

SARATOGA NEWS

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MIX OF 99 PROJECTS ON CIP FUNDING LIST APPROVED BY COUNCIL

*City accepts Civica's bid
to design a new website*

By BRIAN BABCOCK

The Saratoga City Council went forward at its latest meeting and adopted the 2008-09 fiscal year Capital Improvement Plan, which contains a mix of 99 funded and non-funded projects.

The list contains projects for city facility improvements, parks and trails upgrades, street repairs and resurfacing and safety and traffic-calming landscaping. Of those projects, 42 were added this year after several discussions with residents during public meetings.

All 42 projects were reviewed under the California Environmental Quality Act, which requires all development projects be reviewed for their potential effect on the environment. Thirty-nine of the projects were considered exempt, public works director John Cherbone told the council.

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Photographs by George Sakkestad



The candidates for the two open Saratoga City Council seats this fall are (top, from left) Ailene Kao and Emily Lo, and (bottom, from left) Howard Miller and Susie Nagpal.

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Council

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Before the council unanimously approved the CIP budget, Councilwoman Aileen Kao expressed her concern with the 13 non-funded roadway safety projects on the list and asked Cherbone what the next step was in finding funding for them.

"Some of these projects are related to quality of life issues and some of these basically are traffic calming [projects]," Cherbone said. "In the near future we may come back after engaging the neighbors of these areas, and we may come back and say they should be removed because there wasn't support for those."

Councilwoman Kathleen King added that the plan is to hand the list of roadway projects over to the traffic and safety commission and have them prioritize the projects, as it does every year.

In other business, the council also accepted a bid from Civica, a consulting, software and managing services company, to design and host the city's new website.

During a May council meeting, "council indicated that the design

of the current website is out of date and a poor reflection of the city," said administrative analyst Crystal Morrow. Morrow said that during the discussion the council stated it wanted a website with a classier appearance that would serve as a visual representation of the city and promote Saratoga while allowing for easy navigation through the site.

In a report to the council, city staff stated that Civica has promised the website will be up and running within 16 to 20 weeks at a one-time cost of \$46,790. Hosting and supporting services would cost the city \$5,910 if the council chose to put that into the contract.

Councilwoman Jill Hunter said she would like to see the city reach out to residents and ask for their help in building the community website. Hunter said she was pleased that the city is moving forward with an updated website.

"I feel very strongly that this is a valuable tool in promoting our city," Hunter said. "We have so many wonderful things for people to come see, and I think that if we have a wonderful website it will be well worth the money because it will bring people in; they'll know where to go and understand what we got to offer."

Teacher

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it as I do, they'd understand the immigration issue better. It's a humanitarian problem.

"Many people just know that there are 11 million illegal immigrants in the U.S., but they don't know the individuals. The ones that immigrate here, they're the ones that aren't afraid to change their lives, that bring something to their lives."

Years ago Lynch taught a student from Mexico who was disabled because he was stricken with polio as a baby. Whenever he wrote on the chalkboard, he had to use one arm to help his other arm write.

One day the student asked Lynch if she could help him find a doctor to fix his arm. "I said, 'Oh yeah, sure!' And when I got home I was like, 'Why did I say that?'"

Nevertheless, Lynch got on the Internet and e-mailed hospitals to find a surgeon. She received a message back from O'Connor Hospital, a not-for-profit Catholic hospital in San Jose that could provide a surgeon to reset her student's arm for free.



Photograph by George Sakkestad

ELD teacher Roberta Lynch works with student Carlos Chavarin at the board. Carlos is from Mexico.

What causes Lynch to be so charitable and empathetic with her students?

"I get up early and step on the cat, and then I yell at my son and feel better," she joked. But seriously, she said, "I try not to complain and look for what my students are doing right. I think it's really easy to find what is wrong and find fault in everything. With my students I try to find what they're doing good, even if they're being monsters, and then they react better."