

City Hall News

From the desk of

Fort Bragg City Manager Linda Ruffing

October 23, 2008

- 1. City Awarded a Second “Safe Routes to Schools” Grant.** The City of Fort Bragg was notified by Caltrans last week that it has been awarded \$214,000 in federal grant funds to install crosswalks, curb ramps, bulb-outs, sidewalks, signs and new bicycle/pedestrian trails near the Fort Bragg Middle School, Dana Gray Elementary School and Redwood Elementary School. The planning and design work for the Safe Routes to Schools project will be completed next year and construction will occur in the following year. This was a highly competitive funding cycle where only one in four applications was approved. Fort Bragg was the only jurisdiction in Mendocino County to receive funds and Grants Project Manager Jennifer Owen deserves another round of thanks for writing the successful grant application!
- 2. The GEM Has Arrived.** Last week, the City’s new GEM electric vehicle arrived. This vehicle was funded by a grant from the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District and it will be used as an around-town pool vehicle for City employees. The GEM will be used for conducting the monthly automated meter reading; performing site visits and postings; conducting inspections at construction sites, and any other local needs that can be handled by an electric vehicle. A new electric outlet will be installed at the north side of City Hall and the vehicle will be regularly charged at that location. This is another step for the City of Fort Bragg in reducing fuel costs and carbon emissions.
- 3. Community Survey Update.** Councilmembers have been walking Fort Bragg’s neighborhoods distributing Community Surveys and completed surveys have started trickling into City Hall. The hope is for all of the surveys to be distributed by early November, after which Councilmember Courtney and Mayor Hammerstrom will tally the results and establish a plan of action for follow-up activities.
- 4. Residential Streets Overlay Project.** The Residential Streets Overlay project is nearly complete. The project used a three step rubberized chip seal process: (1) a minor leveling course to smooth areas up to 1 inch; (2) a layer of oil and rubberized chips; (3) a final layer of slurry (oil and sand). The slurry creates a binder over the chips, but is not thick enough to completely smooth the surface as with standard asphalt. The rubberized chip seal creates a flexible surface and, purportedly, it will prevent surface cracking from reappearing, as often happens with a standard overlay. The street surface is somewhat rougher than a regular pavement job; however, the rubberized chip seal surface is a quieter surface because of the rubber additive. The surface is expected to smooth down over time with the traffic driving on the surface. About 4½ miles of streets were resurfaced this summer using the rubberized chip seal process at a cost of about \$1.7 million. The process costs about half as much as a standard overlay, so the City was able to repair twice the amount of streets than could have been repaired with the other process. The City will be carefully evaluating how the rubberized chip seal surfaces hold up over time, to see if this new technology is worthy of continued investments. In the meantime, we have a standard overlay project for several residential streets scheduled for next summer. The “Phase 3 Overlay” project will be funded with State grant funds.

5. **Sales Tax Receipts Continue to Decline.** City staff received an accounting of the City's second quarter 2008 (i.e., April – June) sales tax cash receipts last week. Compared to second quarter 2007, the percent change was a dismal -8.5%. This follows on the heels of first quarter sales tax receipts that were down -3.9%. While we can hope that summer tourist spending slowed the decline, we also need to prepare for the possibility of some mid-year budget adjustments to reduce expenditures. The Finance Department is preparing a report to “true up” the year-end revenue and expenditure projections in the FY 2008-09 Budget. That exercise, combined with new information regarding sales tax and transient occupancy tax (TOT) revenues, may necessitate a refinement of the revenue assumptions in the FY 2008-09 Budget.
6. **“No Drugs Down the Drain.”** In support of Stormwater Awareness Week, I want to put in a plug for dropping off old medications at Rite-Aid's Safe Medicine Disposal Program. There is no charge for dropping off old pills and capsules and they will be safely destroyed. Flushing pharmaceuticals down the toilet can create a potent source of contamination that can affect fish and other aquatic organisms. Leaving unused prescription medicines around the house can create a danger for children and an opportunity for theft and abuse.
7. **Skate Park Workshop- Thursday, October 23.** A community workshop to seek input regarding the two alternative locations for a Skate Plaza and to solicit input on design features will be held on Thursday, October 23rd in the Redwood Elementary School multi-purpose room. The workshop starts at 6:00 p.m.
8. **Industrial & Fine Arts Center Feasibility Study Workshop- Wednesday, October 29.** Next Wednesday, October 29th at 6:00 p.m., the Community Development Department is conducting a workshop at Fort Bragg Town Hall to bring together artists, manufacturers, craftspeople, and other North Coast community members to discuss the feasibility of an Industrial and Fine Arts Center in Fort Bragg.