



**CITY OF PALO ALTO**  
**CITY COUNCIL**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Monday, August 05, 2024**  
**Council Chambers & Hybrid**  
**5:30 PM**

<b>Agenda Item</b>
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13. City Council Summer Recess Report



CITY OF  
**PALO  
ALTO**

## City Council Staff Report

**From: City Manager**

**Report Type: INFORMATION REPORTS**

**Lead Department: City Manager**

**Meeting Date: August 5, 2024**

Report #:2407-3265

### **TITLE**

City Council Summer Recess Report

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Informational report only.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The summer months often include vacations and family time outside of school, and through it all staff teams continue to ensure that City services are provided, camps and activities are enriching our youth, and Council Priorities continue to advance supporting residents, businesses, and visitors who live, work, and play in Palo Alto. This informational report offers a summary of notable activities and City work through the month of July.

### **BACKGROUND**

This report shares brief updates, organized by department, on activities accomplished during the City Council's July recess. The report is not an exhaustive list of staff activities. The updates are to inform the City Council and public about items completed since the last City Council meeting of the fiscal year and other efforts underway.

### **ANALYSIS**

#### **Administrative Services Department**

##### *End of Fiscal Year and New Fiscal Year Activities*

The Administrative Services Department (ASD) has been focused on transitioning to the next fiscal year. In partnership with the Information Technology (IT) Department, ASD staff completed the transition in the financial system. Both departments worked closely to increase automation of this transition and due to these efforts, the team smoothly completed the

transition ahead of schedule. Closing of FY 2024 is underway and, automation of year-end accounts payable accruals was implemented.

ASD's annual inventory of both warehouses, the Municipal Services Center and Regional Water Quality Control Plant, were completed. This process requires physically counting inventory of close to 4,500 stocked parts, totaling approximately \$7.7 million.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is working on publishing the FY 2025 Municipal Fee Schedule along with the FY 2025 Adopted Operating and Capital Budget books, targeting a July release date for the Municipal Fees and an August release date for the Budget books.

### *Recruitment*

A key department vacancy was filled with a new Budget Manager starting at the end of July, and other new employees to start by fall 2024: Senior Buyer in Purchasing (Utility focus), Grant Analyst, Payroll Accountant, Risk Manager, and a Treasury Management Analyst.

### *eProcurement + Other Process Efficiencies*

Several process efficiency efforts are underway or completed, such as a new eProcurement system, which streamlines purchasing requests and planning and staff are exploring ways to minimize department wait times to encumber and spend contract funds.

### *Roth Building Construction*

As of the end of July, the Roth Building project is 54% complete. The insulation installed on the second floor passed inspection in early July. Glass blocks were installed at the basement and Stair 1 openings, the transformer pad and transformer were set, and waterproofing at the second-floor balconies at additions was completed. The second-floor sheet rock installation and energizing the building is expected to be complete by end of July. Ongoing activities include overhead and in-wall low voltage rough-in at the first floor, framing and wiring for updated light fixtures, installation of light fixtures, and high roof terra cotta tile installation.

### *CalPERS Update*

Staff anticipates transmitting the June 30, 2023, CalPERS valuations for the City's pension plans to the Finance Committee in the fall. CalPERS completes valuations using member data two years in arrears and issues annual reporting each August. As of July 2024, CalPERS provided the following [preliminary investment returns as compared to a 6.8% target](#):

- 5.8% for the period ending June 30, 2023 (impact in FY 2026)
- 9.3% for the period ending June 30, 2024 (impact in FY 2027)

Consistent with past practice, staff will incorporate these results in financial planning, including the Long-Range Financial Forecast (LRFF) and annual budget development. Additionally, staff continues to use a lower discount rate than the 6.8% used by CalPERS to calculate the

employer's normal cost and transmit the difference as an additional contribution to the City's Pension Trust. As part of the FY 2025 Adopted Budget, the City Council approved continuing to use a discount rate of 5.3% in FY 2025.

CalPERS preliminary investment returns for the period ending June 30, 2024, were announced on July 15, 2024.

#### *Inflation Reduction Act Clean Energy Tax Credits*

Staff submitted its pre-filing registration of seven electric vehicles for Clean Energy Tax Credits, and expect to receive \$40,000, subject to IRS review.

