



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: June W. Catalano, City Manager

DATE: December 16, 2010

SUBJECT: **WEEKLY UPDATES**

GENERAL UPDATE

- New Senior Van Funding – Last month, staff presented an allocation request to TRANSPAC for Measure J (Line 20a) Paratransit Funding to purchase a new vehicle for the Pleasant Hill Senior Van Program. These Measure J funds are to be used to supplement services provided for seniors and people with disabilities. At their meeting on December 9th, TRANSPAC granted the request and allocated up to \$56,000 for the City to purchase a new vehicle to replace the current van. City staff will proceed with developing the specifications to purchase a smaller vehicle that will be more energy efficient, less costly to operate and easier to drive.

PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Engineering Division

- 2010 Drainage Facilities Repair – Construction activities continue this week and include the repair of concrete sidewalk, curb, gutter and valley gutter; removal and replacement of 12-inch drainage pipe; curb inlet repair; and miscellaneous drainage repairs throughout the City. About 50% of the contractual work will be completed by the end of this week, and the site will be cleaned and secured in anticipation of the holidays. The contractor will resume work in early January, weather dependent.
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program – Funding Initiative Project Update – Staff met with the Contra Costa Clean Water Program's (CWP) consultants to review the City's currently-approved NPDES budget. The consultants are meeting with all co-permittees to determine each City's potential funding needs in order to be compliant with the new requirements of the Municipal Regional Permit (MRP).

Staff reviewed with the consultant the City's anticipated costs to comply with several big ticket items, such as trash capture requirements, watershed monitoring and new development (C.3) requirements. In addition, staff provided the consultant with the existing finance mechanisms, such as the stormwater utility fee, development fees, and grants, which the City relies on to fund these activities.

Based on this information, the consultants will propose possible solutions, tailored to each city, in order to adequately fund the NPDES program and comply with the MRP. This information will also be used in the opinion poll and survey, which is scheduled to occur Countywide sometime in early spring. These tasks are all occurring on schedule, as part of a larger plan, in preparation for a possible Proposition 218 vote in 2012.

- Pleasant Hill Road (Gregory Lane – Taylor Boulevard) Pavement Testing – Nichols Consulting Engineers was recently hired to test the pavement structure of Pleasant Hill Road and develop a matrix of pavement rehabilitation design strategies. This work is part of the Street Resurfacing Program and supports the City Council's annual goals in seeking grant funding opportunities and maintaining our arterial and collectors in good condition. Pleasant Hill Road is one of eight City streets that are part of the San Francisco Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation System (major roadways) that qualify for Federal aid grant funding. Nichols has completed the pavement deflection testing and is preparing the final pavement analysis report, which staff will use as a template for determining pavement rehabilitation construction costs and include as part of the supporting documentation for the competitive requests for future Federal aid construction funds.

Maintenance Division

- Tree Replacement – A new street tree has been installed along the sidewalk area on Contra Costa Boulevard at Woodsworth Lane. The Tulip tree is a replacement for a Silver Maple that had decayed and needed to be removed. A crushed stone material was placed around the base of the tree to allow for safe pedestrian use along the sidewalk.
- Automobile Damage to Landscaping – Two separate vehicle accidents on Contra Costa Boulevard damaged the landscaping in the center median. The first accident occurred on Contra Costa Boulevard at Cottonwood Drive. The vehicle ran into the median and hit a large pine tree, slightly damaging the bark. It also severely damaged several shrubs. The second accident occurred on Contra Costa Boulevard at Monument Boulevard. The vehicle ran into a concrete column, moving its foundation and damaging a wrought iron fence. Both auto accidents were reported by the Police Department. Once the repairs are completed, the City will contact the insurance companies for reimbursement.

Planning Division

- Planning Commission

Safeway Sign Variance (703-707 Contra Costa Boulevard) – The applicant is requesting a Variance for exceptions to the City’s sign ordinance standards for the following signage elements for a proposed new Safeway store and fuel station at the site of the former Mervyn’s Department Store (located within the *RB-Retail Business* zoning district):

- 1) Excess number of free-standing signs, consisting of three new freestanding signs, where Section 18.60.050 of the Zoning Ordinance would allow a maximum of two freestanding signs for sites located in the Retail Business RB district with a street frontage in excess of 250 feet;
- 2) Excess sign face area for each sign face of a proposed double-face pylon sign, located along Interstate 680, consisting of 88 square feet per sign face (or a total 176 square feet for two sign faces), where Section 18.60.050 would allow a maximum 32 square feet per sign face (or a total 64 square feet for two sign faces) for freestanding signs located in the RB district;
- 3) Excess height for a proposed 25-foot tall free-standing pylon sign where Section 18.60.050 would allow a maximum 8-foot height for freestanding signs located in the RB district; and
- 4) Displaying an electronic reader board fuel price sign on the proposed pylon sign, where Section 18.60.060H prohibits this type of sign (if larger than 2 square feet in sign area and located on the exterior of a structure) in any zoning district.

