

FRESH NEW LOOK

*Belmont
Times Co Times
Dec. 14, 2005*



RON LEWIS — STAFF

*12/20/05
San Mateo
Co Times*

VISITORS get a peek at the newly renovated Belmont Civic Center during an event Tuesday.

Belmont's city government finally has home of its own

By **Rebekah Gordon**
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT

BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAIN! — Your name is so true! Your slopes are most graceful from Bay to the blue," says Belmont's now-official city poem, authored by Jim McLaughlin, city manager from 1966 to 1986.

More than 100 guests heard him read the poem — originally published in 1962 — as they gathered in the lobby of the new City Hall and Police Department to celebrate the civic center's re-opening Tuesday.

"Now I know why I lived to 84 years old last week,"

McLaughlin said.

The timeless poem now shares wall space with a flat-screen television broadcasting the latest city happenings.

"We haven't had a home at all for the city," said Councilman Dave Warden, who stepped down as mayor Tuesday. "It's a seismically safe, structurally sound place to do city business."

Interim City Manager Jack Crist said the project cost about \$10 million, requiring 600 cubic yards of poured concrete and 115 tons of steel reinforcement beams.

Besides lobby permit and information desks and new council chambers, the 52,000-square-foot building offers a

permanent home for the Police Department, more than double the size of its old locale across the parking lot.

"It's taken some getting used to," said Sgt. Patrick Hal-leran. "We have hallways that are bigger than rooms used we used to have."

The facility has ample space for briefing, a state-of-the-art dispatch center, gym, new locker rooms, evidence-processing room, ample storage for police gear, and even two sleeping rooms for officers who need a nap.

Their department was the last in the county to still have bars on its holding cells, Hal-

Please see **CIVIC**, Local 2

Belmont

Phillip Mathewson is the new mayor of Belmont and Coralin Feierbach is the vice mayor. ... The Belmont Senior Club meets at 10 a.m. today, Dec. 20, in the Senior and Community Center, 30 Twin Pines Lane.

Officials take oath of office in new chambers

► **CIVIC**, from Local 1

leran said, an amenity no longer allowed.'

They'll keep the bars for good measure, he said, but now have three holding cells and interview rooms up to security par.

"It's kind of regenerated people. To work in that environment for a long time is

pretty rough," Police Chief Don Mattei said.

Their former home was supposed to be temporary when they moved there some 28 years ago, Mattei said.

Expected to withstand a major earthquake, the facility also has an emergency operations command center.

The project was in the works since the building was

purchased in the early 1990s, said John Curtis, the city's public works director from 1999 to 2001.

An original design was completed in 2000 and bid for in the spring of 2001, he said, but all bids came back too high and were rejected. A contract was awarded in Oct. 2003 to Thompson Pacific of San Rafael.

The council met in its new chambers, swearing in Councilmen Warren Lieberman and Bill Dickenson, and electing Phil Mathewson mayor and Coralin Feierbach vice mayor. It also bade outgoing Councilmen Dave Bauer and George Metropulos farewell.

City of San Mateo
San Mateo Times
Jan 14, 2006

ROAD to FRUSTRATION

County may only see tail lights of bond money



MATHEW SUMNER — Staff

NORTHBOUND TRAFFIC on Highway 101 is backed up for miles just south of the Ralston Avenue exit. County leaders say they feel shortchanged by the governor's plans on how to spend \$12 billion in transportation bond money.

(over)

Plan includes little for congested county

By Laura Ernde

STAFF WRITER

As Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger toured the state this week promising to inject billions of dollars into roads and transit projects, officials in San Mateo County were scratching their heads and wondering what happened to their share.

An early list of projects that would be funded by a \$12 billion transportation bond contains only one thing for San Mateo County: a new park-and-ride.

Where Alameda County would get \$264.4 million to upgrade Interstate 880, among other things, and San Francisco would get \$330



"When I saw the list, it almost knocked me on the floor."

Jerry Hill
SAN MATEO COUNTY
SUPERVISOR

million toward improving the approach to the Golden Gate Bridge, San Mateo County would get just \$1.3 million, according to a "preliminary working list" posted on the governor's Web site.

"When I saw the list, it almost knocked me on the floor," San Mateo County Su-

pervisor Jerry Hill said. The amount of money earmarked for San Mateo County was nearly the same as the rural counties of Inyo and Tehama.

Almost immediately, county transportation officials sent a letter of protest to Caltrans.

"Obviously, this has got to be an oversight, because look at all the traffic between San Francisco and Santa Clara counties," said Richard Napier, executive director of the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County.

Napier and San Mateo County Transportation Authority Executive Director Michael Scanlon signed the letter asking Caltrans to add \$200 million for two local transportation projects — a fair figure, they believe, considering the population and the need.

Please see **ROAD,**
News 7

Plan for state bond stuns county leaders

► **ROAD,** from News 1

They would like to see \$100 million to add lanes and improve interchanges on Highway 101 along with broad track-and-signal upgrades for Caltrain.

As the economy has bounced back from the dot-com bust, so has the traffic. It's not as bad as it was during the tech boom, but only because of improvements made in the last four years, he said.

Caltrans Director Bijan Sartipi stressed that the list is only a starting point, and state transportation officials realize the importance of Highway 101 as the main thoroughfare on the Peninsula.

"They will be taking that into consideration," Sartipi said. "This is a preliminary list. There will be ample opportunity for the region to provide advice, provide input."

It's also important to note that the \$12 billion bond is only one piece of a sweeping \$107 billion spending plan for transportation over the next decade, he said.

A conference committee of state legislators will ultimately decide what projects will get funded, said Assemblyman Leland Yee, D-San Francisco.

"I think that it's still pretty early in the game. There will be plenty of opportunities for input," Yee said.

The bond proposal would also have to go before voters.

"My thinking is if the governor and the Legislature want San Mateo County to support any type of large bond such as this, we need to be treated fairly," Hill said.

Staff writer Laura Ernde can be reached at (650) 306-2428 or by e-mail at lernde@sanmateocounty-times.com.

CITY OF BELMONT
(GENERAL NEWS)
EXAMINER-INDEPENDENT
DEC. 10-11, 2005

Trash agency reform roils Peninsula

Cities split on letting politicians serve on authority

BY EDWARD CARPENTER

Staff Writer

REDWOOD CITY — Greater public accountability is needed on the governing board of one of the Peninsula's largest trash and recycling agencies, according to some local politicians.

Since its inception in 1982, the South Bayside Waste Management Authority, or SBWMA, has grown into an agency that touches the daily lives of numerous Peninsula residents. It now has an estimated \$30 million annual budget, oversees more than \$35 million in trash contracts, deals in local real estate holdings and takes out bonds.

That alone should be reason enough to change the agency's governing rules to allow elected

officials, rather than just city staffers, to serve on the board, according to Belmont Councilwoman Coralin Feierbach. Moreover, Feierbach pointed out, the SBWMA's contracted trash provider, BFI/Allied, failed to meet some of its contractual requirements in the past three years.

Perhaps more costly to ratepayers, however, was that up until this year SBWMA was paying millions more than other local trash service providers to dump its trash at Ox Mountain Landfill in Half Moon Bay, according to public documents.

"I think that the cities have been disconnected, and that has probably cost us, because [elected officials] are not there and depend on their employees to report back to them to know what's going on," Feierbach said.

In full agreement, a unanimous Belmont City Council voted last month to reject an overhaul of the governing rules of SBWMA, which while expanding the authority of cities to approve such things as

real estate and bond transactions, continue to prohibit elected officials from serving on the board.