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

#### *TRUST Augmentation Evaluation*

In September 2022, the City received a \$2 million Community Project Funding grant for an alternative response program in Palo Alto, Mountain View, and Los Altos. Since Santa Clara County had already set up an alternative response program ("TRUST") serving the Palo Alto area, the City focused on augmenting TRUST with outreach and marketing, case management, and Mental Health First Aid trainings. Staff contracted with RDA Consulting to evaluate the augmentation and report on its performance in relation to the goals of the grant. Some highlights from the recently released report include:

- Community members, Police Departments, and staff from the three Augmentation Cities have developed *new and enhanced awareness of how to respond* in a mental health crisis, including awareness of the availability of TRUST as a resource.
- *Utilization of TRUST steadily increased* throughout the Evaluation period.
- Case Management services resulted in *positive client outcomes*.

The TRUST augmentation activities end September 2024, with the final reports to the granting agency and an information item to the City Council is anticipated for this December.

#### *El Camino Real and Safe Parking*

Staff continued to work with community partners to expand safe parking in Palo Alto to accommodate potential displaced vehicle dwellers along El Camino Real. We are working closely with the Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing and other agencies on an expansion of the current City safe parking site.

Funding is needed for the expansion of safe parking which will mostly be based on a significant fundraising effort for the next six months. The Palo Alto Community Fund, has donated \$20,000 for this effort to City's safe parking operator, MOVE Mountain View. Additionally, staff worked with Townsend Public Affairs to apply for State funding which, if granted, will support expanded safe parking and a pathway to permanent housing for the people living in vehicles along El

Camino Real in Palo Alto. Caltrans has indicated it expects to start El Camino Real paving work in early September.

#### *Palo Alto Homekey Project Progress*

Modular fabrication continued at the offsite factory in Pennsylvania. Site work moved forward with a variety of activities including installing site power distribution underground conduit, pouring concrete for light pole bases and the elevator pit, and forming of the building concrete slabs. In August, the construction team anticipates completing the concrete building pads and installing low voltage (e.g., access control, security camera, and wireless internet) underground conduit.

#### *Sunnyvale Shelter Impacts*

This summer it was reported that there will be a change in operator for the Sunnyvale shelter. The new operator expects to begin serving families in the fall of 2024 and there will be a period of serving both single adults and families. By July 2025, the site will be a family shelter. Unhoused single adults from around the County which previously went to the Sunnyvale shelter would likely join the queue for any single-adult serving shelter, including Palo Alto Homekey which will serve both single-adults and families when it opens in early 2025. From 2021-2023, on average, 64 people affiliated with Palo Alto were enrolled each year at the Sunnyvale shelter, 184 at other North County shelters, and 249 at shelters outside of North County.

#### *Annual Community Survey*

Staff reviewed the annual Community Survey to be conducted by Polco/National Research Center in August. Survey goals include gaining insight into residents' perspectives about the community, including amenities, services, public trust, resident engagement, and unmet service needs. The survey will be offered in English, Spanish and Chinese, and results will be presented to the City Council this winter.

#### *Economic Development Activities*

Staff has continued engaging merchants and the general public on programming public spaces, circulation and outdoor patio guidelines as part of developing street design alternatives.

#### *Cal Ave. Car Free Streets Design Concepts*

As part of the City's continued efforts to engage stakeholders on the future of California Avenue, we released an online survey on July 3, 2024. This survey gathers input on signage and street design concepts for Cal. Ave to advance City Council's direction to enhance Cal. Ave as a permanent car-free street. To date, we have received 822 responses. The survey closes on August 11, 2024. The City will continue engaging community members and merchants through various forums on programming public spaces, circulation and outdoor patio guidelines as part of developing street design alternatives.

### *Middlefield Building Fire Recovery Status*

The City is actively working with the property owner of the buildings impacted by the Middlefield fire. There are permits for shoring and hazardous materials clean up and testing. A hazardous materials plan was recently finalized and waiting for work to be scheduled to shore up the buildings. Following this work, inspections will take place by the City and the property owner's insurance company, which will inform next steps.

## **Community Services Department**

### *Recreation*

On July 4, the City celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> Chili Cook Off and Summer Festival at Mitchell Park, with 10 chili-cooking teams competing for cash prizes. The teams cooked approximately 285 gallons of chili. Approximately 1,900 wristbands were distributed to attendees to sample the chili; up from last year's wristband count of about 1,600.

