

Fall 2009



Neighborhood Note

For a full version of this newsletter, please go to our current web site: srjcnighbors.org



JCNA BOARD

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- Vice President-Eric Stephens
- Secretary-Curt Hayden
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- Representatives:
- Susan Curry
- Jessica Diaz
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Boundaries of the JCNA

- Mendocino Ave.
- Lewis Rd.
- Franklin Ave. PacificAve.
- Fourth St.
- College Ave.

Contact Information

JCNA,
P.O.Box 1928,
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Anuncio en espanol, pagina 4

BICYCLE BOULEVARD AN OPPORTUNITY!

**Eric Stephens-Dexter Street
Tom Bahning-Slater Street**

In April, the Santa Rosa City Council approved the 6 month long test installation of the first bicycle boulevard in the county, on Humboldt Street between Lewis Road and 5th Street. This bicycle boulevard was envisioned in the 2001 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master plan, selected in part because it is a relatively safe and direct connection between the County Center and downtown Santa Rosa. Persistent public demand for safer, more bicycle friendly streets by groups such as the JCNA and the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition helped to convince city leaders to approve the project and implement the pilot project this past August.

A bicycle boulevard strives to create a bicycle-safe thoroughfare for bicyclists of all skill levels and age to utilize the street in conjunction with cars. Bicycling has become an increasingly important and attractive mode of transportation, especially

for short trips, and has seen a resurgence in popularity, especially in our neighborhood.

Key features of the boulevard are the new traffic circles at Silva, Carr, McConnell and Spencer Streets. Like the existing traffic circles on Spring, Stewart and Morgan Streets, they are designed to slow motorized traffic and eliminate the need for complete stops at the intersections for all vehicles. While the marked pedestrian crosswalks at some of these intersections were removed during this test phase, they will be reinstalled with the completion of the final project.



The city held the first of two public review meetings on Thursday, October 8th to obtain

comments from local residents on the test installation. City staff presented traffic data that showed a reduction in motor vehicle speed and volume as well as an increase in bicycle use on Humboldt Street



MENDOCINO AVENUE CORRIDOR PLAN AND THE CULINARY ARTS CENTER

Curt Hayden-Dexter Sreet

In 1975 the Junior College Neighborhood General Plan Amendment was adopted to “encourage a pedestrian-oriented...character where shops should front on streets rather than parking lots.” However, years of unfocused planning as demonstrated by the Safeway strip mall allowed the slow degradation of Mendocino Avenue and sparked the reorganization of the Junior College Neighborhood Association in 2004 and the Dan Burden Walkable Communities project in March of 2005. Thus began the long and winding road leading to the Mendocino Avenue Corridor Plan (MACP), which includes design guidelines, pedestrian enhancements and public improvements showing how to turn this stretch of Mendocino Avenue from College to Steele Lane into a more beautiful, safer and user-friendly space for residents, students and busi-



nesses. Picture widened sidewalks with benches, fountains, public art and a landscaped buffer between street traffic and pedestrians. Picture landscaped medians down the center of Mendocino and businesses fronting the street and side-walk dining. These are the goals of the MACP, which was approved by the City Council in May. This was a truly collaborative effort with input from neighbors, businesses, the City and the Junior College. The JC Neighborhood Association (JCNA) was happy to finally see this dream realized and we were ecstatic to learn that the JC planned to locate the new Culinary Arts Center on their lot near the corner of Mendocino and Carr (Personalized Auto remains on the corner). This appeared to be a match made in heaven's kitchen. The Culinary Arts Center with a restaurant open to the public and an inviting entrance on Mendocino Avenue (as required by the MACP) and an outdoor café with dining spilling onto the sidewalk.

Neighborhood representatives attended all meetings offered by the JC concerning the CAC and were eagerly awaiting the design of the Center. Alas, we learned on June 2 that the JC ignored our input and key MACP guidelines by placing the Culinary Arts Center entrance on the Carr Avenue side of the facility, and omitting both outdoor dining and a landscaping buffer along Mendocino Avenue,

In our meeting with JC officials in 2007, we received assurances that the JCNA would play an effective role in shaping the design of all projects proposed on the east side of Mendocino Avenue. Thus, it was a huge disappoint-

ment to learn we had been ignored again, resurrecting the bad memories of our frustrating experience during the planning and design of the JC parking garage. After additional meetings and a series of letters between the neighborhood and the City with the junior college, the JC did agree to reconsider some of our recommendations for green building features, a revised outdoor seating plan in the plaza along Mendocino Avenue, and other design changes. However we were just notified that none of our recommendations were approved; no solar, no composting, no permeable parking surface and the outdoor seating plans will remain unchanged. If you are as disappointed as we are about the JC's lack of cooperation with the neighborhood, please write a letter to the JC board of trustees, Don Edgar, Rick Call and Don Zumwalt, c/o SRJC, 1501 Mendocino Ave, Santa Rosa, CA 95401-4395.

We are proud to have such a fine academic institution in our neighborhood. But it is a shame that after all the years of hard work and money that our neighborhood has devoted to make the Mendocino Avenue Corridor Plan a reality, the first major building will fail to live up to the vision of that Plan.



NEED A TOOL? CALL THE TOOL LIBRARY!