As a joint powers authority, the SBWMA oversees trash services for 12 local agencies, including Atherton, Belmont, Burlingame, East Palo Alto, Foster City, Hillsborough, Menlo Park, Redwood City, San Carlos, San Mateo, West Bay Sanitary District and the county.

Belmont isn't alone. The West Bay Sanitary District, which represents an unincorporated area of the county near Portola Valley, also has rejected the proposal. And, on Tuesday the county Board of Supervisors delayed a decision on the agreement until January, with several members saying they didn't necessarily see a reason why elected officials should be prohibited from serving on the board.

Not everyone agrees, however. "That's come up before and the other cities felt very strongly the other way," said Brian Moura, SBWMA chairman and San Car-

At a glance

SBWMA's proposed new governing rules

- Create a new executive director position to manage the joint powers authority full time, relieving the chairman of many of his/her responsibilities under the current agreement. The executive director will be paid at a salary of \$140,000-\$170,000 a year, not including benefits.
- Gives member agencies more approval authority on major decisions on real property and bond transactions.
- Provides for the position of chairman to be elected from among the board members, rather than be designated by San Carlos as it has up until now.
- Provides for the board to appoint a nonsalaried financial director to serve at its pleasure. The finance director will be paid for services rendered, and likely be one of the member agencies' finance department directors.

los assistant city manager.

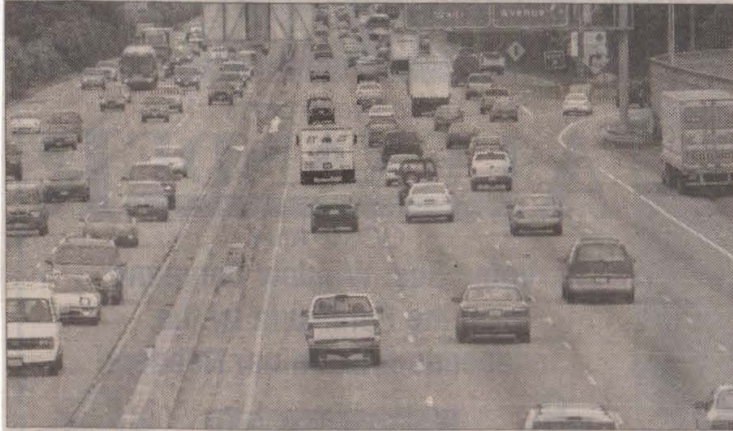
Moura and others said it makes more sense to have city department heads, or the equivalent, serve on the board because of the technical nature of the job.

So far, Atherton, Foster City, San Carlos, San Mateo and Menlo Park

have approved the new governing rules. Other agencies, including Redwood City and Burlingame, will vote on the agreement this month. Eight out of 12 agencies must approve the agreement before it will take affect.

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CITY OF BELMONT
(GENERAL NEWS)
EXAMINER-INDEPENDENT
NOV. 19-20, 2005



DOUG OAKLEY/THE EXAMINER

In an effort to ease congestion and improve traffic flow along Highway 101, metering lights could be added to several onramps.

Waiting to accelerate

Metering lights may be erected on Highway onramps

BY KATE WILLIAMSON
Staff Writer

BELMONT — San Mateo County residents may be waiting at a light before they enter Highway

101 within a year, but their delay will be compensated for by improved merging safety and shortened transit time, officials said.

Last week, the board of directors for the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County voted to move forward with a three-year-old plan to establish metering lights at all onramps along Highway 101 in San Mateo County, and along Interstate 280 north of Interstate 380. The move allows a

committee with members from all of the affected cities and Executive Director Richard Napier to work with Caltrans to set up the lights.

It's a smart idea, several drivers at the Arco AM/PM gas station on Ralston Avenue in Belmont said Monday.

"I think it probably reduces some problems with merging. If you space out cars a little, it would help," said Laura Doherty, a San Francisco resident.

The Ralston interchange could particularly use such lights because of the heavy traffic impact created by the Oracle offices, Hayward resident Don Wallace said.

The equipment costs \$100,000 per onramp to install, but most of the equipment is already in place for the first phase of the project, CCAG Transportation Systems Coordinator Sandy Wong said.

That phase, which would meter the onramps from University Avenue in Palo Alto to Hillsdale Boulevard in San Mateo, could be completed by the end of the summer, Wong said. To do that, the agency is hoping to receive a \$400,000 grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to outfit the last unequipped southern interchange, located at Willow Avenue.

Once completed, drivers would wait at the light anywhere from less than a minute to several minutes, Wong said.

(OVER)

CITY OF BETHMONT
(GENERAL NEWS)
EXAMINER-INDEPENDENT
NOV. 19-20, 2002

POLICE BLOTTER

The metering should improve transit time on the freeway by 5 percent to 10 percent, CCAG Executive Director Richard Napier said. That's only partly due to the traffic-distributing effects of the lights, he added. Some people will likely chose secondary routes such as El Camino Real for shorter trips rather than wait at the light, reducing overall freeway traffic.

"What we're striving for is to increase overall mobility," he said.

The lights will not result in congestion on local area roads because the interchanges will have sensors that will turn the lights green if traffic backs up past what the on-ramp can hold, Wong said. And some entry ramps that don't have enough holding capacity may simply stay green, Napier said.

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San Mateo County metering onramps

Phase I: Highway 101 from University Avenue north to Hillsdale Boulevard, scheduled for completion by fall 2006

Phase II: Highway 101 from state Route 92 north to the county line; with little equipment in place, unlikely to appear for at least three years.

Phase III: Interstate 280 from the Interstate 380 interchange north to the county line; also not yet equipped.

For more information, visit www.ccag.ca.gov

BELMONT (GENERAL NEWS)
SAN MATEO COUNTY TIMES
OCT. 18, 2005

Anti-war women's groups take message to Belmont

By Rebekah Gordon
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — For eight ladies descending on Monday on the military recruiting substation in Belmont, their arsenal included tea, cookies and questions.

Members of the Peninsula and San Francisco chapters of the Raging Grannies and CODEPINK, women's

groups that support the anti-war movement, formulated their surprise attack from the safety of Whispers Cafe & Creperie in the Belmont Plaza shopping center.

But they feared that the military had gotten wind of their plans. And when they went next door in their floppy granny hats and pink outfits,



RUTH ROBERTSON
(from left to right),
Janey Grundy, Pat
Gray and Gail Sre-
danovic, of the Pen-
insula chapters of
CODEPINK and
Raging Grannies,
speak with Marines
Staff Sgt. Chad In-
boden after serving
him tea and
cookies.

GLENN FUENTES

OVER

Grannies stage gentle protest

► **RAGING**, from News 1

they found the Army recruiting office locked, though a sign read "open," and two men in uniform were visible inside.

"We brought tea and cookies. We just want to show that we support the troops," Raging Granny Ruth Robertson of Palo Alto said through the door, to no avail.

But the Marine recruiting office a few feet away welcomed the women, and they plunked down their teapot and Tupperware full of homemade gingerbread "military men" on a recruiter's desk.

"Get rid of those Doritos, please," Robertson chided Cpl. Robert Bastida.

And as they munched and sipped, the onslaught began.

Pat Gray of Burlingame, both a Raging Granny and CODEPINK member, voiced concern about her nephew deployed in Baghdad.

"I'm especially concerned about the recruiting at the high schools," she said. "He learned how to kill people, which is not really a job skill."