### *Summer Camps*

This year's summer camps are in full swing, from the Baylands up to Foothills Nature Preserve and everywhere in between. There are 277 camps, and 3,964 campers were enrolled out of 4,937 available spots; there are another 2,526 campers on waiting lists for various camps. Some of the high demand camps include What's for Brunch & Let Them Eat Cake, Zoo Camp, 2-Week Theatre Academy, and Ceramics for Kids. Revenue for all CSD Summer Camps as of July 25, 2024 is \$1,705,501.42. Camps end August 9.

### *Rinconada Pool*

The Swim School (lessons) and Open Swim programs continue to grow as we rebuild after the pandemic. The learn to swim program camp structure was changed from two half day camps to one main camp per day to support its growth, which has continued to be in demand.

### *Human Services*

The Human Relations Commission hosted a Listening Session with leadership from 11 faith communities at a special meeting on June 20. The faith leaders shared ways in which they could partner with the City, past challenges, and ways the City could support the church communities more broadly.

In response to the excessive heat warning and heat advisory, on July 4 a Cooling Center was opened and staffed at the Lucie Stern Community Center, noon – 5 p.m., and at Mitchell Park Community Center for Chili Cook Off & Summer Festival attendees.

### *Public Art Program*

Artist Cameron Moberg completed a site-specific mural titled "Generations" at Cubberley Community Center. The mural spans two walls on the H- and U-wings at the north-east end of

the Campus and is inspired by the artist's interactions with community members and activities at Cubberley.

ArtLift Grants- Utility Boxes Edition: Twenty Palo Alto and Bay Area-based artists were selected to design and paint original works using City-owned utility boxes as their canvases. The utility boxes will be painted this summer and fall. Projects completed thus far include one in Midtown on July 11 and one near JLS planned for July 26, with one utility box project being completed by the Teen Arts Council near Palo Alto High School by August 4.

Three Bay Area artists were selected to design and paint three murals in downtown Palo Alto. Informed by the community engagement throughout July, the artists will submit their conceptual designs for Public Art Commission (PAC) review and approval in August and painting onsite in early October.

A conceptual design by artist Bodeck Luna for Fire Station 5 was approved by the PAC at their July 18 meeting. The design was inspired by the artists' community engagement, rich history, and lush landscapes of the Barron Park neighborhood and will be painted on the Station's roll-up engine door in late August.

#### *Palo Alto Art Center*

The Art Center is closing out a year of food programming with the exhibition *What's Cookin'? Art, Culture, and Community*, on view from June 22-August 18. The exhibition features artwork from more than 60 artists in a wide range of media exploring the power of food to connect us to community, culture, and each other.

The Art Center summer camps experienced record enrollment with 772 children and teens in art camps in all media, and Counselor In Training (CIT) and Lead Counselor In Training (LCIT) programs, generating more than \$250,000 in revenue.

Summer adult art class programs enrolled 282 people with 93 on waiting lists, generating over \$60,000 in revenue. Melbourne-based ceramic artist Sally Walk provided a free lecture and workshop in the studios.

The ACGA Clay and Glass Festival returned on July 14 and 15, drawing more than 10,000 people to the Art Center to experience ceramic and glass artwork from regional artists.

The summer intern program continues to provide meaningful work experience in the arts for diverse teens from around the country. This summer, undergraduate interns and graduate fellows were from University of San Francisco: Museum Studies Master's Program; UC Riverside, George Washington University, University of Washington, Syracuse, Barnard, and the University of Miami.

Based upon continued demand, the facility rental program is thriving; at the end of FY24 revenue goals were exceeded by more than \$100,000.

### *Children's Theatre*

In July, Palo Alto Children's Theatre produced the second of three Summer Hot Dog Season productions, A Peter Rabbit Tale. More than 3,000 people attended the sold-out production with a Magical Series Spectrum & Sensory Friendly Performance on July 18.

The Magical Series Afternoon Theatre Camp was offered for those who benefit from camps based on developmental age and smaller class sizes, plus other inclusive Magical Series offerings such as Summer Sing-Along, Spectrum-Friendly Story Acting and Dance classes, and Music Therapy Classes.

