



# City of Palo Alto

## City Council Staff Report

(ID # 13474)

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**Meeting Date: 8/9/2021**

**Summary Title: City Council Recess Summary Report**

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**From: City Manager**

**Lead Department: City Manager**

### **DISCUSSION**

The following informational report provides a brief update on activities accomplished during the City Council's July recess. The updates are organized by department. While the summary is not an exhaustive list of staff activities, it seeks to inform the City Council and the broader community about items completed since the last City Council meeting of the fiscal year or recent efforts underway. The report is transmitted with the August 9 City Council meeting packet.

### **City Manager's Office**

#### **Tracking \$11M in Community Project Funding Applications**

On July 16, 2021, Representative Anna Eshoo [announced she was successful in securing \\$5 million for local projects](#) in Palo Alto, including \$2 million for the mental health alternative response pilot program and \$3 million to renovate Palo Alto Museum's historic Roth Building. The funds still need approval by the US House and Senate but they continue to advance. Plus, Senator Alex Padilla has [posted his earmark requests](#) that he sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development Subcommittee. His requests included \$6 million towards the Palo Alto Fire Station No. 4 renovation project. **All funds are not yet guaranteed** until approved by both the US House and Senate. But if approved, in total, with \$2 million for mental health services, \$3 million for the Palo Alto Museum, and \$6 million for Fire Station No. 4, Palo Alto could receive \$11 million for local projects. Read more [here](#).

#### **Continued Progress on Race and Equity Framework**

The City Manager's Office continues to move forward several efforts focused on Race and Equity, including a series of community engagement opportunities. The approaches range from panel discussions, Q and A sessions, speaker series, and public forums, to digital conversations through a social media campaign and online forum over the next several months. A recent blog

post outlines a comprehensive [update on Council directives and actions and recent community events and engagement activities](#).

A brief description of related programs and events are listed below:

- **Palo Alto Public Art Open Call For Artists: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. & Coretta Scott King Artist Residency (King Residency) — Sunday, August 8, 11:59 p.m. deadline**  
The Palo Alto Public Art Program is inviting individual artists, collectives, and keystone community leaders/artist partnerships experienced in creative community engagement and outreach, to apply to be part of the first two rounds of King Artist Residencies for the Palo Alto Public Art Program. The selected artist or team will be asked to engage the community in conversations about equity, inclusion, and belonging in Palo Alto, resulting in a final artwork that will be displayed on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King Plaza in front of City Hall for a period of 6 months to one year. This opportunity is open to individuals over the age of 18 and residing in Santa Clara, San Mateo, Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Cruz and San Francisco counties. We strongly encourage artists who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color [to apply](#).
- **The Black Index – Runs through August 14**  
The [Palo Alto Art Center is holding an exhibition](#) titled [The Black Index](#) through August 14. Featuring the work of Dennis Delgado, Alicia Henry, Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle, Titus Kaphar, Whitfield Lovell, and Lava Thomas, the exhibit built upon the tradition of Black self-representation as an antidote to colonialist images. Curated by [Bridget R. Cooks](#), Associate Professor at the Department of African American Studies and the Department of Art History at the University of California Irvine, the exhibit features a wide range of art by Black artists, conversations featuring the artists about the role of artistic representation in acknowledging, honoring and celebrating Black women, as well as poetry reading and thematic overviews of the displayed art.
- **Black American Art History: People, Places, and Things — Friday, August 13 at 5 p.m.**  
In these free virtual Friday evening presentations, *The Black Index* exhibition curator Bridget R. Cooks will offer a thematic overview of art by Black American artists from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries. Discover new favorite artists, styles, and stories in these engaging sessions. [Register for the session](#).
- **Palo Alto Public Library Reconnect With Your Community: HP Laptop Donation Drive — Accepting Donations through August 31**  
The Palo Alto City Library has partnered with HP to repurpose used Windows laptops (Dell, HP, Microsoft, etc.) and donate them to local community partners who work with underserved students and families. HP will safely wipe the data on donated laptops using their HP Refresh software. [Learn more about this program](#).
- **7-Day Equity Book List for Children**

Spend 7 days with your [children reading books](#) on racial equity and anti-racism. Palo Alto City libraries provides a curated collection and discussion question for each day. Check out each days' curated program: [Day 1](#), [Day 2](#), [Day 3](#), [Day 4](#), [Day 5](#), [Day 6](#), [Day 7](#). Want to go the extra mile? Form a book club and work with some friends! There's no due date and no grades. There are books, videos, questions and opportunities for deeper connections and understandings.