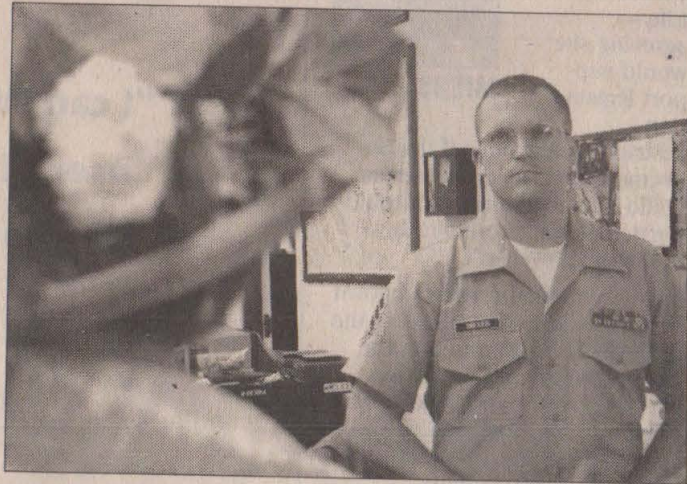
The women examined a bulletin board with photos of new young recruits.

"They can't vote at age 17 but they can sign away their life?" Robertson asked.

Staff Sgt. Chad Inboden answered their questions.

"These are young men and women who are looking to set themselves up for a successful future," he said.

There were questions about benefits for veterans — which the women said needed to be better — and about the



GLENN FUENTES

MARINES STAFF SGT. Chad Inboden listens as Gail Sredanovic, from the Peninsula chapters of CODEPINK and Raging Grannies, speak about recruitment after serving him tea and cookies.

actual number of deaths in Iraq. Robertson picked up a replica of a training bomb, asking what it was.

Gail Sredanovic, a Raging Granny from Menlo Park, asked if she could get a copy of the contract that new recruits sign, concerned that some guarantees, such as the job someone will do or how long they will serve, are anything but.

"There is no Consumer Reports for military service, so we're filling in the gap. At the very least, we should be truthful with our young people," she said. "I guess they have a private definition of what 'guarantee' means, but they don't tell you that."

Inboden said contracts cannot be altered without the individual's consent.

The visit ended amicably.

"Just don't end up like this, with a leg missing," Robertson said as she left the recruiters some cookies — one of them broken.

"You guys should come back more often," Staff Sgt. Thomas Sanford said.

The recruiters didn't seem to mind the visit, and Robertson declared "mission accomplished" as the group of women, who ranged in age from 46 to 90, sang rallying songs outside.

"Our job here is to answer questions," Sanford said. "What makes the lady that's 90-something-years old different from someone that's 4? They seem like nice ladies willing to give us cookies."

STARMAKER TITANS BASEBALL
EXAMINER/INDEPENDENT
AUGUST 23, 2005

Starmakers find an effort worth repeating

Belmont baseball team becoming national power

BY JAKE LEONARD
Special to *The Examiner*

A baseball factory is quickly being established on the Peninsula.

The Starmaker Titans of Belmont recently leveled the competition in the Amateur Athletic Union under-14 tournament at Sarasota, Fla., bringing home a national championship for the second straight year. The Titans have been in existence for just five years.

"East Cobb, in Atlanta, is as good as it gets," Starmaker coach Ed Mitchell said. "But we're up there now."

The Titans went 9-1 during their title run through the 54-team field, capped off by a 7-1 victory over Easton Select of Orlando, Fla.

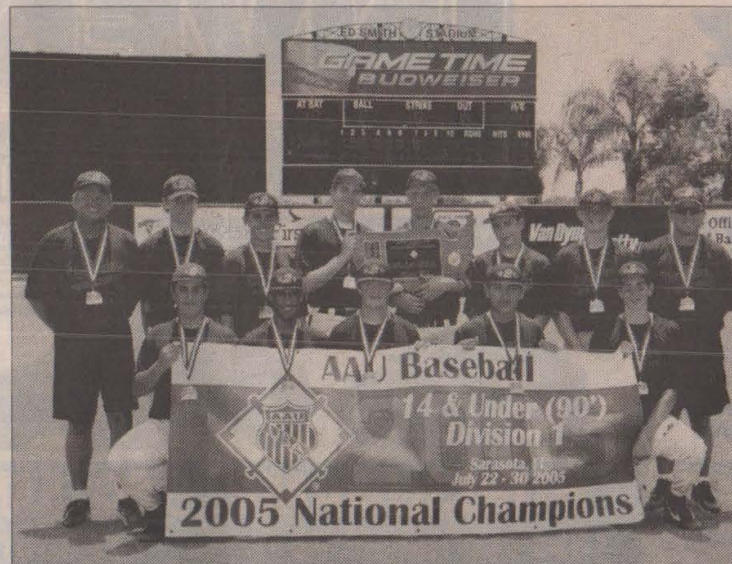
"The players got this look in their

eyes," Mitchell said. "[The coaching staff] knew this was an exceptional baseball team, and when we saw them toward the end of the tournament with that look, we knew we didn't have to get them motivated. They weren't going to lose."

In the first round of pool play, the Titans went 3-0, posting wins over teams from Florida, Georgia and North Carolina.

Starmaker pitcher Jarrod Hopper turned up the intensity in the second round of pool play, shutting out the BCC Heat of Maryland. The Titans followed that with a win against the Gainesville (Fla.) Thunder, ensuring a spot among the final 16 teams for single-elimination play.

The only letdown for the Titans came in the second-round finale, as the St. Petersburg (Fla.) Stingers handed Starmaker an 8-1 loss — a reminder that the road to a championship wouldn't be easy. The players took the lesson to heart, calling a team meeting to get back on track.



COURTESY PHOTO

The Starmaker Titans have won back-to-back national championships.

"They really felt like they weren't playing to their potential after that loss and wanted to get themselves turned around," Mitchell said.

The team meeting was the per-

fect tonic. Sparked by lights-out pitching from Hopper, Greg Mills, Paul Anaya and Matt Flemer, Starmaker outscored its final four opponents 36-5.

In the semifinals, the Titans met the undefeated West Florida Young Guns — the top-seeded team. Despite starting Ray Delphey, who Mitchell says ranks among the top pitchers in the country for his age, the Young Guns couldn't keep the game close. The Titans scored 10 times in the first three innings, while Mills and Anaya combined on a two-hitter in the 14-0 win.

The championship game brought more of the same dominance, as Hopper held Easton Select to three hits in six innings. Flemer pitched an inning of perfect relief, striking out the side to put an exclamation point on the Titans' tournament run.

For their standout performances, Flemer, Hopper, Mills, Marcus Semien and Max Stassi garnered all-tournament honors.

Five Titans — Hopper, Flemer, Mills, Semien and Anaya — competed on the varsity as high school freshmen, a testament to the quality of the program, Mitchell said.

Eshoo echoes Murtha's call for withdrawal

■ 'It's time' to bring troops home from Iraq, she tells town hall gathering

By Rebekah Gordon

STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — If there's anything that Rep. Anna Eshoo (D) wants her constituents to know, it's that she stands behind the call to bring the troops home from Iraq.

Citing \$277 billion spent and 2,079 soldiers killed, she said, "I believe that it is time to begin the redeployment, to begin the draw-down. I think it's time to take the training wheels off the Iraqis."

More than 100 constituents filled the City Council chambers Saturday at a town hall meeting with Eshoo. Providing an update on Washington, D.C., matters and answering questions, her meeting was also Webcast live for the first time.

Eshoo, who represents California's 14th District, which stretches from San Mateo County to Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties, visited



ESHOO

Attends town meeting in Belmont council chambers

Iraq in April.

"The insurgency has grown. Ninety percent of insurgents are Iraqis targeting American troops," she said. "We are not viewed as the people that are there to help."