The Teen Arts Council closed out the school year with WaveFest, an outdoor music and art festival for teens. Almost 300 teens attended this year's festival that included teen bands, dance companies, student vendors and clubs, local community groups, and Teen Leadership Groups from the Library and Palo Alto Art Center.

### *Open Space*

Open Space Park Rangers focused on accomplishing annual fuel reduction requirements. Rangers closely monitored and managed the Open Space preserves on July 4 for increased visitor use and provided additional monitoring for fire prevention. The vacant Foothills Preserve Open Space Technician position was filled with an anticipated start date of August 12.

### *Parks*

The annual athletic field aeration and over-seeding renovations were completed. Park irrigation scheduling and ongoing maintenance are continually modified to compensate for the warmer seasonal temperatures.

### *Baylands Golf Links*

With seasonal warm weather, 5,890 rounds of golf were played in June and the course observed higher usage of the practice facilities.

## **Fire Department**

### *Regional Fire Deployment Status*

There are 17 active wildfires in Northern California. On Sunday, July 21 Palo Alto Fire deployed Engine 365 to the Ridge Fire in Sonoma County. On Tuesday, July 23, the strike team was reassigned to the Gold Complex in the Plumas National Forest; a wildfire which began Monday night due to lightning strikes. This is the second-strike team deployment of Engine 365.

## **Human Resources Department**

In June and July, 104 new employee hires were onboarded. This includes the annual hiring process HR completes in partnership with the Community Services Department to onboard



summer camp leaders for the Recreation, Arts, and Children's Theatre programs - 75 Hourly new hires were onboarded, a record high. In addition, there were 10 promotions.

HR assisted hiring, onboarding, and developing summer programming for 14 summer interns in Administrative Services, City Clerk, City Manager, Library, Public Works, Transportation, and Utilities departments. They are all enthusiastically working on many great projects that support staff and the community. Human Resources partnered with City Manager staff to plan several learning opportunities and activities to connect interns with each other, staff, and resources to help support and encourage careers in local government. A closing ceremony will be held in August to celebrate their completion of the summer program.

The City entered its second year partnering with Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) to offer City employees the opportunity to enroll their children into PAUSD schools that have openings. This enrollment opportunity deepens our employees' commitment to the Palo Alto community and strengthen the City's ability to attract and retain employees. Five additional employees enrolled their children, bringing the total to 17 City employee families who have been accepted and placed into various schools for the 24-25 school year. These employees represent the Community Services, Fire, IT, Police, and Public Works departments.

### **Library Department**

The Library expanded its open hours at Children's Library on July 8 and is now open six days a week, adding Mondays and Fridays to its service days.

The [Words on Wheels: Home Delivery](#) program was relaunched. Words on Wheels is available for Palo Alto residents who are unable to visit the Library and borrow items, due to health and mobility issues. [Sign up](#) for this free service and enjoy items delivered for an extended time period. This is also a great [volunteer opportunity](#) for anyone wanting to deliver items to homebound customers.

The Library is participating in the City's annual Open House at the Municipal Service Center on July 27 again this year by provide activities such as corn hole toss, Q&A prize wheel and coloring craft, in addition to promoting library services and events.

Staff continued eHelp visits to the Channing House retirement community to provide personalized assistance with eBooks and digital collections, helping residents stay connected and engaged.

eLibrary resources were expanded to add a subscription for ConsumerReports.org in the July collection. This expansion provides comprehensive access to the print and digital magazine.

The Vintage Media Lab at Mitchell Park Library expanded its open hours with the help of two summer interns. This digitization service supports preserving precious memories by converting vintage media into modern digital formats. The lab provides all necessary equipment, ensuring a smooth and efficient digitization process.

## **Office of Emergency Services**

Staff continues to support the development of a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, notably receiving the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan annex back from Santa Clara County after a review process by the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Staff anticipates Council consideration of the plan this Fall.

Staff began updates to both the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and related work on the Foothills Fire Management Plan (FFMP).

In addition, staff partnered with the Fire Department on deploying wildfire detection sensors in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) with Stanford University and the Woodside Fire Protection District. Finally, work has begun to the update of the City's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

Activities continued related to supporting the Emergency Services Volunteer (ESV) Program, including training sessions and drills conducted with residents, and expanded the ESV radio network system.