- All books on these lists can be found in [PAUSD elementary school libraries](#) in print or digital format, or at the [Palo Alto City Library](#). This list was curated in partnership with the Palo Alto Unified School District and connected to the [21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge](#) conducted in February this year. The Palo Alto City Library also offers reading lists for [adults](#), [teens](#) and [kids](#).

## **Community Services Department**

### **Delivered Full Summer Camp Season**

The Community Services Department launched virtual and in-person summer camps in June, with in-person camps being the most popular in July. Camps include music, dance and theatre, art, science, and sports/recreation.

Special interest camps are also offered, such as LEGO, STEM and cooking camps. **Mayor DuBois made a special appearance** on July 23 at Kidizens' camp, where kidizens build their own small-scale cities with LEGOs and learn their decisions have real impact on others. The campers built their own versions of cities including police stations, schools, grocery stores, fire stations and more. They were eager to show Mayor DuBois where his house would be in their cities and enjoyed hearing about the Mayor's duties. They were also very excited to hear about the details of the new police headquarters coming in 2023. All in-person camps are following masking, social distancing and hygiene guidelines. Each camp had a limited number of campers and many camps that are traditionally held inside, were moved outside.

### **Restored Special events**

CSD brought back several events in July, offering a space for the community to come together. Although the annual Fourth of July Chili Cook-Off wasn't possible, there was a community celebration featuring live music and games to honor the holiday. **The Twilight Summer Concert Series** kicked-off its season on July 17, drawing over 1,500 people to Rinconada Park to hear the Sun Kings. The next concert is August 14 at Rinconada Park.

Summer Hot Dog Productions returned to the Children's Theatre to produce **The Berenstain Bears – A Country Musical**, which opened on July 21 and runs through August 8. Shows are Wednesday through Sunday at 6:30 p.m.

Public Art continues to brighten community spirit: **ArtLift Microgrants** continue to fund uplifting temporary art projects and experiences in Palo Alto's commercial areas and

neighborhoods. Several new projects are currently on display through September, such as the [Free Little Art Gallery of Palo Alto](#), [Game of Cones](#), and [Love Not Hate](#). All ArtLift projects and their locations can be found [here](#).

In association with ***The Black Index Exhibition***, the Art Center offered two virtual conversations about Black artists. These included an overview of art by Black American artists from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, and a conversation about Black creativity, artistic inspiration, and the importance of mentorship. [The Black Index](#) Exhibition is on display through August 14.

### **Office of Emergency Services**

In addition to substantial activities related to the ongoing pandemic, OES continues its "all hazards" mission, supporting planning, response, and mitigation activities across a wide range of planned events, public safety incidents, and regional planning and coordination efforts.

### **Received New Solar Generator Trailer**

OES is pleased to announce that it has taken delivery of the new Solar Generator Trailer (SGT)—a large solar array and battery system, capable of powering the Mobile Emergency Operations Center (MEOC) indefinitely, reducing our carbon footprint as well as our vulnerability and exposure to fuel supply chain risks. OES has also continued important work on the topic of wildland fire and foothills safety. This [staff report provides](#) some background information. A study session with City Council is pending.

### **Fire Department**

#### **Continued Oversight of Matadero Creek**

The Fire Department continues to oversee mitigation of a May 6 diesel oil spill consider the **incident at Matadero Creek to be stable**. Soil remediation continues on the VA property while regular monitoring of the creek at 16 locations indicates that Matadero Creek is largely remediated with no observed impacts to fish or wildlife. The sampling data continue to show that the boom system is continuing to keep the residual contained. All work is being conducted to ensure that wildlife remain protected throughout the remediation.

The Palo Alto Fire Department remains in Unified Command, which means the Palo Alto Fire Department Hazmat Bureau is working as a cohesive unit through all phases of this incident with the VA Palo Alto Health Care System, City of Palo Alto Stormwater staff, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the San Francisco Regional Water Board, the Santa Clara Valley Water District and 3rd party remediation and environmental scientist experts.

Representatives from regulatory agencies continue to meet to review all aspects of the incident, including cause of the release, continued containment of the diesel and remediation of the soil and water. Action plans continue to evolve based on monitoring results and expert

recommendations. See the [latest blog post here](#).