She said she strongly supports Rep. Jack Murtha's (D-Pa.) Nov. 17 resolution to re-deploy U.S. forces, calling him a staunch Pentagon supporter, the "most knowledgeable" on matters of war and a "true American hero."

"He is respected in every quarter of the Congress," she

said. "Anyone that debates should never be targeted as someone that is less than patriotic."

Eshoo did not vote for the resolution to go to war, saying she did not see compelling evidence for the threat of attack.

"The tragic part of this endeavor is that if you're going to have an entrance plan, you have to have an exit plan. There is no strategic plan for winning in Iraq," she said.

Eshoo responded to questions on subjects ranging from immigration

policy to the budget deficit, and drew attention to the complicated nature of the Medicare prescription drug plan that goes into effect Jan 1.

Questions answered

Some questions were e-mailed from constituents.

Belmont resident and Eshoo supporter Marla Minowitz, 53, attended this town hall meeting — her second — because she has been discouraged by the war.

"I was feeling down," Minowitz said. "I needed to hear from her how she's holding up. She's hanging in there, I gotta say."

An office manager for contractor and 31-year Belmont resident Allan Burnett, 52, Minowitz persuaded Burnett to come to his first meeting. He was impressed.

"The world is in a mess, and these are the people who are straightening it out," Burnett said about Eshoo. "I actually feel secure to have a levelheaded person that's willing to look at both sides."

What about Iraqis?

Liana Ye, 54, a Belmont resident who owns a small computer business, said that though she agreed with Eshoo's stance on the war, she was

disappointed that Eshoo didn't address the Iraqi loss of life and their experience of having Americans in their homeland.

"As an immigrant myself, I understand that," she said.

She also had hoped to hear Eshoo speak to energy consumption and protecting the environment as housing and retail development burgeons.

Local connections

Belmont Mayor Dave Warden credited Eshoo with getting Belmont \$250,000 in funding to help build its new city hall and for securing \$3 million for its bicycle and pedestrian bridge project over Highway 101.

Before running for Congress, Eshoo was a San Mateo County supervisor from 1982 to 1992.

She urged her constituents, who seemed to express a lot of dismay with the Bush administration by the nature of their questions, to "keep the faith."

"People will weigh in at the ballot box," she said. "I think the policies of this administration will be impeached at the polls."

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CITY OF BELMONT
(GENERAL NEWS)
SAN MATEO COUNTY TIMES
DEC. 27, 2005

A Tree Down On Christmas

**A PG&E
ELECTRICAL
WORKER**

looks at the power lines caught in a tree that uprooted Sunday on the 1700 block of Terrance Drive in Belmont. The tree also pulled up a gas line going to one home.

PETER MOOTZ



Room with a view nestled among the trees

Longtime residents help community keep its sense of tradition

By **Jim Harrington** | Correspondent

Residents consider Belmont to be a hidden gem among the many treasures to be found in San Mateo County.

The 26,000-population town, located between San Francisco and San Jose, is known for its glorious views of the San Francisco Bay, lushly wooded hills and vast stretches of open space.

It's a quiet, friendly place that seems to have escaped much of the commercialization and overbuilding that has captured a good portion of the rest of the Peninsula. Belmont residents, who include corporate CEOs and hi-tech power brokers, see the future coming. Yet they make it a point to keep one eye trained on the past.

"You'll find people who have been here for 50 years. My family has actually been here since 1930," says Terri Cook, former Belmont City Councilmember and current city clerk. "Even though time marches on, people still want to see that small-town village at-

New and
Cool

NEW: The Belmont Chamber of Commerce has recently unveiled a brand new informational site about the city. Check it out at www.BelmontToday.com.

► **COOL:** Meet some "grape" friends at the fashionable wine tastings held every third Saturday of the month at A.G. Ferrari Foods. The nominal tasting fees benefit the Friends of the Belmont Library.

► **COOL:** Take an art break by visiting the Wiegand Gallery at Notre Dame de Namur University. The gallery has shown works by the likes of Nathan Oliveira and John Walker.

mosphere remain."

Belmont is perhaps best known as the home of Notre Dame de Namur University, a comprehensive Catholic uni-

versity. Founded in 1851 by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in San Jose, the university moved to Belmont in 1923 and offers undergraduate and graduate programs in all major disciplines. The school also thrills the local community by offering professional art, music and theater presentations.

Belmont has 14 recreational areas. One of the most popular is the centrally located Twin Pines Park on Ralston Avenue, which houses a senior and community center as well as picnicking facilities. The Belmont Sports Complex, at the interchange of Ralston and U.S. 101, includes various ball fields and play areas.

The city also has numerous trails and open space areas that are perfect for getting away from the hustle and grind of everyday life. Some trails lead as high up the neighboring hills as 750 feet, where folks can often get a clear view of Mt. Diablo.

"We've got all these hidden jewels that even people who have lived here for a long time might not know about," Cook says. "We are in an urban setting, but we've got open space. You can go on hiking trails where you feel like you are out in the woods, yet you haven't left the city limits."

Web site: www.belmont.gov

BELMONT

CITY GOVERNMENT
SAN MATEO COUNTY TIMES
OCT. 26, 2005

Around the County

► BELMONT

HR Director resigns, will go to Burlingame

Deirdre Dolan, the city's human resources director, announced her resignation Tuesday to become the human resources director for Burlingame. Her last day with Belmont is Nov. 4. Interim city manager Jack Crist is expected to appoint an interim HR director until a replacement can be found. Dolan has been the human resources director for Belmont since March 2001, and also provided HR services for the South County Fire Protection Authority.

Dolan's departure follows the resignation of the community development director in August and city planning director in July, and retirement of the

parks and recreation director in June. The city manager's position has been filled on an interim basis since last year.

CITY OF BELMONT
SAN MATEO DAILY NEWS
JULY 5, 2005

Commission to weigh city yard expansion plan

Belmont officials are preparing to expand the city's Corporation Yard on the border with Redwood Shores.

The Planning Commission will review plans today for a new 1,200-square-foot, 16.5 feet tall storage building, equipment canopy structure and wash area and landscaping at the Corporation Yard at 110 Sem Lane, according to a report by Craig Ewing, community development director.

The roughly 2-acre Corporation Yard site is surrounded by light industrial facilities, a 267-room Motel 6, a tidal creek flowing from Belmont Slough to the Bay and the northbound lanes of Highway 101. The property already contains three equipment and vehicle storage buildings totaling 6,450 square feet, a 3,000 square foot storage structure, a 5,000 square foot auto shop, a 2,550 square foot office building and a vehicle fuel dispensing island with a canopy.

No comments have been received from neighboring property owners or businesses on the project.

The city has operated a Corporation Yard at this location since 1952. Prior to that the property was a vacant lot.

The Planning Commission will meet at 7 p.m. at One Twin Pines Lane.

Mayor: Belmont is 'in better shape'

By Malaika Fraley

STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Worst-case scenario, the city will have to trim 5 percent — \$600,000 — from next year's budget, Mayor Dave Warden said Thursday at the mayor's annual state-of-the-city address.