## **Office of Transportation**

### *El Camino Real Repaving and Bike Lanes Project*

Staff actively engaged with California State Department of Transportation (Caltrans), business and neighborhood stakeholders, and the community to shape the future of El Camino Real and advance City Council's June 18, 2024 direction. Staff conducted several meetings with the City's consultant, Caltrans, GreenWaste of Palo Alto, Stanford and other stakeholders.

Staff has continued to develop recommended adjustments to the Residential Preferential Parking (RRP) program to:

- Identify opportunities to provide temporary safe parking for vehicle dwellers
- Revise restrictions on short-term parking in nearby side streets
- Identify locations for additional bike parking

A new webpage was published to provide information on the Caltrans El Camino Real Improvements repaving project. The new website is available at [www.cityofpaloalto.org/ECRPavementProject](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/ECRPavementProject)

### *Additional Caltrain Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossings*

This spring, the City released a Request for Proposals for consultant services to identify locations and develop design concepts for up to two new bicycle and pedestrian grade-separated crossings on the Caltrain corridor, and Alma Street if needed, in Southern Palo Alto i.e., south of Oregon Expressway. The study will also identify bicycle and pedestrian enhancements that link the proposed grade-separated crossing sites to the existing/proposed bicycle and pedestrian networks within the neighborhoods adjacent to the railroad tracks. A contract with a preferred vendor will be advanced for City Council consideration later this

summer. The study is anticipated to take 16 to 24 months to complete and will include robust community engagement.

#### *Churchill Avenue Enhanced Bikeways Project*

The Churchill Avenue Enhanced Bikeways Project has been transitioned to Public Works for bidding and procurement of a construction contractor. Staff plans to conduct community outreach soon after the contractor is on board. All necessary easement agreements from Palo Alto Unified School District were signed, granting use of PAUSD land for the project. Staff also obtained the required encroachment permit from Caltrans for the improvement work at the El Camino Real and Churchill Avenue intersection.

#### *Churchill Avenue/Alma Street Intersection and Railroad Crossing Safety Improvements*

Staff completed the final design for the Caltrain rail crossing and intersection traffic signal improvements and awarded a construction contract for portions of this project within the City's right-of-way. Construction is in progress and managed by Public Works staff. Portions of the project that fall within the Caltrain right-of-way are managed by the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board.

#### *Embarcadero Road Improvement Project (Alma Street to Emerson Avenue)*

The project design is substantially complete. However, this project is on hold due to a utility gas line replacement project conflicting with proposed improvements in the project area. Staff plans to conduct outreach soon after the utility project is complete.

#### *Palo Alto Link*

Palo Alto Link's new operating hours, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., have helped improve the service's regular efficiency and usefulness, providing up to 418 completed trips per day in June, and averaging up to 3.7 trips per driver service hour. Beginning in September, all fare types will increase to \$4 per trip.

#### *Parking Updates*

A Downtown parking survey is circulating now through August 4 to gain input that will be used to evaluate additional parking permit types, explore customer enhancements such as validation, mobile payment, and potential parking time limit extensions. The City released a Request For Proposals (RFP) to hire a parking services vendor for the Downtown and University Avenue Parking District.

As of July 1, daily parking rates were adjusted in Downtown parking garages and lots to \$15.

Additionally, four Downtown garages will receive Automated Parking Guidance Systems similar to the Cal Ave. garage; the project is fully underway and expected to be complete by Spring 2025. Construction started in the Garage R (Alma/High).

### *Quiet Zones*

The Quiet Zones project is divided into two separate efforts: one for Palo Alto Avenue and another for the remaining crossings at Churchill Avenue, Meadow Drive, and Charleston Road. The consultant working on the Palo Alto Avenue Quiet Zone is developing 100% plans, specifications, and estimates. Staff will then seek permits to construct improvements from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Initial Quiet Zone evaluation was completed for at Churchill Avenue, Meadow Drive, and Charleston Road crossings. The consultant is developing conceptual plans for the proposed measures at these crossings. Staff plans to update the Rail Committee this fall.