### **Organized Wildfire Preparedness Community Meeting**

The Palo Alto Fire Department is hosting a Wildfire Preparedness Community Meeting August 19 from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. The team will review the basic steps reduce the impacts of wildfires to property, and how to plan for a potential evacuation and re-entry. Participants can meet with local agency representatives, ask questions, and get better informed. [Register for this meeting here](#).

### **Administrative Services Department**

#### **Transitioned Fiscal Year Activities**

Over the past 6 weeks, ASD staff have been hard at work transitioning from one fiscal year to a new fiscal year, it is the “New Years” for financial staff. Staff completed the normal review of contracts and revenues and expenses to begin the annual comprehensive financial report for FY 2021 and begin the FY 2022 fiscal year in the newly upgraded enterprise resource planning system (ERP) and ensured continuity of business. Staff has also completed other year-end activities like the annual inventory of both warehouses at the Municipal Services Center and Regional Water Quality Control Plant (RWQCP) requiring the physical count of inventory with no material discrepancies and implementation of employment contract for payroll processing.

#### **Other Administrative Activities**

Other staff activities included implementing programs approved by the City Council in June such as the City’s Tenant Rent Relief program and waiver of the Business Registry and Downtown Business Improvement District fees as well as further scoping of and drafting economic development services in preparation for Council review upon return from summer break. A new process for submitting Utility User taxes (UUT) and Transient Occupancy Taxes (TOT) has been coordinated and implemented allowing for online submittal as of August 2021 for July tax remittance. Divisions across the department have worked to prepare for and implement changes in operations for the City’s continued reactivation, most notably the walk-in window hours Tuesday-Thursday to assist the community in administrative transactions.

### **Human Resources Department**

As a result of continued fiscal challenges and actions approved as part of the FY 2022 adopted budget, HR staff completed position reductions and layoffs, and focused on filling high priority and specialized vacancies. Staff also partnered with Community Services to hire and onboard employees for summer camps.

#### **Responded to Rapidly Changing COVID-19 Requirements**

A significant amount of staff’s time and resources were dedicated to monitoring, reporting and ensuring safe work practices related to COVID-19, including assisting with the administration of employee and community testing.

## **Advanced Confirming Appointments of New Directors for Library and Information Technology**

The City Council will consider confirming the appointments of new Director of Library Services Gayathri Kanth and Director of IT Darren Numoto—both of whom served as interim directors with great leadership during the pandemic—at the August 9 meeting. Recruitment for these vacancies were conducted prior to the pandemic. However, final appointments were put on hold due to a COVID-19-related hiring freeze. Read the full release [here](#).

## **Library Department**

During Council recess, the Library accomplished the following:

### **Advanced Grants**

- With a \$20,000 grant from the **California State Library**, the Library created a successful set of “**Read Together Storytime**” kits, aiming to promote equality and inclusion in the community.
- With a grant fund from the **Pacific Library Partners**, the Library partnered with Space Cookies, a community robotic team of the Girl Scout of America, to start **building a harvesting robot**.

### **Events and Activities**

- **Little Ones Storytime in the Secret Garden** started in mid-July at the Children’s Library. This is the Library’s first in-person, outdoor event that has attracted up to 60+ children and caregivers.
- The **2021 Summer Reading Program** launched on July 1, with over 1300 signups. This year’s theme of “Reconnect With Your Community,” provided various events and challenges for the summer.
- Library staff have been participating in a California State **Library training program on cultivating racial equity and inclusion**.

### **Upcoming Months:**

- The Library is **planning on reopening College Terrace and Downtown Libraries late-August**, and expanding hours at Mitchell Park and Rinconada in mid/late-September; Full reopening will happen once the library is able to hire staff to fill vacant positions.
- The Library will be setting up video streaming for the community to view the harvesting robot in action this fall.
- The Library is working on offering lockers and vending machines for 24/7 access to reserved library items and popular materials later this fiscal year.

## **Office of Transportation**

### **Prepared Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS)**

The Office of Transportation team coordinated an **Adaptive Cycling event for PAUSD Exceptional Needs elementary school students** on June 30<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the team took delivery of the **Mobile Information Kiosk E-bike (MIKE)**, a new tool for SRTS outreach. All secondary schools will have Back to School events with free bike repair, Bike Index registration, helmet checks, and safety information. Also, for middle schools, SRTS will conduct bike orientations for incoming 6th graders.