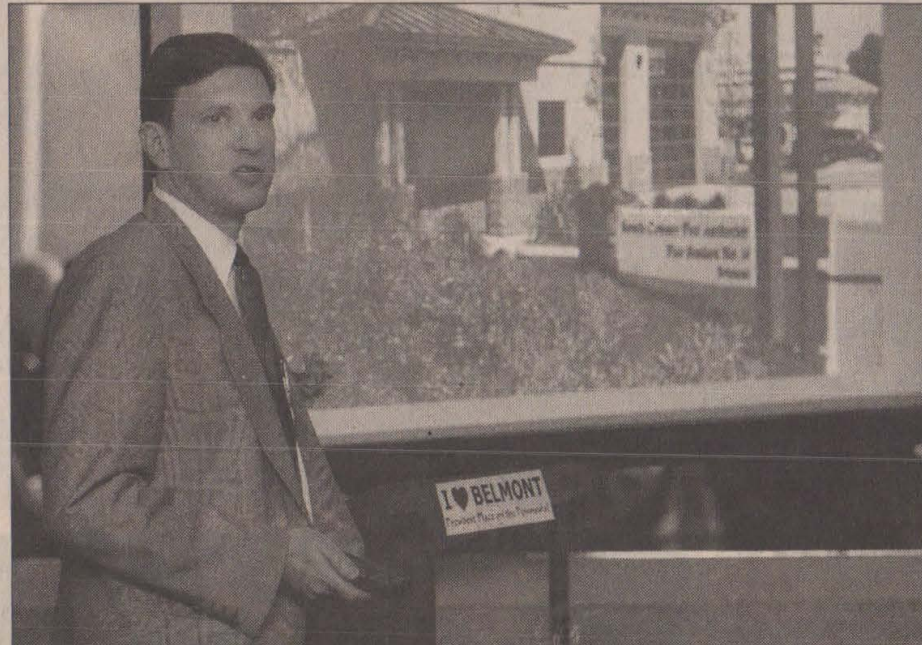
"It's not great, but it's not bad, either," the mayor said, speaking at a Belmont Chamber of Commerce luncheon at the Iron Gate restaurant. "We're in better shape than a lot of cities."

Warden said \$600,000 would be the maximum the city would have to cut, after trimming its budget by \$2 million over the past two years.

Warden, who last served as mayor in 2002, said the city has accomplished many of its goals over the past three years. Next month, construction will be completed on the new City Hall and police station.

The Police Department, which has been housed in a temporary building since 1978, is ready to move in, Police Chief Donald Mattei said.

Construction of another long-awaited project, a new library, is under way. Crews broke ground on the project last year, and the new facility is expected to be



BELMONT

MAYOR Dave Warden delivered an upbeat State of the City address Thursday at the Iron Gate restaurant. The luncheon was sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.

MATT SUMNER
— Staff

completed in spring 2006.

Traffic flow on Ralston Avenue will improve dramatically upon the completion of Caltrans' new interchange on Highway 101, Warden said.

What's less certain, he said, is the future of the South County Fire Authority. Late last year, the city councils in Belmont and San Carlos voted to dissolve their 25-year fire part-

nership. Fire Chief Chuc Lowden, whom Warden called an expert in fire department consolidations, is talking to neighboring cities about potential mergers.

"We don't know if we are going to merge with San Mateo, or if we are going to merge with Redwood City, or CDF (California Department of Forestry)," Warden said.

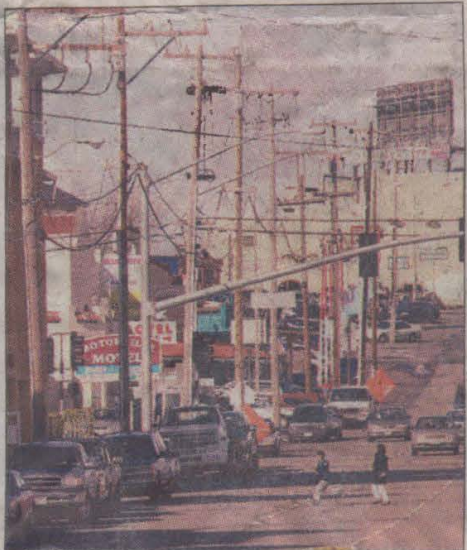
"Maybe we'll start our own," he said, adding that fire-protection services will be maintained in any scenario.

EL CAMINO REAL RENOVATION

GRAND BOULEVARD NO PIPE DREAM

Upgrades ramp up in six cities across county

*City of Belmont
The Independent
Jan 4, 05*



BY NAT FRIEDLAND
Staff Writer

The first six demonstration projects showing what can be done to upgrade El Camino Real from a county eyesore to a "grand boulevard" are moving closer to reality.

From Top of the Hill, Daly City to downtown Redwood City, with Colma, Millbrae, Belmont and San Carlos in between, these demonstrations are geared towards making the areas around public transit hubs more attractive to private developers of high-density housing, retail and offices.

Transit agency SamTrans is leading the push for Phase I of the multi-agency Grand Boulevard Initiative and has

already put in about \$400,000 in seed money for preliminary planning and grant applications.

"As soon as the grant money comes in, we can move ahead with detailed design plans and groundbreaking," said Ian McAvoy, SamTrans' chief development officer.

McAvoy expects some local funding to be approved by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission as early as

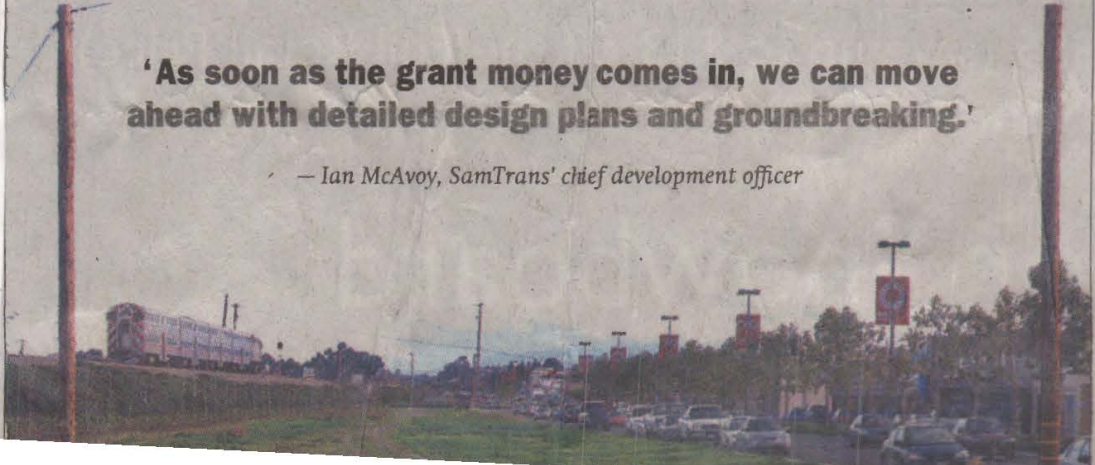
EL CAMINO: page 12A

Street upgrades are planned for El Camino Real in Daly City, Redwood City, Colma, Millbrae, Belmont and San Carlos.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN CALDWELL

'As soon as the grant money comes in, we can move ahead with detailed design plans and groundbreaking.'

— Ian McAvoy, SamTrans' chief development officer



EL CAMINO: Improvements

Continued from 1A

will mean overcoming funding and other challenges, "Just having this event is a good start," said Mary Boughton, executive director of the Peninsula Habitat for Humanity.

Others agreed.

"I think it is critical to get our act together to define what we want," said Rich Napier, executive director of the City/County Association of Governments. "If

we can have a broader vision, we can go for broader funding opportunities."

Phase I of the "grand boulevard" efforts include creating a policy committee, conducting transportation assessments and developing financing mechanisms.

Phase II involves building demonstration projects, bringing in additional cities.