### *Rail Grade Separation Project*

Following Council's recent direction on grade separation projects, staff is collaborating with Caltrain and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Agency staff to develop a cooperative agreement for the Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Documentation phase and funding from Measure B Grade Separation funds. City staff also worked with State representatives to successfully preserve the California State Transportation Authority (CalSTA) to secure the Transit and Intercity Capital Program funding awarded for the project, which was being considered for reduction/elimination in the Governor's budget.

### *Safe Routes to School*

On June 25, Safe Routes to School Staff and Public Works staff partnered to help facilitate a student-led Parks and Recreation Commission presentation supporting the creation of Palo Alto's first traffic garden at the Ventura Community Center. A traffic garden is a bike track course with tiny streets featuring miniature versions of familiar elements such as roundabouts, crosswalks, stop signs, and bus stops. These gardens are designed to give young children a safe space to get familiar with cycling fundamentals at their own pace. Construction is anticipated to begin this year.

### *Traffic Signal Operations*

Staff have continuously worked to improve traffic signal operations throughout the City with regular monitoring and adjustments to changing traffic conditions. Staff is in the process of procuring and updating the central operations system and intelligent transportation systems to incorporate current standards and technologies. Several capital projects are also in progress including infrastructure upgrades and optimization at existing traffic signals along Quarry Road between Palo Road and Vineyard Road, as well as other locations around the City.

## **Planning & Development Services Department**

### *Boards and Commissions Continued to Meet*

The Historic Resources Board recommended a historic category upgrade for a mixed-use building constructed in 1901 at 431-433 Kipling Street. The Planning and Transportation

Commission discussed the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park tentative map and recommended advancing an ordinance implementing state laws scheduled to be presented to Council in August. The Architectural Review Board met to discuss and provide input on the Palo Alto Commons Planned Community and an update to the City's lighting standards and new bird-safe design standards.

### *Policy Development*

The City received a comment letter on July 9, 2024 from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) requesting additional minor refinements to the 2023-31 Adopted Palo Alto Housing Element. Staff met with HCD on July 15 to discuss the proposed refinements. The revised Housing Element was recirculated for public review from July 17 to July 25. HCD communicated to staff that it will issue another letter regarding refinement or certification on an accelerated timeline following the end of the public review period. Staff anticipates HCD will conclude its review in mid-August.

An RFP for the San Antonio Road Area Plan (Area Plan) was issued on June 20 and will close on September 4. Staff anticipates evaluating proposals and presenting a recommended consultant in the late fall/early winter. In late June, an RFP for the Seismic Hazard Identification Program closed, and evaluations are underway. Staff anticipates presenting a recommended consultant in the fall and initiating the project later this year.

In July, staff began testing a preliminary portal for the Rental Registry Program. Following a series of property owner notifications and a community information session on August 22, the first open registration is expected to begin on October 1.

### *Development Services Trial, New Offering, and Pilot Program*

**BuildCheckAI:** The department continues to explore opportunities to make the review process more efficient, including researching and understanding new technologies. Staff completed a 60-day trial with BuildCheckAI, a company with a software that uses artificially intelligent technology to assess application submittals for completion. The trial concluded on July 17 and assessed three types of projects: new single-family homes/accessory dwelling units/accessory structures, single family residential alterations or additions, and residential bathroom or kitchen remodels. Staff uploaded the submitted documentation of approximately 66 Building Pre-Applications to assess accuracy, speed, and effectiveness. Staff is assessing the results of the trial, conducting a cost and benefit analysis, and determining next steps.

**Instant Permits:** As of July 1, licensed contractors can obtain an [instant permit for kitchen and bath remodels](#) for residential single-family, ADU, or duplex kitchen or bath remodels within the existing footprint and that do not involve additions to fixture count or equipment. Kitchen and/or bath remodels in existing homes are one of the most popular project types that the Development Center processes. This process does not require plan review and the permit issuance is instantaneous. Changes in placement of fixtures, equipment, and number of outlets

is allowed; however, projects involving changes to walls, windows, doors, or structure would need to through the Pre-Application Process.

**Over-the-Counter Pilot:** On August 1, a pilot over-the counter permit program for eligible residential mechanical, electrical, and plumbing projects will be launched to improve the permitting experience. This new effort offers applicants the ability to meet with a dedicated plan review team in-person or virtually and obtain permits for a range of eligible home projects. This program will support permitting residential sustainability projects and other single-family home renovations with ease; enhancing customer service by reducing the processing time needed for property owners seeking to advance eligible projects. Stand-alone electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permits for equipment or systems associated with single-family structures and individual units within multi-family structures are eligible for the program. Staff will compare permit processing times and customer satisfaction across projects processed regularly and those participating in the pilot program for areas of improvement and determining future offerings.