### **Engaged Community on South Palo Alto Bikeways**

Staff made progress in the project evaluation phase through a **Community Engagement Summary webinar** on June 22, 2021. Staff brought an initial Preferred Concept Plan to PTC on July 14, 2021. **The South Palo Alto Bikeways concepts will be reviewed at City Council on August 9, 2021.**

### **Supported the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (PABAC)**

**PABAC** held a joint Mountain View Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (MV BPAC) and Palo Alto PABAC meeting on June 30.

### **Managed Parking**

Parking staff have been manually managing permit issuance while our **new permit vendor system** is ramping up and operating. Staff are developing new plans and policies for parking programs which will be brought to Council in Fall. Parking enforcement (ticketing) has been paused in all commercial and residential parking districts since March 2020 due to the pandemic. Enforcement will resume on October 1, 2021 in all commercial and residential parking districts. Vehicles without valid permits will receive warning notices only, but no tickets/citations through September 30, 2021.

### **Implemented School Zone Speed Limit Project**

The installation of the **School Zone Speed Limit of 20-miles-per-hour** is currently in progress to comply with updated state law, and the City's municipal code requirements establishing speed zones in Palo Alto.

### **Advanced Crescent Park Neighborhood Traffic Calming Project**

The design of the Traffic Calming pilot improvement project in the Crescent Park neighborhood is complete. Staff is preparing for the installation of improvements including bicycle lane protection on University Avenue & W Crescent Drive, curb extension and related improvements at Southwood Drive & East Crescent Drive, and traffic circle pilot at Hamilton Avenue, Center Drive & Southwood Drive. This project was reviewed by City Council at its November 19, 2020 meeting ([item # 11603](#)).

### **Continued Alma Street & Churchill Avenue Safety Improvements Project**

Staff is continuing to work towards the design of the safety improvements at the railroad crossings of Alma Street & Churchill Avenue. The project includes pre-signal, sidewalk modification, resurfacing, signing, striping, and modifications to the traffic signal. This project is separate and independent from the ongoing rail grade separation conversations, and addresses more immediate safety concerns at this crossing. Council approved the concept plan in May 2021 and the design is expected to be complete by December 2021. Construction is anticipated to begin in Summer of 2022.

### **Continued Connecting Palo Alto - Grade Separation Projects along Caltrain Corridor**

With the completion of the XCAP review of grade separation alternatives and preparation of the final report, a City Council study session was held on March 23, 2021. After the review of the XCAP report and considering the XCAP recommendation, the City Council on April 26, 2021, removed the two tunnel alternatives 1) South Palo Alto Tunnel (Passenger and Freight) 2) South Palo Alto Tunnel (With At-Grade Freight) from further consideration for grade separation. Upcoming discussions with the City Council are tentatively scheduled for:

- **Summer 2021:** Council review of the Charleston/Meadow alternatives still under consideration, then provide direction on additional studies/next phase of the project. This is currently scheduled for August 23, 2021 City Council meeting.
- **Fall 2021:** Council review of the Churchill alternatives still under consideration, then provide direction on additional studies/next phase of the project.
- **Fall 2021/Winter 2022:** Council to reconvene the Rail Committee and discuss financial considerations.

In addition, Staff from the three cities of Sunnyvale, Mountainview, and Palo Alto reached an agreement for **allocation of the Measure B funding** to be based proportionally on the number of the existing at-grade locations in each jurisdiction, which will lead to 50% of such funding to be allocated to the City of Palo Alto. **A joint letter regarding this will be before Council for review and approval on August 9, 2021.**

### **Other Projects Currently in Design**

- San Antonio/Charleston Road Improvement Project
- Churchill Avenue Enhanced Bikeway Project

### **Ongoing Work**

Transportation Planning staff have been conducting development reviews and providing continued support for Housing Element Working Group meetings, S/CAP Implementation Planning, and Uplift Local coordination. Engineering staff have reviewed Traffic Control Plan for Encroachment permits, Public Works Projects, and Utility Projects. And staff have been reviewing and responding to 311 requests. OOT Administration has been working on contract



management, developing new Requests for Proposals (RFPs), encumbering funds for contracts, and conducting revenue forecasting necessary for various staff reports.

## **Planning and Development Services Department**

### **Submitted RHNA Appeal**

On July 9, PDS, in collaboration with the City Attorney's Office, filed an appeal of the City's Regional Housing Needs Allocation. The appeal was filed with the Association of Bay Area Governments. The City has the opportunity to testify for its appeal at a noticed and scheduled hearing.

