



# The Saratogan

Fall 2010

## Building Capital in Saratoga

The recent economic recession has had a significant impact on the entire nation and caused some of the most difficult budget challenges the City has faced. Despite the downturn, Saratoga will still be able to “build capital” this fiscal year by investing in its infrastructure (streets, parks and trails, facilities, and administrative projects, such as telecommunications and information technology). Known as “capital improvements”, infrastructure projects generally have a lifespan of at least 5 years at a fixed location.

The City funded a number of projects in its Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Budget for fiscal year 2010/11 with funding from previous budget surpluses and outside sources, such as grants and state allocations. One source of funding that the City has benefited from has been the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Federal stimulus funds).

Although capital projects may not produce a monetary return like traditional investments, they provide dividends in the areas of safety, convenience, and quality of life. While maintaining smooth City operations is the direct output of capital improvements, the positive outcomes are much more widespread:

- Capital projects help ensure that residents can safely and conveniently travel in and out of the City, which influences property values since many residents value the ability to travel from their homes to work, school, and other important destinations.
- Keeping City streets free of potholes, clean, and beautiful makes Saratoga a more attractive place to visit and makes the City’s restaurants and shops more accessible, which in turn stimulates the local economy.
- The City’s recreational opportunities, including its parks and trails, increase the quality of life of residents and make Saratoga a desired community in which to live.
- Capital projects help reduce unemployment and support local businesses, since many projects are contracted out to local and regional companies.



*Construction of a pathway in El Quito Park*

Read more about ways in which the City is building capital in Saratoga in this issue of the Saratogan, including the revitalization of the Joan Pisani Community Center, the CaliforniaFIRST property assessment clean energy program, and Saratoga Prospect Center improvements.

## Joan Pisani Community Center is Dancing!

The Saratoga School of Dance is now with the Recreation Department and there is a noticeable change at the Joan Pisani Community Center! The Saratoga School of Dance is now holding more than 30 weekly classes at the Community Center, including Tap, Ballet, Tiny Tots Dance, Hula, and more! The Community Center is dancing on Monday through Saturday. For more information, call (408) 868-1249 or visit [www.saratoga.ca.us/recreation](http://www.saratoga.ca.us/recreation).



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## CaliforniaFIRST - Investing in Green

Later this year, Saratoga residents will be able to take advantage of a new resource to help them reduce their impact on the environment. The City, along with the rest of Santa Clara County and 14 other California counties, will be participating in a pilot Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program called CaliforniaFIRST. The pilot is funded by a State Energy Program grant, part of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act.



CaliforniaFIRST will allow property owners in Saratoga to voluntarily finance clean energy improvements on their homes, including insulation, double-paned windows, and renewable energy. Participating property owners then pay the funds back as a line item on their property tax bill with repayment terms up to 20 years, depending on the life of the energy improvements. If the property is sold, the repayment obligation transfers to the new owner.

PACE financing makes it more feasible for property owners to invest in clean energy improvements, which has made it an important tool in minimizing climate change. Furthermore, PACE programs spur development of green jobs by increasing the demand for energy efficiency and renewable energy goods and services.

After the initial pilot phase, CaliforniaFIRST is scheduled to be launched on a statewide basis by the end of the 2010 calendar year. CaliforniaFIRST's large service area offers lower implementation costs for municipalities than would be available through smaller programs. Additionally, CaliforniaFIRST operates independently of participating cities and counties by providing all the necessary administrative and financial services for residents enrolled in the program. More information is available online at [www.californiafirst.org](http://www.californiafirst.org).

## Saratoga Prospect Center Improvements

The third and final phase of improvements to the Saratoga Prospect Center (formerly North Campus) will begin in 2011. Renovations to the facility started in 2007, when the City Council funded a project to remodel the Grace Building (previously the Administration Building). Then in 2008, the City completely renovated Friendship Hall (formerly Fellowship Hall) and demolished two dilapidated buildings and installed landscaping at the site.

This last stage of improvements will be focused on increasing the safety and visibility of the City facility and will include a new monument sign, safety and parking lot lighting, repaving of the parking lot, and relocation of the driveway. The City will also be installing motorized projection screens in both buildings at Saratoga Prospect Center and adding an integrated sound system in Friendship Hall.

This project is expected to increase rentals at the Saratoga Prospect Center. Work should begin by spring 2011 and be completed by fall 2011.



*Saratoga Prospect Center*

## Get to Know your Waste Hauler

Saratoga has an exclusive recycling, green waste, and garbage hauling agreement with West Valley Collection & Recycling (WVC&R), this means that WVC&R is the only waste hauler authorized to serve the City of Saratoga. As the City's exclusive waste hauler, WVC&R offers a wide variety of services. For example, WVC&R accepts household universal waste (like batteries, motor oil, and fluorescent bulbs) and electronic waste at its drop off center. Residents can also arrange to have bulky items or additional garbage picked up at their curb. For more information, visit at [www.westvalleyrecycles.com](http://www.westvalleyrecycles.com) or call (408) 283-9250.