Jenny Bard-Carr Avenue

We have an amazing resource right here in our own backyard. **The Santa Rosa Tool Library**, located at 611 Beaver Street, offers over 300 hand and power tools for landscaping and home repair, free of

charge. Yes, that's right! You can borrow a tool, take it home for four to seven days, and return it, at no charge. The tool library was founded by our neighbor Dustin Zuckerman who took his experience working in a library and created a tool library for the public good. He says it's "just like borrowing a book from your public library."

Here's what a customer says on the website:
"The Tool Library is a wonderful community service, and we really appreciate what you've done for those of us who occasionally need these kinds of tools, but don't want to spend \$40-50 (to rent a tool) for three hours. It was a big help, and we look forward to coming back!"

To check out the tool library, visit <http://bor-rowtools.org/> to see what tools are available, and call 576-0590 to

arrange a pickup day.

PS...The tool Library was awarded a City of Santa Rosa Merit Award for Neighborhood Enrichment.

since the start of the test period. Police department representatives reported on enforcement and outreach activities on the boulevard and a representative of the SRFD reported on his department's coordination and input on the traffic circle size and design. He also reported that the fire department has done driving tests on Humboldt to ensure that their trucks, including a hook and ladder rig, can navigate safely around the traffic circles as installed.

The approximately 140 meeting attendees then broke into small groups to provide comments to their respective table monitors. Comments were grouped into "what is working" and "what needs improvement" along Humboldt Street. The overall response was positive with the bulk of the comments noting the smoother, slower, and quieter traffic flow and the increase in cyclists. Suggestions for

improvement centered on the alignment and reinstallation of pedestrian crossings, better outreach and education efforts by the city to cyclists and motorists, revised street signage and surface markings, and better sight lines at the traffic circles.

While removing parking from Humboldt Street may have been suggested by one of the small groups assembled (as reported in the Press Democrat article about the meeting), the City

never proposed this idea or indicated that this was required or considered by the project designers. It was also suggested by some of the attendees that city staff cycle the route themselves at different times of the day to observe the new traffic flow and experience the boulevard themselves.

While there were a few calls to retreat back to the pre-bike boulevard configuration of the street, the overwhelming majority of attendees seemed pleased and proud of the city for initiating this project in our neighborhood.



The second and final public input meeting is scheduled for Thursday December 10 at 6 pm at the Steele Lane Community Center.

Comments can be directed prior to the meeting to Nancy Adams (the project manager) at 543-3910 or nadams@srcity.org.



LOOKING TO FINANCE A GREENER HOME?

Jessica Diaz–St.Helena Ave.

Consider the Sonoma County Energy Independence Program

In March 2009, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approved the Sonoma County Energy Independence Program (SCEIP). SCEIP provides financing to property owners so they can make energy efficiency, water conservation, and/or renewable energy improvements to their property.

Often the biggest obstacle to energy projects is the “up front” cost. SCEIP solves that problem. The program finances permanent energy improvements and the property owners agree to repay the program through their property taxes over five, ten, or twenty years. Because this is a tax assessment, not a loan, it stays with the property and can be

passed from one owner to the next. Recent Legislation (AB 920-Huffman) mandating that utility companies pay customers for excess generation from solar photovoltaic systems, make these investments even more attractive. There are a wide variety of projects approved under the SCEIP program. For example, a homeowner might replace a home’s windows, upgrade the wall and attic insulation, and seal leaky ducts, before installing a small solar system. This could conceivably be done for around \$20,000 (after solar rebates). Financed through SCEIP over 20 years, this would cost about \$2,000 per year in additional property taxes, or \$167 per month.

Residential owners are encouraged to have an energy audit performed on their property. This supports the principle of “First Reduce, then Produce,” meaning that producing “green” energy like solar is great, but is still wasteful if the property is poorly insulated. The cost of an energy audit can be reimbursed under the program.

For more info, check out www.sonomacountyenergy.org, call 521-6200 or visit the SCEIP storefront at 404 Aviation Blvd in Santa Rosa.



JCNA NOTEBOOK

New Website

Construction of a new JCNA website is in process. Meanwhile, go to srjneighbors.org

Neighborhood Bulletin Boards

The JCNA is working to install two outdoor community bulletin boards...one at Humboldt Park and the other on the north end of



Fremont School. Permission has been obtained from the appropriate officials and a funding request has successfully been made to the city’s community Advisory Board (CAB) and City Council.

.....Stay tuned for a future work party announcement. Direct any questions or comments to Tom Bahning at 525-1960.

The JCNA Newsletter is printed on recycled paper courtesy of the City of Santa Rosa

En Espanol

Se les invita a todos a tomar parte del crecimiento de nuestra comunidad unida, saludable, seguro y con consciencia ecologica. Si desean mas informacion a desean que hablemos can ustedes en espanol acerca de los articulos en este anuncio, llame a Julie al 579-3849. Todas estan incluidos!

JCNA MEMBERSHIP...PLEASE JOIN TODAY!

Your dues help protect our neighborhood and keep you informed. Dues paying members only can vote at general meetings. *For calendar year 2010*, please mail check payable to JCNA and this form to:

JCNA, P.O.Box 1928, Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Dues: \$10 Individual \$20 Household \$35 Business

I support JCNA and will make an additional donation of \$ _____

Name: _____

Business: _____

Address: _____

EMail: _____

Yes I want to receive neighborhood news email updates

Phone: _____