(OVER)
(CONT)

BELMONT GENERAL NEWS
CALIFORNIA WRITERS' WEEK
OCT. 18, 2004
SAN MATEO DAILY NEWS

NEWS

Peninsula events for Writers Week

Peninsula writers will gather at several venues this week in recognition of California Writers Week, a celebration of the written word.

Writers Week, which runs through Saturday, was officially declared by former Gov. Gray Davis in 2003.

To celebrate the week, the California Writers Club's 14 regional branches will hold events honoring California writers past and present.

The San Francisco/Peninsula branch of

CWC will host several events, including a literary breakfast in Belmont, a literary agents' panel in San Francisco, panels on memoir writing and freelance writing in Burlingame and a literary open-mike night in San Mateo.

The freelancing panel is scheduled for today from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. The memoir panel will be tomorrow from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Both events will be at Books Inc., 1375 Burlingame Ave. in Burlingame.

The writers' forum open-mike night, featuring 12 writers reading their own material, will be held Wednesday from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at Borders, 2925 El Camino Real in San Mateo.

The literary agents' panel, preceded by a wine-and-cheese networking event, will be held Thursday at the Mechanics Institute Library, 57 Post St., 4th floor, San Francisco. For more information about the writers' week events, visit www.sfpensulawriters.com.

GRAND BOULEVARD NO PIPE DREAM

*City of Belmont
Independent
Jan 4, 05*

Upgrades ramp up in six cities across county



BY NAT FRIEDLAND
Staff Writer

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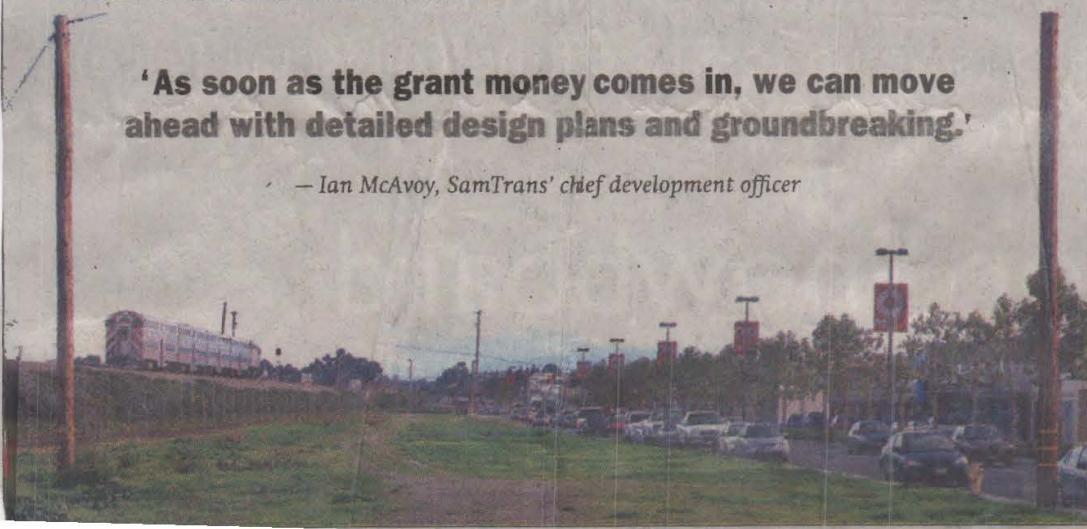
EL CAMINO: page 12A

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PHOTOS BY SUSAN CALDWELL

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EL CAMINO: Renovations for grand boulevard

Continued from 1A

January and from the C/CAG Congestion Management Agency by March. He also just returned from a Washington D.C. trip to lobby Reps. Tom Lantos and Anna Eshoo for transportation funds that must be reauthorized in new bills every six years.

"The smaller projects could break ground in 2005 if we're just enhancing the public facilities with more visible crosswalks, safer intersections, better medians, landscaping and improved bus stop shelters," McAvoy said.

Demonstration projects in Millbrae and San Carlos are considerably more ambitious.

The City of Millbrae is setting up an improvement district between the El Camino and the Millbrae BART station, and SamTrans will upgrade public facilities in the area. Construction is expected to begin in about 12 months.

In San Carlos, builder proposals have been solicited for construction for a mixed-use development with 350 housing units on SamTrans-owned land along most of the east side of El Camino between Belmont and Redwood City.

"We've narrowed it down to three developers, and we hope to be ready to break ground in about 15 months," McAvoy said.

In Daly City, Grand Boulevard funding will help enhance a new business improvement district by redesigning the Municipal Railway/SamTrans bus parking areas, making bus stop shelters more comfortable



SUSAN CALDWELL

Retail stores across from the Belmont train station on El Camino Real.

in the wind, and redesigning the roadway to make it more attractive as a business destination.

In Colma, the six blocks of El Camino surrounding the BART station will be revitalized as a new town commercial center, with wider sidewalks, new infill developments on underused and vacant properties and space for community events.

Belmont will remodel its Caltrain station as an anchor for a village-style downtown, turning an auto-dominated thoroughfare into a walkable center with multiple uses.

Redesigned roadways will encourage safe walking and bicycling across the tracks to the west, making new connections between the train station, retail and civic events in Twin Pines Park.

The downtown Redwood City project will focus on creating

ing on auto-dominated streets, development at the transit hub, enhancing passenger-waiting areas and new mixed-use development in the prime downtown area.

During an October forum, more cities around the county expressed interest in joining the El Camino project in 2005. The South San Francisco City Council will hear a Grand Boulevard presentation on Jan. 12, and similar appearances are to follow soon in San Mateo and Menlo Park.

"Grand Boulevard is going to be the biggest development in the county since Bay Meadows," said Deberah Bringelson, president of the San Mateo County Economic Development Association. "We've all been working four years to get to this point where it's starting to take off."

E-mail: mfriedland@smindependent.com

CITY OF BELMONT
THE INDEPENDENT
MARCH 23, 2004

Tuesday, March 23, 2004

Belmont makeover coming?

City ponders whether to rejuvenate downtown for better business

BY MATT ELLISER
Staff Writer

BELMONT — It was born as a whistle-stop along the Union Pacific Railroad, matured as a rustic getaway for city dwellers and grew into a booming post-World War II suburb. But city of Belmont staff is less concerned with the city's colorful past than rejuvenating the downtown area for a modern, vibrant future.

Planners are currently discussing an increased emphasis on the arts, more business opportunities and affordable housing near the "transportation corridor" on El Camino Real, as well as urban beautification to create a Renaissance here. The city has approximately \$5 million in Redevelopment Agency funds available and, while it is not a requirement, Finance Director Thomas Fil senses it will be pumped into economic development.

"That's the track we're certainly on," Fil said. "The council has a list of various projects

they want to consider, and I think one of their priorities is to use these funds to encourage economic development."

Redevelopment Agency money can only be used in a designated redevelopment area of a city, but the different desires and expectations of Belmont citizens makes the subject a delicate one for city officials. Staff will seek direction from the City Council at an April 13 meeting.

"Right now we're struggling with the range of public opinion, because no community



SUSAN CALDWELL

An increase in commerce would boost traffic on Ralston.

(OVER)

DOWNTOWN: Planners seek direction

Continued from 1A

speaks with just one voice," said Jere Kersnar, city manager of Belmont. "There are some people who wouldn't want to do anything except beautify what already exists here, and there are others who wish we would spend more money promoting and bringing business to Belmont."

Downtown Belmont is loosely defined as El Camino Real from San Mateo to San Carlos, Ralston Avenue from Twin Pines Park to U.S. Highway 101, and sections of Old County Road. This staggered geometry has made the process challenging for city planners.

