plan stated that this requirement was necessary to assure safer access for emergency vehicles and to assure construction of safe roadways and adequate storm drainage improvements.

Costello said the plan is legally defensible if legal action is brought against the city.

The San Juan Hills Plan was developed after residents expressed concern about the area, much of which is vacant.

Originally, the plan was a result of work done by the San Juan Hills Committee, which included representatives of the City Council, Planning Commission and homeowners' association.

One of the main concerns was the "massive" homes being built, changing the character of the hillside, Costello said.



CITY SERVICES  
 REDWOOD CITY TRIBUNE  
 NOV. 1989

# CITY SERVICES AT A GLANCE

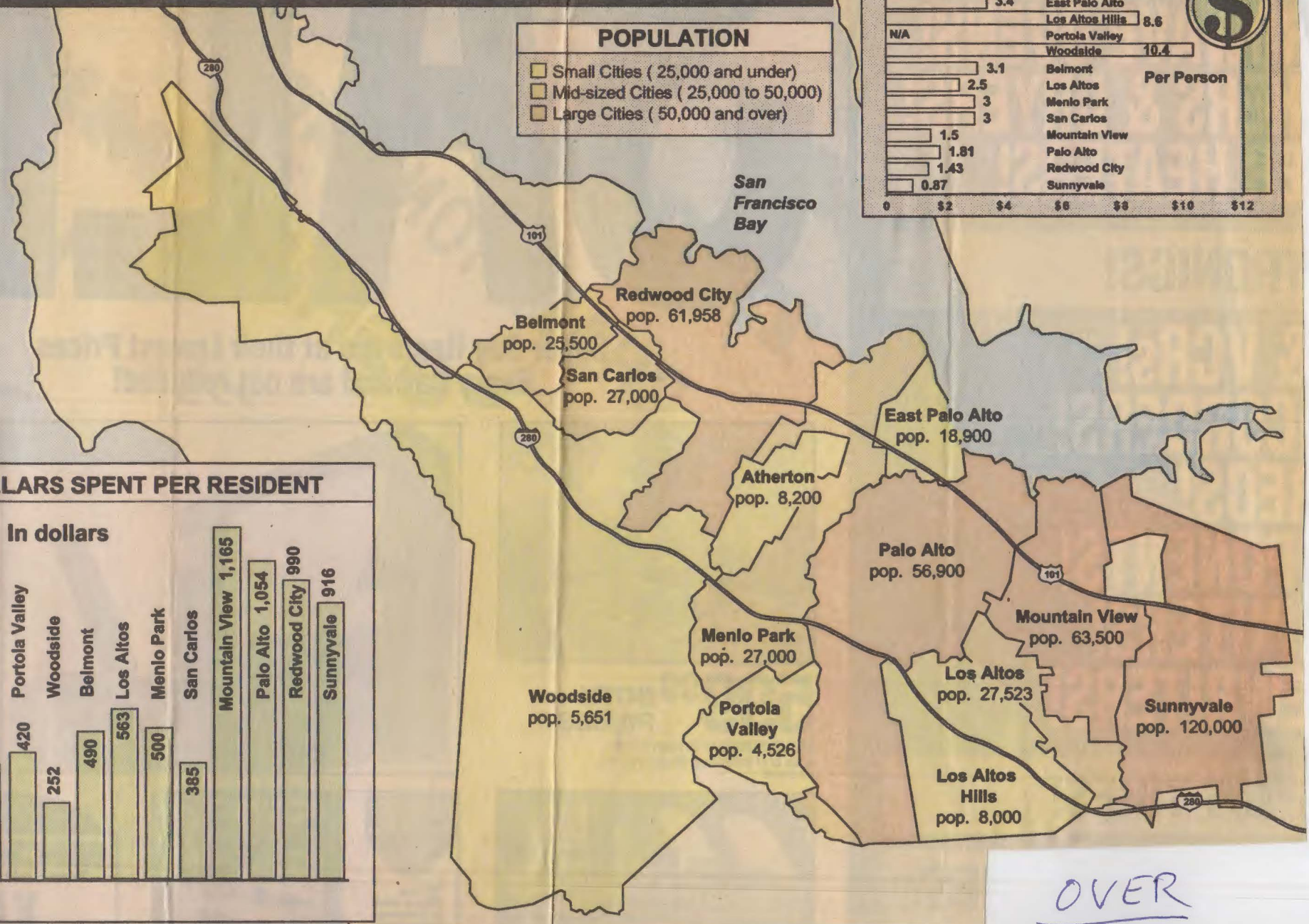
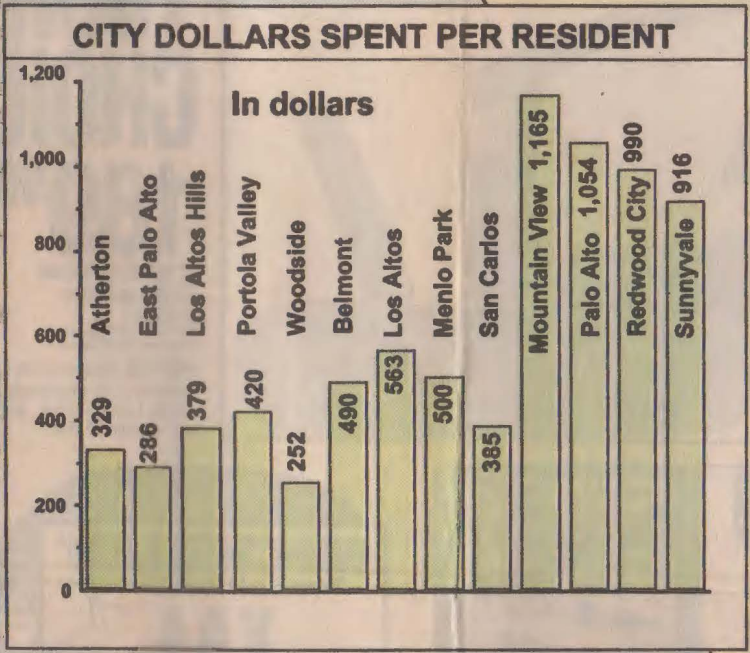
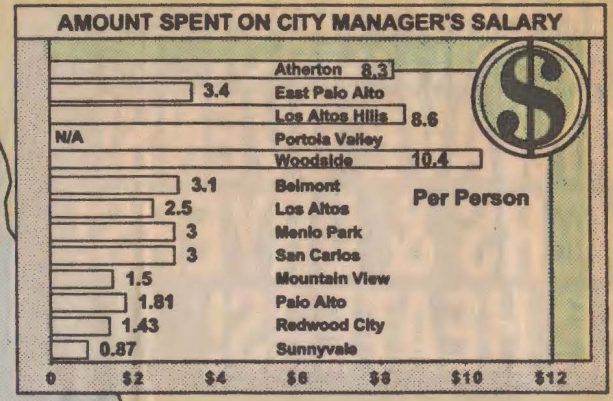
NOV 5 1989  
 BELMONT



