



## San Mateo Park Neighborhood Assn.

### FROM THE BOARD

HERE IT IS! Our once-a-year paper newsletter. For the rest of the year, news and updates will be offered via email, Nextdoor.com and via our website found at [www.sanmateopark.org](http://www.sanmateopark.org).

And speaking of news, read on... This issue is full of timely information about the imminent arrival of 4G & 5G cell infrastructure and proposed statewide zoning changes that could radically change housing density. The SMPNA has

also recently formed a new committee looking into improving security and neighborliness through various initiatives.

Your job is to ensure we can reach you and keep you up to date. Our website is the place to register your email address, find helpful info for new homeowners (see "Resident Guidelines"), AND to pay your annual dues via PayPal. Dues are always voluntary, and not a condition of membership, but we hope you'll consider contributing generously. Your tax deductible donations allow us to continue working for this healthy and beautiful place we all call home.

So Happy Spring to all! And if you find yourself inspired by what you're about to read, please consider joining our Board. We're always looking for new members. No pressure... just bring us your ideas or questions. We'd love to hear from you.

Sincerely,

San Mateo Park Neighborhood Association Board



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Trees & Islands .....	4
Safety & Security .....	4
Cell Towers UPDATE ....	5
Donor Lists .....	6 - 7
Donor Form .....	7
New Website .....	8
Fundraising Status .....	8

### HOUSING PRESSURE: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PARK?

Most of us have experienced severe traffic delays as commuters pass through our major interchanges (US 101, US 92, I280). An underlying cause of this congestion is the lack of affordable housing in our area, where we have great employment and educational opportunities that attract visitors, but scarce housing to support them. We experience the traffic issues often, but many of us don't personally see the housing shortage implications.

For example: From 2010 to 2016, San Mateo County added 79,000 new jobs, but fewer than 5,000 new housing units; these days, most of our "first responders" don't live here and won't be able to get here in a major emergency. Still, increased density of housing is a controversial remedy that local governments and their residents may not support.

Measures aiming to mitigate California's housing shortage

(continued on page 3)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<i>President:</i>	Virginia McIsaac
<i>Secretary:</i>	Margaret Handlery
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Dave Pearson
<i>Trees &amp; Islands:</i>	Linda Bogue
<i>Web &amp; Newsletter:</i>	David Long

## NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY AND SECURITY

Park safety and security depends on neighbors!

Attendees at our annual meeting in October rated Neighborhood Watch, safety, and security at the top among initiatives they wanted SMP-NA to facilitate. We heard you!

Revitalizing Neighborhood Watch in the Park is key. And the foundation for this is neighborliness: neighbors knowing neighbors and having each other's backs.

A terrific group of neighborhood volunteers, led by Steve Mayer and including Heather Falvey, Nancy Martin, Bob Baumann, Pat Hraba, and Joe Lanam aims to bolster the connections among Park residents that secure us all.

On the agenda already:

- Boosting Neighborhood Watch here, starting with a **neighborhood meeting at the Park School on Tuesday, June 11 at 7pm**. Save the date, come along! Find out what this program offers us all if we participate as a community.
- Neighborhood events, starting with a Park walk for fun and congeniality, with entertaining surprises planned along the route. Keep an eye out for more about this Fall gathering.

If this initiative resonates with you and you are interested in joining this important initiative, please let Steve Mayer know:

[sdmayer@sdmayer.com](mailto:sdmayer@sdmayer.com)

*When strangers start acting like neighbors... communities are reinvigorated.*

Ralph Nader

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR STREET TREES

Who owns our street trees? Who is responsible for maintaining them? Who is liable for damages to persons or property caused by them?

These are complicated questions and ultimately determined case-by-case. But here's what can be said in general:

It varies throughout San Mateo, but City staff has reviewed subdivision maps for the Park and determined that our sidewalks are easements for rights-of-way.

Trees located within City easements are the responsibility of the owner of the underlying property – the homeowner, in other words.

The exception is if the City planted the tree, in which case the City is responsible for it. 'Responsibility' here entails both maintenance and liability (although courts have a final say in liability cases).