### **Responded to Plan Bay Area Draft EIR**

Staff drafted, and the Mayor reviewed and signed, a comment letter regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Plan Bay Area 2050. This comment letter outlined concerns the City has as well as proposed policies the City supports.

### **Continued Reactivation**

PDS is preparing to welcome customers in-person at the Development Center. We are also adjusting our operations to a hybrid format, which includes a mix of virtual and in-person services, as well as virtual and in-person staff collaboration. Activities included: adjusting schedules, preparing workspaces and public spaces for access; developing procedures and protocols to minimize COVID-19 spread while providing in-person services; and the soft-opening of the Development Center and 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of City Hall.

### **Online & In-Person Appointment Booking Software**

PDS staff tested and launched online booking system for in-person and virtual appointments. These features enhance connection between customers and staff.

### **Supported Safe Parking Applications and Outreach**

Staff met with the Highway Church in Palo Alto to review the progress and operations of the safe parking site. At the time of the meeting, the congregation was not hosting any participants. The two participants the congregation had hosted were able to secure transitional housing. The congregation looks forward to hosting more households in the future. As a reminder, the congregation only serves those living in passenger vehicles; no RVs are served here.

### **Boards & Commissions**

The Planning and Transportation Commission and Architectural Review Board held noticed meetings to process applications, review policies, and review plans—such as potential plans for enhancing Palo Alto's bike network.

### **Supported Housing Element Working Group**

The Housing Element Working Group held its monthly meeting in July. The Working Group continues to seek ways to meet the housing needs of Palo Altans and meet state requirements.

### **Continued Electric Vehicle, Electric Vehicle Servicing Equipment, Electric Solar Storage Permitting Improvements**

The Department continues to collaborate with permitting partners—especially the Fire Department and Utilities—to increase the efficiency and predictability of processing permit applications and inspections. Together, the City has made great strides in ensuring applications are reviewed on time and that any issues are resolved with customers as quickly as possible. The Department continues to lead efforts in developing a comprehensive checklist as well as reviewing current practices to identify efficiencies.

### **Held Objective Standards Outreach Meeting**

The Department held a community outreach meeting to discuss proposed Objective Standards. The PTC recommended the City hold this meeting in response to public comments regarding a proposed change in the code. The meeting was well attended and helped illuminate an area that needs more refinement before being brought forward for Council consideration. The Objective Standards staff report and draft ordinance have been adjusted and will be brought to City Council in late August.

### **Police Department**

#### **Reinitiated Recruiting/Hiring**

The police department is very excited to have **posted job openings in early July 2021** for entry level/academy graduate/and lateral police officers. We currently have five officer positions unfilled, with more retirements forthcoming. We have reinvigorated our recruiting team to locate the best possible candidates to serve this community.

#### **Addressed Downtown/Unhoused Issues**

In response to community concerns and safety issues occurring in the downtown corridor, the Police Department has engaged in **high visibility foot and bike patrols to address unhoused persons living in public garages and other illegal activity**. Additionally, in conjunction with Public Works, the Police Department has implemented an ongoing maintenance strategy addressing unhoused and transient issues in our garages and downtown. This involves posting for the removal of any debris, garbage or unclaimed property and starts a 48-hour time-period allowing for the voluntary removal of any personal property prior to any unclaimed property being removed.

While the Police Department has taken a services-led approach in addressing these issues, we have also been prepared to take enforcement action with those who are illegally lodging and refusing to comply with the law. During July, the garages were cleared through compliance and no one was arrested or issued a citation. The department will continue this ongoing maintenance strategy to address unhoused and transient issues, with public safety being our highest priority. The department and its City partners will also continue to address downtown and transient issues identified through various channels necessitating additional outreach or

action.

Lastly, we are excited with the **County's recent hiring of a mental health clinician**, who will be assigned to the Police Department and work in conjunction with a sworn officer to form the PERT (Psychological Emergency Response Team) team. **The PERT team's primary responsibility will be addressing people in mental crisis** and the department anticipates using this team in support of **addressing downtown/unhoused issues**.

### **Collaborated with Stanford SPARQ**

After many months of planning, Dr. Rebecca Hetey and her team of researchers from Stanford SPARQ were at the Police Department to conduct a survey of sworn personnel between July 25 and July 28. The survey covered a spectrum of contemporary law enforcement issues, both nationally and specific to Palo Alto. Moving forward, the feedback and data from the survey will be compiled and used to improve relationships and trust within the department and the Palo Alto community.