Pacific Ocean

### POPULATION

- Small Cities (25,000 and under)
- Mid-sized Cities (25,000 to 50,000)
- Large Cities (50,000 and over)



OVER

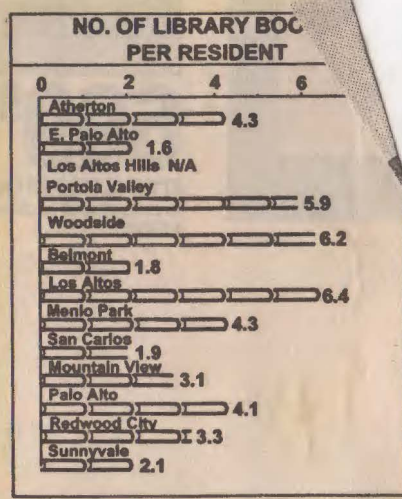
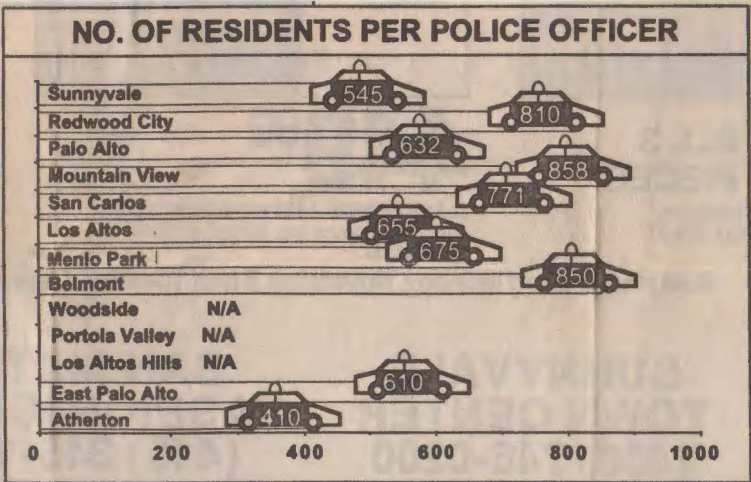


### BEST RUN CITIES

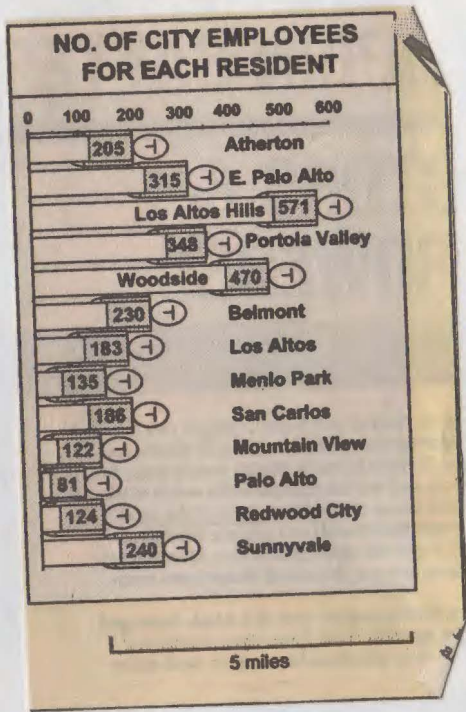
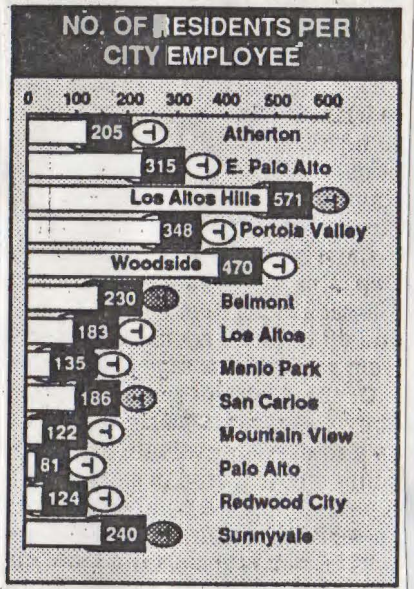
Top two in each category\*

- SMALL CITIES**
- 1. Atherton
- 2. Woodside
- MID-SIZED CITIES**
- 1. San Carlos
- 2. Menlo Park & Los Altos (tie)
- LARGE CITIES**
- 1. Sunnyvale
- 2. Palo Alto

\*Based on collected chart data and "intangibles".  
 Source: Data from city government offices



### CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS



NOV 7 1989

Part of a graphic in Sunday's edition that showed how Peninsula cities compare in providing municipal services was labeled incorrectly. The correct version is above.



*City of Belmont  
San Mateo Times  
June 17, 1989*



Times Photo by John Green

### PUTTING OUT THE WELCOME SIGN

Belmont Mayor David Bomberger and public works staffer David Stevenson post a new city-limit sign at the city's southern boundary. The new white signs feature the more inviting Belmont logo rather than population and elevation figures.