A Look at the City’s Strategic Initiatives

Originally adopted in 2009, Redwood City’s Strategic Plan provides enduring statements of the critical and ongoing work of the City to accomplish the mission of “Building a Great Community Together”. Under Council direction, the Strategic Plan has evolved over time and in 2016 the Council added Housing as a strategic initiative. The Plan’s seven initiatives ensure department objectives align with the City Council’s vision. The adopted strategic initiatives are community building and communication, community for all ages, economic development, government operations, housing, public safety and transportation. Last year, the City received community input from the Redwood City Conversations process, where nearly 300 residents and business owners took part in one of eight events to discuss the City’s future. Comments received at these events echoed the City’s Strategic Initiatives and include: support affordable housing programs, enhance mobility, increase City park and public spaces for community enjoyment and multipurpose uses, maintain a small town feel and ensure inclusiveness. For a list of all the themes discussed during the Redwood City Conversation process, go to www.redwoodcity.org/redwoodcityconversations.

For more information, go to www.redwoodcity.org/calendar

This newsletter provides various updates on several of the City’s Strategic Initiatives.
Are you a Redwood City resident? Passionate about City parks, senior programs, cultural and art programs, affordable housing, architecture standards or know someone who is? The City will seek volunteers for a variety of Boards, Commissions and Committees (BCCs) this March. Twenty-eight seats are open! Join other Board, Commission and Committee volunteer members by shaping policy initiatives and services affecting the community.

Submit your interest by going online to the City’s website. Interested community members can fill out the form, select which BCCs they are interested in, and list any relevant experience. The form and more information about each Board, Commission and Committee is online at www.redwoodcity.org/bccinterest.

The City Council made evaluating a local minimum wage a priority to help assist low wage earners with the high cost of living in Redwood City. The City Council is considering establishing a $15 per hour minimum wage in Redwood City by 2019, faster than the State of California’s approach of $15 by 2022. If implemented, all businesses with employees working within the geographic boundaries of Redwood City would be subject to paying the local minimum wage for employees working two or more hours a week in the City. Over the last 4 months, City staff and the City Council have conducted outreach to business owners and residents about the proposed increase to the local minimum wage. City staff will present the input received from an online business survey, business visits, twelve business and stakeholder group meetings, and one community meeting to the City Council’s Finance and Audit Sub-Committee in early March. Following the Committee discussion, the City Council will consider adopting a minimum wage ordinance at their March 26 City Council meeting.

Community members interested in sharing their input can email the City at localminimumwage@redwoodcity.org. For more information go to www.redwoodcity.org/minimumwage.
The City approved a contract with SERA Architects to conduct a Downtown Parks Site Assessment and Feasibility Study. The study will review a number of City owned parcels in the Downtown area for a new downtown park. Once City staff better understands opportunities and constraints, such as utilities, underground infrastructure, and existing parking agreements, the City will seek public input on the most feasible parcels for conversion to a community park.

Look out for more details and ways to share your thoughts in the coming months. For information on this effort, go to www.redwoodcity.org/parks.

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For more information on the project and the master planning process, including upcoming public meetings, go to www.redwoodcity.org/CityYMCAproject.

Downtown Park Assessment and Feasibility Study

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Fair Oaks Branch Library Expansion

The Fair Oaks Branch Library is expanding and currently undergoing renovations. This project increases the library from 3,200 square feet to 3,800 square feet. Once complete, the library will offer new programs, a new educational play area for children, new amenities for all to enjoy, and more.

County of San Mateo Measure K funds, with additional funding support from the City of Redwood City and the Redwood City Library Foundation are supporting this project. In early January, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved $500,000 in additional Measure K funds for the Fair Oaks Library renovation and expansion. The County previously approved Measure A funds to aid the library and its programs in 2013. As part of the Fair Oaks Branch Library renovation, the City is paying for new furniture for the public to enjoy and modifications to existing furniture, as well as a portion of the early childhood learning installation. The Redwood City Library Foundation is funding technology for the new teen space and helping fund other expenses. The Fair Oaks Branch Library is under construction and currently closed. The new renovated library will reopen in early June 2018, in anticipation of the Library’s Summer Learning Challenge. During construction, limited library services will be available at the adjacent Fair Oaks Community Center.

For additional details, go to www.redwoodcity.org/fairoaksexpansion.
In 2015, the City Council approved three approaches to support affordable housing in the community, including: increasing the overall supply of housing, supporting programs and new regulations aimed to allow existing Redwood City residents to “stay in place”, and creating new funding sources and incentives to produce new affordable housing.

To support these significant goals, a number of affordable housing efforts are underway and more are coming up for Council consideration soon.

Most notably, beginning this March, the City, in partnership with Redwood City 2020, the County’s Home For All initiative and the Library Foundation, will co-host a series of community dialogues on housing named Our Community: Housing and Our Future. You are invited to join others to learn about trends and what is happening with housing in our community and share your perspectives. These discussions will inform the City Council as they discuss and consider housing related policy changes this spring.

Please consider joining us for one or all of these opportunities to discuss this important issue facing our community. For event details, go to www.redwoodcity.org/ourcommunityandhousing.

In an effort to share more about this important topic, here are some actions underway or recently completed to help support affordable housing in our community.

**INCREASING AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

- The new affordable housing development on City-owned property at 707 Bradford continues to move forward. This project will generate 117 very-low senior affordable units, include a space for a day care center and more. For details on this project, go to www.redwoodcity.org/bradford.

- Recently, the City Council approved new Accessory Dwelling Unit requirements to make it easier to build small units constructed in residential areas of the City. An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is a smaller living unit on a property that has a single-family residence. It is complete with its own kitchen and bathroom facilities. Common names for an ADU include in-law unit, secondary unit, and backyard cottage. For more details on this go to www.redwoodcity.org/adu.

- The City Council revised the Downtown Precise Plan and required that 375 units of 2,500 housing units be affordable housing.

- This May the City Council will consider establishing affordable housing requirements in developments, also known as inclusionary housing (based on new state law that will allow for this).

- In an effort to share more about this important topic, here are some actions underway or recently completed to help support affordable housing in our community.

- This spring, the City Council will consider funding guidelines to begin to allocate funding from the Affordable Housing fund to support affordable housing in the community.

**CREATING NEW FUNDING SOURCES TO SUPPORT AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

- The City Council recently held a public hearing and took initial steps to regulate short-term rentals (AirBnB and others), and dedicate the transient occupancy tax revenue generated to the City’s affordable housing fund. Redwood City is the first community in the region to dedicate taxes generated by short-term housing to support affordable housing.

- The Council also approved affordable housing impact fees to help pay for the creation of new affordable housing in our community. This action requires new residential and commercial development to pay fees to support affordable housing.

- This spring, the City Council will consider minimum rental lease terms and renter relocation assistance recommendations which were first approved by the Housing and Human Concerns Committee.

**NEW PROGRAMS AND NEW REGULATIONS AIMED TO ALLOW EXISTING REDWOOD CITY RESIDENTS TO “STAY IN PLACE”**

- On March 26 the City Council will consider minimum rental lease terms and renter relocation assistance recommendations which were first approved by the Housing and Human Concerns Committee.