Accordingly, considerations for Park homeowners include:

Even if you are impatient to plant new street trees in front of your home, consider the benefit of requesting trees and waiting for the City to plant rather than getting a permit to purchase and plant privately.

Uncertain who planted your tree? Inquire at the City Arborist's office (522-7420 [mfried@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:mfried@cityofsanmateo.org)) to find out if City records show it planted 'your' street tree(s). But these records go back only so far and then become spotty or non-existent. Where City records are incomplete, any street tree issues will have to be worked through with the City.

Be sure to get the required permit for any pruning you do on your street trees, because – regardless of who is 'responsible' for the tree -- homeowners who maintain a tree can be



*Deadwood sample among our live islands*

held responsible for damages to persons or property resulting from negligent maintenance. Best to have the City approve the work plan and the arborist so that you at least know these are professionally appropriate.

If you think your street tree poses a hazard, report it to the City Arborist's office (522-7420) or [mfried@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:mfried@cityofsanmateo.org)

### CROWDSOURCING CALL: MOST NEEDY CASES

Want to weigh in as we evaluate deadwood buildup on island trees (per article on page 4 - City is no longer doing this pruning)? We're looking for the worst of it. If you have candidates for Most Needy of deadwood clearance, please submit your nomination (s) to Linda Bogue: [linda7250@aol.com](mailto:linda7250@aol.com)

We'll prioritize the "winners" – the best of the worst - for SMP-NA-funded pruning. Our intent is to undertake this work in batches over the next few years as funds allow.



## HOUSING PRESSURE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

are working their way through State and local governments. In our State legislature, several bills (SB50 most prominent among many) would override local zoning jurisdiction to facilitate high-density residential development. Targeted as of now, for example, are areas with larger populations and their residential neighborhoods that are close to public transit nodes, jobs and good schools. San Mateo Park's R1A (single family) zoning quite likely would be encompassed.

The bills in play are not fully settled, but the sorts of State overrides under consideration include:

- Cities could not ban high-rise, multi-family developments in designated areas. For example, under SB50 (the bill farthest along in the legislature), our entire neighborhood is provisionally mapped as being near transit, job growth, or good schools. Therefore the Park's single-family residential designation and tight restrictions on density – height, floor area ratios, setbacks, for example— could be invalidated. Parking space requirements could be loosened.

These bills generally do not include robust measures insuring surrounding local infrastructure can sustain the housing density they enable.

While recognizing San Mateo needs more housing, the San Mateo City Council has gone on record opposing SB50 specifically, in part because it imposes a one size fits all solution without consideration of local conditions and needs.

At the same time, the City has been implementing measures to mitigate the housing shortage here. These include:

- Converting public property, including in our downtown, to affordable housing
- Focus on housing in the update to the General Plan 2040
- Support for shared housing programs
- Freeing up the restrictions on building accessory dwelling units

For detailed information about housing-related measures, please visit our website where you'll find links allowing you to explore the issues (pro and con) and a link to register your opinion with State Senator (and Park resident), Jerry Hill.

## FINANCE AT-A-GLANCE (CONTINUED FROM BACK COVER)

some watering of young trees, this cost may be lower. However, at our annual meeting last fall, we registered neighbors' preference for a focused effort to remove accumulated deadwood from our island trees — which the City is not doing — and this will add to our spending. (See related article, page 4.)