## **Police Department**

### *National Night Out*

On Tuesday, August 5, the Police Department is hosting their annual National Night Out at two concurrent at Eleanor Pardee Park and Bol Park. At both locations, there will be games, emergency vehicles on display, and public safety staff to chat with residents. Consistent with prior years, staff will also visit resident-hosted block parties around town.

### *Recruitment*

Over the summer, the Department hired four new officers, who will soon begin the police academy, three new dispatchers, and two new professional staff members.

### *Traffic Team*

The two newest members of the traffic team are in the process of completing motorcycle training and should be visible around town by the end of August.

## **Public Works Services Department**

### *Capital Improvement Program Projects*

In late June, prefabricated restrooms were installed at Ramos, Rinconada, and Boulware parks. Remaining onsite work includes concrete and asphalt paving, site utilities and connections, and minor planting and irrigation. Work at the restroom sites in Rinconada and Ramos parks is anticipated to be complete by August, while the Boulware Park restroom will be completed with the completion of the larger park improvement project anticipated later this fall.

Public Safety Building work continues including furniture installation, artwork, and testing of fire and other building systems. Temporary occupancy is anticipated for a phased move-in beginning September 2024.

In July, work started on the Downtown Automated Parking Guidance project at Garage R (Alma/High). The contractor will work in one garage at a time.

#### *Ongoing Parklet Program and Emerson Paving Work*

In June, staff sent out letters to all parklet owners describing the transition from the temporary to ongoing program including requiring submission of a pre-application and payment of fees by July 15. Paving and concrete work started on the first section of Emerson Street (Channing to Hamilton Avenue) on July 1 and completed by July 31. Work on the second section (Hamilton to Lytton Avenue) will start on August 1 and be completed by August 31.

#### *Horizontal Levee*

The Palo Alto Horizontal Levee Pilot Project construction is delayed at least a year due to higher construction bids than project funding available. During this time, staff will seek additional grant funding, explore project design changes, and rebid the project. This project will be a first of its kind to utilize treated wastewater for sea level rise adaptation to create a transitional brackish habitat on the Bayside of a future flood control levee. Even with the recent news of construction delays, Palo Alto's work is well ahead of other Bay Area wastewater plants in using horizontal levees as green infrastructure within larger flood control levee improvement projects and will be an early example for others to learn from.

### **FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT**

This report is informational only and items will be brought to the City Council independently, should they need additional fiscal or policy considerations.

### **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

Enhanced community engagement continued. Work is underway planning for the next two Neighborhood Town Hall meetings, applications are available for the Downtown Area Housing Plan Community Advisory Group and the inaugural Youth Climate Advisory Group, and three open surveys to gain input on key topic areas.

Website statistics for January – June 2024 include:

- 1,642,583 total pageviews
- 518,840 users
- Top 10 Visited Web Pages
  - o Home page
  - o Creek Monitor

- Content Search landing page
- Utilities Department
- News Articles
- Register for Activities & Classes
- Palo Alto Children's Theatre
- Outages
- Careers with the City of Palo Alto
- Meeting Agendas and Minutes

Other communications shared during the Council recess include:

- [Apply for the Downtown Housing Plan Community Advisory Group](#)
- [Community Fun & Festivities Continue in July](#)
- [Community Topics: Summer Engagement Opportunities](#)
- [Excessive Heat Warning and Heat Advisory](#)
- [Construction Updates – July & August](#)
- [Apply to the Inaugural Youth Climate Advisory Board](#)
- [In Case You Missed It: Recent Blog Highlights](#)
- [Revised Housing Element Public Comment Period Open](#)
- [Recent Global Tech Issue – City Response & Safety Message](#)
- [Heat Advisory and Excessive Heat Warning July 22 – 24](#)
- [Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing Streamlined Permit Launches Aug. 1](#)

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This report is for informational purposes only with no action required by the Council and is therefore not a project subject to CEQA review.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

None

## **APPROVED BY:**

Ed Shikada, City Manager