Action: No action taken since: 1) City staff had recommended that the Planning Commission provide direction to staff to prepare a resolution in accordance with any determination that may have been generated by the Commission, and 2) during the public hearing the applicant requested a continuance to January 11, 2011 in order to submit revised plans in accordance with comments provided by the Commission. After receiving information from staff and the applicant, the Planning Commission provided the following input on the proposed project: The applicant should research alternative sign designs to substitute for the proposed pylon sign, to include building-attached signage on the east (rear) building elevation.

The Planning Commission continued the Variance request to January 11, 2011.

Appeal Period: Not applicable since no action was taken.

Sign Ordinance Amendment Study Session – Study session on proposed amendments to the existing sign ordinance, specifically Chapters 18.60, 18.105 and

18.140 of the Pleasant Hill Municipal Code. The proposed amendments are intended to make minor corrections and clarifications, integrate references to the City's Design Guidelines and streamline review procedures to improve administration of the ordinance.

Action: Continued without discussion to January 11, 2011.

Appeal Period: Not applicable.

- **Zoning Administrator**

No meeting scheduled this week.

- **Architectural Review Commission**

Ross Dress For Less Façade Improvements (556 Contra Costa Boulevard) (Continued from November 18, 2010) – The applicant requested approval for façade and other related exterior building improvements to an existing approximate 30,000-square-foot retail tenant space. Improvements would include a new front building façade (with a new 32-foot tall arcade/canopy), new exterior lighting, new doors and window, new roof top equipment and modification to existing loading doors at the rear of the tenant space.

Action: Approved with conditions. The Commission required the façade height to be lowered by one foot (to 31 feet) and the proposed building colors to come back to the Commission for final review and approval. No one from the public spoke on this item.

Appeal Period: The appeal will end on Tuesday, December 28th at 5:00 pm.

Mazza Grill Outdoor Seating (35-F Crescent Drive) – The applicant was requesting approval of a new outdoor seating area to include an enclosed seating area with chairs, tables and new wall lighting (to match existing wall lighting) for an existing wall sign on a different elevation.

Action: This application was withdrawn by the applicant. No action was taken.

Appeal Period: Not applicable.

Pleasant Hill Plaza Master Sign Program Amendment (1902 Contra Costa Boulevard) – The applicant requested approval of a sign permit for an amendment to the existing Master Sign Program (MSP) for the Pleasant Hill Plaza shopping center. The proposal includes two new replacement monument signs to be installed at the same locations as the existing monument signs, located at: 1) the northeast corner of

the intersection at Contra Costa Boulevard and the primary entrance to the shopping center and 2) the southeast corner of the intersection at Contra Costa Boulevard and Woodsworth Lane. The amendment also includes provisions that would allow for a total of three monument signs of which one is currently nonconforming.

Action: Approved with conditions. The Commission required the base of the signs to incorporate real/cultured stone and landscaping at the base of the site. No one from the public spoke on this item.

Appeal Period: The appeal will end on Tuesday, December 28th at 5:00 pm.

Sun Valley Apartments Site & Grading Improvements (1382-1400 Contra Costa Boulevard) – The applicant requested approval for rear parking lot modifications, made without prior City approval, including related unauthorized grading and landscaping changes. The project proposes to add approximately 22 vehicle and three motorcycle parking spaces and provide landscape improvements, including planting 32 trees and 29 shrubs along the adjacent Ellinwood Creek bank.

Action: Approved with conditions. The Commission added a condition to remove parking spaces to better accommodate vehicle movements and comply with required parking lot design standards. No one from the public spoke on this item.

Appeal Period: The appeal will end on Tuesday, December 28th at 5:00 pm.

- **Code Compliance**

Selected highlights of weekly activity:

Unlicensed Contractors – Staff addressed work being done by unlicensed contractors installing a new driveway on Marcia Drive in violation of the Contractor State Licensing Board (CSLB) laws. A report is being sent to the CSLB criminal investigators for potential prosecution.

Roadside Food Vendors – Staff attended a training meeting with Contra Costa County Environmental Health concerning actions to address roadside vendors selling food without obtaining a license or health permit.

Foreclosures – Staff periodically reviews and follows up on homes that appear on a monthly list of local foreclosures to determine if any contact is required by the City to resolve property maintenance or safety issues. Several new homes on the list were checked by staff with no noteworthy problems.

Number of Tasks Completed This Week – 62 (includes phone calls, emails, courtesy notices, investigations, site visits, area patrols, internal requests for service, attendance at training sessions and other miscellaneous activities).