### **Public Works Services Department**

#### **Progress with Highway 101 Bike Bridge and Public Safety Building Projects**

Significant progress has been made over the last couple of months on the Highway 101 Bike Bridge and the Public Safety Building projects. Some key milestones for the bridge include installation of the final bridge truss, completion of reinforcing steel and concrete deck placement over the steel trusses. It also included pavement of the Adobe Creek Reach Trail, and completion of the east approach landing, irrigation, landscaping and miscellaneous electrical and light work. For the Public Safety Building, the off-site utility work is nearly complete, job site trailers have been installed, and the installation of the perimeter shoring system has started. Like the California Avenue Garage project, the impermeable perimeter shoring system is designed to dramatically reduce the need for groundwater dewatering.

#### **Other Construction Projects**

Prior to Council's break, construction contracts for a number of important projects were approved. These projects are going through the process of obtaining bonds and insurance, contract execution, and notice to proceed issuance, and are either already started or beginning shortly. The projects include Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Phase 3, Rinconada Park Improvements, Civic Center Fire/Life Safety Improvements, Municipal Service Center Roofs Replacement, FY2021 Street Resurfacing, and RWQCP Primary Sedimentation Tank Rehabilitation.

#### **Sustainability and Climate Action Plan Progress**

The Sustainability Leadership Team continues to move forward several efforts focused on the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (S/CAP) Update. Staff is preparing for the **first Sustainability and Climate Action Plan Ad Hoc Committee Meeting on August 12**. The [Sustainability and Climate Action Plan Ad Hoc Committee](#) was [formed by City Council](#) on

April 19, 2021 to guide the development, implementation, and communication of the S/CAP. This new City Council Ad Hoc committee will complement the work of the City Council and staff on our sustainability and climate action efforts. Monthly in-depth discussion on various topics of the S/CAP are planned.

### **EV Overnight Charging**

**Starting August 1, 2021, Public Works started removing the \$2 per hour overstay fee at over 100 City-owned charging stations to allow for overnight (5 p.m. – 8 a.m.) parking and charging.** This change will make it easier to drive electric by providing more convenient access to charging for Downtown and California Avenue area residents who may not have access to charging at home. The current \$0.23 per kWh charge will remain in effect, but after the car is fully charged, there will no longer be an overstay fee. Allowing residents to charge their electric vehicles overnight at City-owned charging stations contributes to the City's overall efforts around sustainability and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Completed Roadside Vegetation Clearance/Fire Prevention**

Public Works staff in the Operations and Urban Forestry Sections combined efforts to conduct roadside vegetation clearance activities in the foothills area. Eight weeks of **roadside vegetation clearance work was completed in early July.** Grasses, trees, and brush were cleared 10 feet back from the road edge where possible for fire prevention along approximately six miles of roadway. Roads cleared included Page Mill Road, Los Trancos Road, and Arastradero Road.

### **East Meadow Circle Google Project**

The sidewalk improvements as part of the 1015 East Meadow Circle Google project are now complete. Improvements were made to the street tree planting area along the entire project length. In total, 35 new street trees were planted. Tree species planted included native oaks, redbuds, and arbutus. Street tree planting areas were expanded by installing seven new areas of Silva Cells, providing a root corridor under the sidewalk and enlarging the available root zone for these planting sites. Soil improvement was made by adding amendments to the planting sites and approximately 100 linear feet of new sidewalk was installed along with two new bio-retention basins for storm water collection.

### **Conducted Homeless Outreach and Clean Up in City Parking Garages**

The Public Works and Police departments **increased their efforts during the month of July to provide homeless outreach and cleanup of City parking garages.** The Police Department along with various other homeless support organizations/agencies connected with unhoused individuals living in City garages to offer shelter and other service needs. The impact of encampments in City parking garages include blocking parking stalls, blocking stairwells, vandalism, as well as fire, health and safety issues due to trash, debris, improperly stored food, and biohazards. To mitigate the impacts of illegal encampments in parking garages and to the community, Police provided advance notice of abandoned property/debris removal by tagging property scheduled for removal. In many cases, individuals were given extra time to separate

items they wanted to keep and take with them from what they wanted disposed of as Public Works crews waited. Efforts continue to monitor the garages for illegal encampments, repair vandalism damage, and maintain them in a safe and clean condition.