"We may not be able to create a San Mateo or Palo Alto downtown, but that doesn't mean we can't create a downtown unique to Belmont," said Craig Ewing, the city's director of Planning and Community Development. "We can have something that some of these other cities don't have."

One possibility that has been mentioned is a continued empha-

sis on the arts in Belmont. Art programs are a focal point at nearby Notre Dame de Namur University and studios have been rented out to artists at what once was Barrett Elementary School.

Councilmember Dave Bauer has said he liked the general notion of accommodating more artists, although any plan is still in its infancy.

"That appeals to me," Bauer said. "I like the idea that Belmont could represent something that maybe other cities don't."

The one unavoidable concern is the existence of just one major east-west thoroughfare: Ralston Avenue. An increase in commerce in the area would spike traffic on Ralston, as well as increase an already high demand for parking.

"Ralston Avenue is unquestionably the biggest challenge we have as planners in Belmont," Ewing said.

Downtown areas typically house all of a city's major civic

buildings, another issue facing Belmont. The new City Hall and police station will stand on Sixth Avenue, the post office on Masonic Way, and the new library will be constructed on Alameda de las Pulgas.

Ewing listed more business activity, a greater variety of retail services, more nightlife and a greater interaction with fellow townspeople as the perks to a busier downtown, while countering that increased congestion, activity and noise are the negatives. Both he and Kersnar admitted it would be impossible to please everybody in Belmont.

"I always tell people just starting as city managers that the technical stuff is always easier because you're looking for a right answer," Kersnar said. "With policy issues there's no definite correct answer, and there's a negative for every positive."

CITY HALL-CITY OF BELMONT
THE INDEPENDENT
MARCH 13, 2004

City Hall masterpiece coming

Refurbished facility
expected to be done by
end of year in Belmont

BY MATT ELLISER
Staff Writer

BELMONT — Right now it is the equivalent of a three-story blank canvas — concrete hallways standing without permanent walls and lines carved into the floor where plumbing will soon exist. But officials in Belmont are already imagining the day when the renovations of their new City Hall masterpiece will be complete.

On Nov. 10, work began to completely transform the existing 44,000-square-foot Belmont City Hall into a new, 52,000-square-foot facility. Approximately one-third of the way through the more than \$7 million dollars worth of renovation and work is right on schedule, with the contractors and city officials hopeful the makeover will be complete by the end of December.

"It's an exciting time," Belmont Mayor George Metropulos said. "It's going to be a beautiful, respectable building that's earthquake-safe. The kind of

place you walk into and know you're at a City Hall."

The new facility will house nearly 100 members of Belmont's city staff, the Police Department, and the City Council chambers. Council is currently holding its meetings in a large room in the Twin Pines Senior Center during the construction. Metropulos is not particular about the setting for council meetings, but focused on how the state-of-the-art facilities will benefit the community.

"As far as the meetings go, I



LANELLE L. DURAN

Mayor George Metropulos and other city officials take a look at the progress on City Hall's expansion.

(OVER)

give me a table and a few chairs I'm ready to go," Metropulos said. "But I'm really excited for the residents of Belmont, because the new chambers will be available for community use as well, not just employees."

The Belmont Police Department will also be the beneficiaries. Police administration was previously located at 1215 Ralston Ave., while the rest of the force worked across the street at City Hall. Once construction has been completed, the force will all be housed in the same area of the new City Hall.

"For years we've been cramped in a very old building," Officer Jim Christman said. "It's a good thing for the Police Department to have the facilities it needs to do the best job it can for the community it serves, and it will be nice for the whole force to be working under the same roof."

The Police Department will consist of three new holding cells as well as an updated dispatch system. Metropulos is proud of improvements the city

'Within the course of two years we're going to have a new Fire Department building and a new Police Department. These men and women have worked hard and they deserve it.'

Belmont Mayor George Metropulos

has been able to make to public service facilities in the face of a statewide economic downturn.

"Within the course of two years we're going to have a new Fire Department building and a new Police Department," he said. "These men and women have worked hard and they deserve it."

Talks of renovating City Hall have been swirling around Belmont for nearly 15 years, according to Assistant City Manager Dan Rich, with many false starts along the way. On July 22, council approved concrete plans and specifications for the renovation, and San Rafael-based contractor Thompson Pacific was awarded the contract on Oct. 14. A notice to proceed was

issued on Oct. 30, with 410 days of work to begin on Nov. 10.

Throughout the early stages of construction rain and weather have caused minor delays but workers have been able to continue almost on schedule.

"The rain always makes these projects go slower, but in this case the weather hasn't affected progress that much," said Keith Anderson, the construction manager. "The contractor has done a good job of being aggressive and staying flexible to work around it."

(OVER)

MAYOR
MARCH 2, 2004
MARCH 12, 2004
SAN MATEO COUNTY TIMES

Belmont mayor to speak at Ralston

Belmont Mayor George Metropulos will give his State of the City address in the Ralston Middle School Gymnasium on March 11, starting at 4 p.m.

Everyone is invited to the presentation, entitled, "Celebrate Our Community: Past, Present and Future."

The gathering will include entertainment by students from Belmont elementary, middle and high schools, and was designed to be more inclusive and family-friendly than previous such speeches. It is co-sponsored by the Belmont Chamber of Commerce and is free.

Belmont mayor paints a gloomy short-term picture

■ George Metropulos said the long-term outlook is much brighter

By Malaika Fraley
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Despite financial woes caused by the economy and state take-aways, it's an exciting time for Belmont, Mayor George Metropulos said Thursday.

"I'm going to sum up the budget for you in just a couple words: It stinks," Metropulos said in front of a multimedia screen reading "The budget. Blah, blah, blah" during his State of the City address at Ralston Middle School.

Metropulos said the recession has hit the city hard, re-

sulting in a 12 percent drop in sales-tax revenue and a 30 percent drop in hotel-tax revenue. After cutting \$2.5 million for its \$11.9 million general fund budget, the city needs to make another \$500,000 in reductions and risks losing \$200,000 to the state.

However, Metropulos pointed to a sunnier outlook for the future Thursday by highlighting a number of capital improvement projects that are either already in the works or will start in the next couple of years.

The most exciting, according to Metropulos, is the \$7 million City Hall renovation project under way that should be completed by the end of the year. The building is going from 44,000 to 52,000 square feet

and will also house the Police Department, which has been putting up with an inadequate facility the mayor likened to something "you'd find in Mayberry."

"This building is something the whole community can be proud of," Metropulos said.

Metropulos also boasted of recently renovated parks and thoroughfares, upcoming affordable-housing projects, and the new city library, the construction of which is scheduled to start in 2005.

"A lot of what we're doing right now is our future," Metropulos said.

March 20, 2004

Mayor rallies his city in annual talk

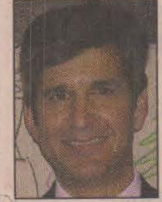
Metropulos keeps it positive in unusual state of the city address geared to families

BY MATT ELLISER
Staff Writer

BELMONT — Cheerleaders chanted his name as the pep band blared their horns before the packed bleachers in the Ralston Middle School Gymnasium.

George Metropulos was not a star quarterback running onto the floor to address his adoring fans before the big game, but the Belmont mayor's March 14 state of the city address was, in effect, a pep rally for the city.

The mayor spent only a moment of his speech dwelling on the budget problems facing Belmont and cities across the state. Instead he focused on some positives that lie ahead.