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## Annual Tree Lighting is Coming!

Save the date for the Annual Tree Lighting on November 26, 2010. Each year, the City celebrates the holidays with a tree lighting ceremony in Blaney Plaza. The tree lighting ceremony is a festive way for families to mark the start of the holiday season. Following the tree lighting, the Saratoga Chamber of Commerce hosts an open house of Village businesses that gives event attendees the opportunity to start their holiday shopping and discover the wonderful stores in downtown Saratoga. Many businesses offer free samples or hot drinks to keep shoppers warm as they explore the Village. Check the City of Saratoga website at [www.saratoga.ca.us](http://www.saratoga.ca.us) for more information in October.



Attendees at Annual Tree Lighting



## Ask Jana

Got Code Enforcement questions? Ask Jana! Send your questions to Jana Rinaldi at 13777 Fruitvale Avenue, Saratoga CA 95070 or by email to [jrinaldi@saratoga.ca.us](mailto:jrinaldi@saratoga.ca.us).

Dear Jana,

I'm thinking about adding an outdoor kitchen in my backyard. Can you tell me what the City regulations are related to backyard kitchens?

Kitchen Kelly

*Dear Kelly,*

*Permits are required for outdoor kitchens and may be obtained from the Building Division. The Building and Planning Counters are open Monday through Thursday between 7:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. at City Hall. When you visit the Building Counter, be sure to bring a site plan that includes all buildings and trees on the property, as well as the proposed location of the outdoor kitchen. Generally, permanent outdoor cooking devices or structures are not allowed in the property setback (6 feet from the property line and no more than 8 feet tall). Anything that is not in compliance with our City Code would need to be removed. For additional information, call the Community Development Department at (408) 868-1222 or visit the City website at [www.saratoga.ca.us](http://www.saratoga.ca.us).*

*Jana*

Dear Jana,

When I was a kid, we had a tree house in our backyard. I loved playing in the tree house with my brothers and our friends. Now that my son is getting old enough to enjoy a tree house, I've been thinking about putting a tree in our back yard. Before I build anything, can you tell me what the City's Code says about tree houses?

Tree House Tim

*Dear Tim,*

*There are several things to consider when building a tree house. First, the City does not permit tree houses to be built higher than fifteen feet or within the property setback (6 feet from the property line and no more than 8 feet tall). Second, you will need to contact our City Arborist for a Tree Encroachment Permit to ensure that the tree house won't cause damage to tree or be constructed in the root zone or dripline of a protected tree. You can contact the Community Development Department at (408) 868-1222 or the City Arborist at (408) 868-1276 for additional information about tree houses.*

*Jana*

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## Remembering Councilmember Susie Vedantham Nagpal

City staff, Council members, and Commission members of the City of Saratoga are deeply saddened by the loss of Susie Vedantham Nagpal, who passed away in the early morning of May 13, 2010. We extend our deepest condolences to Susie's family, friends and colleagues.

In December 2008, Susie was sworn in as a City Council member by her father, who administered the oath of office. Susie distinguished herself on the Council by the thoughtful and considerate questions she posed on matters of policy and her natural tendency to seek understanding of others' opinions and work toward compromise on challenging decisions. Her warm smile, considerate manner of speaking, attention to detail and keen interest enlivened discussion and helped forge cooperation among her Council colleagues.

Prior to her election to the City Council, Susie served on Saratoga's Planning Commission, from 2003 to 2008. During her tenure on the Planning Commission, Susie embodied and demonstrated her deep values of listening, appreciating and understanding differing perspectives, developing consensus and seeking solutions to often complex issues. As Susie noted in her application for the Planning Commission, she believed there is always an answer!

In addition to her many duties as City Council member and Commissioner, Susie had a thriving career as a consultant, working for an environmental engineering firm. Susie held a B.S. in Engineering from San Jose State University, an M.S. in Environmental Management from the University of San Francisco, and numerous professional registrations and certifications. These qualifications, and her long-time experience in the field proved invaluable in both realms - public service and private business.



*Councilmember Susie Nagpal*



*City Manager Dave Anderson with Susie Nagpal*

Susie's deep commitment to her family and community was evident to all with whom she interacted. She immediately put others at ease with her keen interest in a broad range of topics, and her ability to relate to and draw out people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Her recent absence from City Hall and around the community has been deeply felt by all of us. We have solace in knowing she left a legacy of kindness and strong community values that will carry forward into the future.

Donations can be made to the Bonnie Addario Lung Cancer Foundation in Susie's honor by visiting [www.lungcancerfoundation.org](http://www.lungcancerfoundation.org).