## **Utilities Department**

### **Advanced Modifications to Utilities Programs**

Approximately half of the Utilities department staff have returned to work and half of the staff continue to work remotely. All of Operations, Engineering and Meter Reading staff are physically reporting to work to carry out field maintenance and operations projects and respond to emergency service calls.

When the County lifted restrictions on construction activities, some energy efficiency projects resumed this summer, including commercial energy efficiency projects, solar installations and EV charger installations. Visits inside occupied residential dwellings and small/medium businesses are being modified to accommodate the Covid-19 protocols. The City instituted moratoriums on disconnections for non-payment, late payment fees, and full-bill payment requirements for City of Palo Alto Utilities residential, small/medium businesses and commercial customers. Customers can make partial payments, without penalty, and without risk of disconnection for non-payment. The total of missed payments (except late fees, which will be waived in their entirety) will continue to be owed, but customers will be eligible for an extended payment plan of up to 36 months.

### **Saving Energy and Water**

Utilities launched an outreach campaign with energy and water efficiency tips to help keep bills low while people are working and studying from home. A new “Summer Sustainability for Kids” e-newsletter series aims to educate younger Palo Alto community members and provide family-friendly activities for children as they spend more time at home this summer.

### **Monitored Water Supply Conditions**

Valley Water recently mailed letter to elected officials regarding their Board’s declaration of a water shortage emergency and adoption of a 15% mandatory water use reduction. In mid-June, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution declaring a proclamation of local emergency related to extreme drought conditions. As we have shared in past updates, the City of Palo Alto’s water supplier, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), remains in a better water supply position and is still asking its wholesale customers to voluntarily conserve water and try to keep a summer water use to 2019 levels. There are currently no mandatory water use restrictions or drought surcharges in effect at this time for Palo Alto, which currently has permanent water waste restrictions in line with Valley Water’s recommendation. Staff are continuing outreach about “Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life” at all times. Visit [cityofpaloalto.org/utilityprograms](http://cityofpaloalto.org/utilityprograms) and [watersavings.org](http://watersavings.org).

### **Utilities Projects Progress**

Each year Utilities performs a routine inspection of the gas distribution system to check for leaks, and contractors are currently walking residential areas for this inspection. Staff are replacing utility poles in various areas of the city. The construction of the Corte Madero Reservoir is underway and set to be completed by March 2022. In an effort to prepare for the upcoming AMI project, staff have changed out more than 500 gas meters.

## **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

### **Communications Team**

During recess, the Communications team drafted and/or coordinated important content updates to keep the community aware of—and encourage engagement in—City initiatives:

### **Blog Posts on Medium**

- June 29, 2021 – [Summer Fun in Palo Alto - Medium](#)
- July 14, 2021 – [Wildfire Season is Here...Are You Ready? - Medium](#)
- July 28, 2021 – [Palo Alto's Race and Equity Efforts: One Year Later - Medium](#)
- July 29, 2021 – [Library Continues Phased Reopening Plans - Medium](#)

### **News Articles posted to City Website**

- July 1, 2021 - [City Receives \\$16M to Help Design & Build a Salt Removal Facility – City of Palo Alto, CA](#)
- July 6, 2021 - [Upcoming Closures to East/West Bayshore for Bridge Project – City of Palo Alto, CA](#)
- July 8, 2021 - [Update on CinéArts Closing at Palo Alto Square – City of Palo Alto, CA](#)
- July 16, 2021 - [County Recommends Masking Indoors for Everyone – City of Palo Alto, CA](#)
- July 19, 2021 - [Matadero Creek/VA Palo Alto Health Care Diesel Spill Community Update – City of Palo Alto, CA](#)
- July 20, 2021 - [City-owned EV Chargers Available Overnight Without Overstay Fees – City of Palo Alto, CA](#)
- July 26, 2021 - [City Invites Public to Share Opinions on Future Housing – City of Palo Alto, CA](#)
- July 28, 2021 - [Highway 101 Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge Update – City of Palo Alto, CA](#)
- July 29, 2021 - [Current Water Conditions and How You Can Help Conserve Water – City of Palo Alto, CA](#)

### **News Releases**

- July 1, 2021 – [City of Palo Alto Announces Phased Expanded Hours and Services for Summer](#)
- July 29, 2021 – [City of Palo Alto Rolls Out Second Phase of Expanded Hours and Services on August 2](#)

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This report is not subject to environmental review.