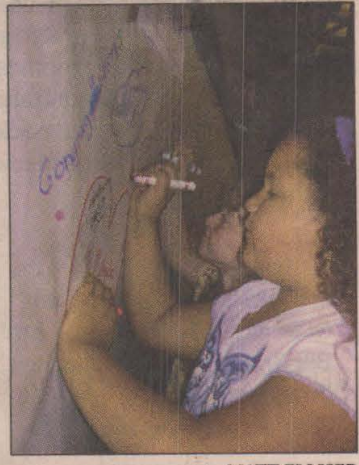


Metropulos

"In a typical state of the city, the mayor will talk about the budget for 45 minutes and how horrible it is," said Metropulos, standing in front of an image that read "The Budget: blah, blah, blah."

"Well I can sum it up in just a few words — it stinks," he said.

Belmont has been forced to cut \$2.5 million from its budget over the past two years, and will have to chop another \$500,000 this year. It has also seen its sales tax and hotel tax revenue drop. But Metropulos, a teacher at Central Elementary School, wasted little time on math



MATT ELLISER

Metropulos students Zoe Judge, left, and Lauren Sheppard wish the mayor well.

before giving the crowd a lesson in the city's history. He contrasted stories and old images of civic buildings in Belmont with artist renderings and discussion of renovation plans for several buildings in the city.

"There are a lot of exciting projects ahead of us," Metropulos said. "The new City Hall and Police Department and library are on their way, and we just recently opened Station 14, the new fire house."

The new library will be four times the size of the existing building, with construction set to begin early in 2005. The seismically-safe City Hall will include a new Police Department facility and is on sched-

MAYOR: page 8A

MAYOR: Focuses on 'very bright future'

Continued from 1A

to be completed by the end of 2004.

Those in attendance seemed to enjoy the entertainment as well as the optimistic tone of Metropulos' address. The mayor made it a priority to make the free event as family-friendly as possible.

"It was interesting and different, and I appreciated his point of view," said Dave Bauer, a Belmont councilmember. "He was marvelous, and his personality really came through. I'm glad he didn't spend a lot of time on budget, because we're in the

same pickle as everyone else and everyone knows all about it."

Metropulos also seemed to impress a number of the children in the audience, although some may have been a little biased. Members of the mayor's third-grade class wrote notes in marker on sheets of paper on the wall wishing him luck. The students later serenaded him with "God Bless the USA" and "This Land is Your Land."

"He's a great teacher — and he's handsome too," said 8-year-old Lauren Sheppard, one of his students. "We just wrote 'You're

the best, you rock' to him on the wall."

The mayor closed his speech by directly addressing the many children in the audience.

"Everything we do and work on — we try to do what's good for us, but we're really forming the foundation for the future," he said. "We've had a colorful past, and we're looking forward to a very, very bright future."

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AD 6

Belmont tries to stay in the black

City still must trim \$500,000 from this year's budget; other cities fare worse

BY MATT ELLISER
Staff Writer

BELMONT — The financial downpour has already commenced on the Peninsula, and cities are struggling to keep their heads above water while facing the combination of decreasing tax revenue and an increasing loss of dollars to the state.

Belmont has taken a few hits, but due to some early preventative measures, the dousing could be less severe than in other local communities.

The city faces \$500,000 in budget cuts for the remainder of the year, but in comparison with the \$3 million slam to the city of San Mateo and the \$4 million San Carlos must slice over the next two years, what's going on in Belmont is a drizzle rather than a drenching.

"I don't think we're going to have the big hit, that big punch in the gut, that some of the other cities have had," said Belmont Councilmember Dave Warden. "Staff has done a great job being prudent, and we've been trimming things for a while so we don't have to make that huge cut."

Facing a \$1.2 million shortfall, the city made \$500,000 in cuts earlier this fiscal year. Council called for more painful reductions at its meeting Feb. 24, eliminating two positions left vacant because of a pre-existing hiring freeze, saving close to

'I don't think we're going to have the big hit, that big punch in the gut, that some of the other cities have had.'

Councilmember Dave Warden

\$200,000. One officer position in the Police Department will be removed from the budget, along with the open community service officer position. Park maintenance will also see reductions, and the expansion of the teen program will be delayed.

"It would certainly be better if we had the people in those positions, but at this point there shouldn't be a drop-off in service levels," Sgt. Pat Halleran of the Belmont Police Department said. "But if we lost any more, we'd have a problem."

While service levels will be unchanged in the short term, staff warned Belmont residents that they could face reductions in the not-too-distant future. City Finance Director Thomas Fil said that major revenue sources like the transit occupancy tax and sales tax have been in decline since 2001 and could continue spiraling downward, while the state Legisla-

BUDGET (CITY OF BELMONT)
THE INDEPENDENT
MARCH 2, 2004

(COVER)

ture could continue its siege on local funds.

"I've been in this field for 20 years, and this financial picture is the worst I've ever seen — it's unprecedented," Fil said. "Nobody in the industry has seen the likes of what we're being faced with now. We're blazing new trails here."

One potential solution to service reduction is increasing revenue. Fil broached the potential for fees, assessments, or tax increases to raise funds in the city.

"The people of Belmont in the past have been very supportive of their city," Fil said. "It could be a question now of 'Do you want to cut maintenance in parks and possibly lower your public safety, or are you willing to take a higher burden on yourselves, because these are serious cuts we're talking about.'"

Yet council, specifically Warden, seemed apprehensive about any increase in taxes.

"I think people get taxed enough around here — I'm not in favor of raising taxes at all," Warden said.

Although somber and focused in mood, officials expressed gratitude that at least some of the cuts were done.

"We've tried to be aggressive and proactive, and we're in relatively good shape," Fil said. "But we still have some heavy work ahead of us."

Staff will present council with a "menu" of potential cuts in May — council will select the most bearable reductions. The final plan will be presented at the June 9 council meeting.

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THE ENGINEERING

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CITY OF BELMONT
(COMMISSIONS)
SAN MATEO COUNTY TIMES
JAN. 22, 2004

Seats on Belmont art, finance and parks commissions open

By Thea Lavin

STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Adults may not be aware of the importance of the City's Park and Recreation Commission, but most 2-year-olds are. The commission recently added new swings and teeter-totters to the Twin Pines Park.

"We've just finished upgrading five playgrounds and tot-lots," said commission member Stephen Singer with satisfaction. Singer is one of three Belmont residents whose terms on the Parks and Recreation Commission are set to expire in March.

The City of Belmont is accepting applications for the Parks and Recreation Commission, Arts Commission, and Finance Commission.

The parks commission makes recommendations to the City Council on matters pertaining to the city's various parks and open-space areas.

Singer characterized his two-year term as exciting and full of collaborative brainstorming.

"There's a lot of room for new ideas. One example is the new Youth Commissioners," said Singer, in reference to the two youth positions that will soon be

vacant on the commission.

Erica Goodwin, 15, applied for her current position as Parks and Recreation Youth Commissioner because teenagers lack places to socialize, she said.

"A lot of stuff in Belmont is geared toward senior citizens. As great as that is, there are not a lot of facilities for teens," said Goodwin.

There are three open seats on the Arts Commission, which advises the City Council about theater, music, and dance projects. Likewise, the Finance Commission is looking for two residents to participate in the budget-review process, audit the City Council and evaluate financial proposals.

Finance Commission chair Warner Lieberman stressed that the application process is not intimidating.

"It's a welcoming, friendly body that runs in a relaxed atmosphere," said Lieberman. "We've served as a sounding board for the finance director." In the past, the Finance Commission has given advice on issues ranging from library bonds to the best way to fund park rehabilitation.

All seats are two-year commitments, except for the one-year Youth Parks and Recreation Commissioner positions.

The deadline to apply is Friday. For more information, call the city clerk at 595-7413.