

*October 19, 2007
Palo Alto, CA*

FRANK'S WEEKLY MEMO

City Co-sponsors Transit Workshop October 23

The City of Palo Alto and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) will sponsor a community workshop on Tuesday, October 23, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Jordan Middle School regarding potential changes and improvements to local bus routes and shuttle services in the city. This community workshop is the first of three anticipated public meetings to obtain input from the community and interested stakeholder groups.

In August 2007, the VTA Board of Directors adopted a new Bus Service Operating Plan which will make major modifications to the current bus transit network. The plan will introduce Community Bus Service throughout Santa Clara County and feature smaller vehicles with an identity tied to the individual communities served. Line 88 in Palo Alto, serving South Palo Alto and Gunn High School, and a new Line 89, serving the Stanford Research Park, will be Community Bus routes. In an effort to meet the transportation needs of Palo Alto, the City and the VTA have initiated this follow-up study of local transit services. Results of the study will be reported to the VTA Board of Directors and City Council in December.

4 Solar Homes Tour Well Attended

Electric meters ran backwards on Saturday, October 6, when Palo Alto residents demonstrated their electric and hot water solar systems as part of a national Solar Homes Tour presented by the American Solar Energy Society. Organized locally by the Palo Alto non-profit Acterra, with sponsorship from the City of Palo Alto Utilities (CPAU), the tour attracted over 225 attendees who visited ten homes throughout Palo Alto neighborhoods.



Tour participants viewed a variety of installations, including solar panels mounted on flat roofs, such as Eichler and Mackay style homes, while others were located on the ground and on a trellis. One resident's home included solar panels that have been heating water since the 1980's, while others

showed how solar energy supports a greenhouse – and even an electric car! Solar home hosts enjoyed sharing their experiences and information about solar energy. Mike, one solar home host, commented, “I think we must have had 100+ visitors at my house, and most were very seriously considering adding solar power to their houses. I even learned some things about my PV system from a contractor that stopped by.”



Before the afternoon tour, Acterra and CPAU presented a Solar Energy Workshop at City Hall where 130 people learned how photovoltaic (PV) systems work, how solar thermal systems provide hot water, and how rebates – including those from the City of Palo Alto Utilities – can help with financing. Outside, the Civic Center plaza was filled with people talking to vendors, whose demonstrations ranged from a solar oven that boils water in 20 minutes to home energy efficiency consultants, along with installers of both PV and solar hot water

systems. For more information about the vendors who participated, contact Acterra at (650) 962-9876 x 316.

Oak Trees Imperiled by Sudden Oak Death and Beetles

Given numerous calls regarding diseased oak trees in Palo Alto, the City's Planning Arborist Dave Dockter has provided information regarding "sudden oak death" (SOD), an oak tree epidemic killing populations of coast live oak, black oak and tanoak trees at an unprecedented rate throughout California.

Trees already stressed by environmental and biotic factors are usually the ones that fall victim to a fungus. After being weakened by the fungus, the tree then succumbs quickly to opportunistic beetles. The beetles strike rapidly, resulting in irreversible decline and can die from within months to two years. Dave says “beetle impact can appear quickly. Without warning symptoms, it's as if a shotgun blast shot hundreds of tiny holes in the trunk and scaffold branches, with red and white ooze exuding.” There have been SOD deaths reported in Palo Alto Foothills Park, and it is being monitored by Parks staff. As in most Bay Area counties, Santa Clara County is under a State quarantine restriction, prohibiting movement of oak firewood over county lines.

WHAT YOU CAN DO - According to the University of California Cooperative Extension in Marin and the California Oak Foundation, proper care can help



Designates an item related to one of the City Council's "Top 4" Priorities.

prevent Sudden Oak Death and ambrosia bark beetle attacks around specimen oaks in the Palo Alto landscape. The City of Palo Alto has prepared a ***Best Management Practices for Sudden Oak Death*** handout, available on the web site at <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/environment/default.asp> under Environmental News. The practices are consistent with State of California and County of Santa Clara/San Mateo regulations currently in effect. The handout is also available at the Development Center.

Planning Department Receives Technology Award

On October 2, 2007, the California Chapter of the American Planning Association (CCAPA) presented its technology award to City of Palo Alto Planning Department staff for the Parcel Report, a computer-generated compilation of many characteristics of a parcel that property owners, real estate professionals, architects, staff and others may be interested in knowing. Some of the characteristics include lot size, floor area allowance, site coverage, flood zone and historic status.

Following the award luncheon at the CCAPA Conference in San Jose, City staff from the Departments of Planning, Public Works and Utilities as well as the Architectural Review Board (ARB) Chair, presented a session entitled "Palo Alto's Green Programs." The session was well attended by planners from across the state. In addition, the Planning Department staff presented "The Missing Link: Integrating Transportation and Land Use Planning." For more about the presentations and current Planning Department projects, visit the City's web site at www.cityofpaloalto.org/depts/pln/default.asp and click on Planning and Transportation Issues of Interest – Oct 2007.

