Budget & Ballot Decisions Before Break

The months of May and June are usually busy with budget decisions before the Council goes on break for the summer, plus this year we are also considering putting a measure on the ballot to complete the funding of our already approved Infrastructure Plan.

We also enjoyed the 96th Annual May Fete Parade – a slice of hometown fun that happens to be the oldest children’s parade in Northern California. A total of 55 organizations and over 2,000 people participated in the parade, including myself and several Council members. There were just as many spectators lining the streets, cheering us on.

As we head into the summer season, we can look forward to lots of other community and family events taking place throughout Palo Alto. Until
then, Council continues to work on projects related to the 2018 priorities. Here are some updates on that front:

**Connecting Palo Alto: Narrowing Options**

Choosing a preferred grade separation alternative by the end of this calendar year is one of the Council’s priorities. At our May 29 meeting, the City’s transportation staff will present 10 ideas that are recommended by the Rail Committee- ideas that grew out of the Connecting Palo Alto community based rail process. We started with 34, and now with the Rail Committee recommendations, we are starting to narrow the options for further consideration.

I would encourage you and your neighbors to become involved and engaged on issues like this as it will have a major impact on our community for many years to come. You can read the full staff report [here](#) and as always, you are invited to attend or watch Tuesday’s Council session.

**Moving Ahead: Charleston-Arastradero Corridor**
The Charleston-Arastradero Corridor got the green light at the May 21 Council meeting to move ahead with the first two phases of the project. We started talking about this project with the community almost 15 years ago, with the goals of making it safer for kids biking to school and to slow down vehicle speeds. There are also a number of beautification elements that include adding 80 trees and plants along the 2.3 mile corridor. A lot of work went into making sure residents understood the goals of the project, and temporary striping was used to visualize and test out how things would work before construction moved ahead.

Speaking of construction, we know that it will be disruptive and city staff is developing communication avenues to keep residents up to date. You can view the final project plans here.

Releasing Water to Help a Good Neighbor
Palo Alto is happy to help a good neighbor by being a good neighbor - in this case by sharing part of its water allotment with neighboring city East Palo Alto. Council voted on May 7 to release a half million gallons per day to East Palo Alto. Even during drought conditions, the City uses far less water than its contracted entitlement from the Hetch Hetchy regional water system. EPA has lacked enough water to move forward with developments such as affordable housing, plus there is the possibility of shared infrastructure benefits such as a jointly supported design for Newell Road bridge, among others.

Our community has done such a good job reducing our use of potable water that we're in a position to assist with EPA's long-term water supply deficit. It's also unlikely we would need the full 17 mgd water allotment in the future. For more details, click here.

Blue Trees Make "Green" Statement

Your eyes aren't playing tricks on you - the tree trunks in front of King Plaza are painted a bright cobalt blue color as part of the City's latest socially driven public art intervention. Volunteers joined artist Konstantin Dimopoulos over several days this month to transform the trees and stimulate a conversation about global deforestation. Dimopoulos uses environmentally safe pigments and has brought The Blue Trees project to
Girl Scouts Earn Bronze Award for 'Last Straw' Campaign

Congratulations to Palo Alto Girl Scout Troop 60016 who received their Bronze Award on May 23 for their Last Straw plastic pollution awareness campaign. As a former Girl Scout myself, I was happy to learn about their idea when they presented it to Council in April. Council declared May “Drinking Straw Awareness Month” and over 40 restaurants participated with educational posters and table tents. You can learn more about the campaign here.

Take a Swing at Baylands Golf Links

Finally, the grand opening for the newly transformed Baylands Golf Links is Saturday, May 26, and I know that many of the golfers in town are really looking forward to playing on their brand new course. The 18-hole course has been totally transformed with elevated scenic views of the Baylands, 55 acres of native vegetation and wetlands, and a much more environmentally friendly footprint. The course is already in big demand, so make your tee
time reservations [here](#) and don’t forget that Palo Alto residents get a discounted rate!

If golf isn’t your sport, take time to walk one of our beautiful open space trails in Palo Alto this Memorial Day weekend. I’m an avid walker, so you just might see me on one of my morning strolls.

Liz Kniss
Mayor