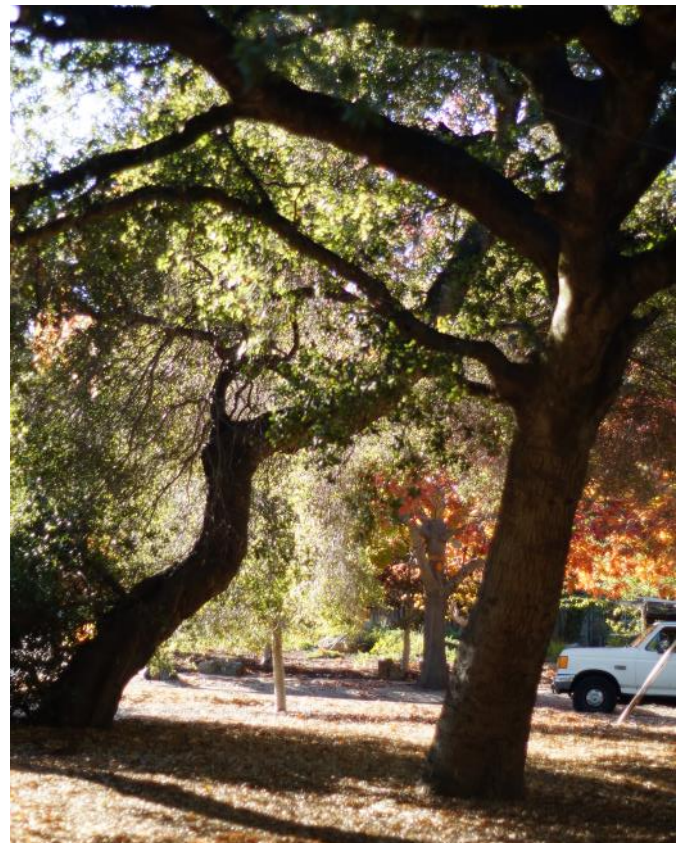
We currently have \$22,600 in the bank, almost one year's expenditures. This sum allows us to commit in advance for full year programs and special projects. Your contributions replenish our fund for next year's costs.

If you see a neighbor's name on our list of donors, please thank them for their efforts for the betterment of the park. And consider getting your name on the list for 2019.

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## VISIT OUR WEBSITE

- See and use live, clickable links from this newsletter to learn more about key topics.
- Explore the site for more information and links covering The Park (way back when and now) and the City
- Make your contribution online via PayPal



*One of our oak islands bathed in sunlight*

## STREET TREES & ISLANDS

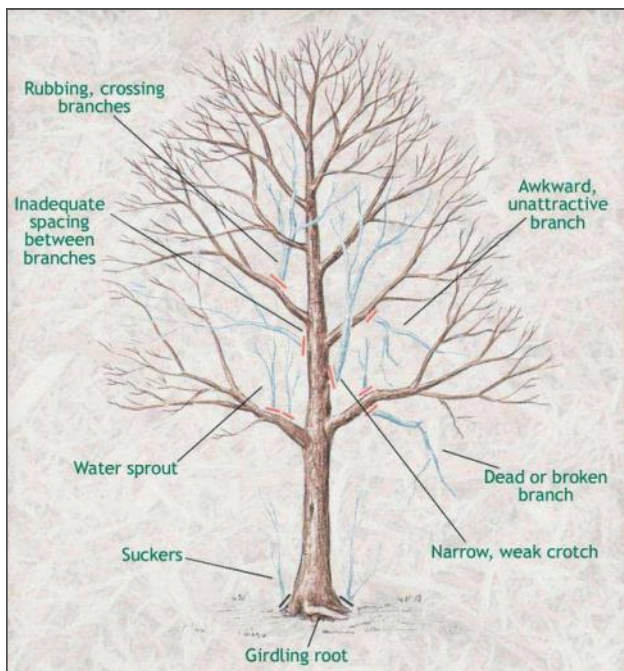
### City Not Pruning Trees

We've been informed that, due to budget constraints, the City will not prune street and island trees unless they pose a hazard. "Hazard" could mean a limb falls or a tree has major structural weakness. The message:

Although structural pruning for young trees is an important investment, it won't happen through the City.

Accumulated deadwood? Get used to it. But if you think your street tree poses a hazard, report it to the City Arborist right away: 650-522-7420 or [mfried@cityof-sanmateo.org](mailto:mfried@cityof-sanmateo.org).

*So now what?*



**Island trees:** We want our island trees to develop proper structure and don't want to see large deadwood buildups. This is where your dues contributions are critical, and where we likely will be deploying funds as these City cutbacks take their toll. Accordingly:

- In April, SMPNA identified and funded structural pruning for 31 young island trees that were due. Going forward, we will track new island trees for this care.

- In early 2000s, SMPNA arranged and funded pruning of our island trees for deadwood removal and proper structure. We're now looking at doing this again (see Crowd Sourcing Call on page 2).

We are grateful to the City's Parks Dept. for expert consultation, permitting, professional oversight, and handling the contracting for projects on City property that we want to pursue. The SMPNA is not structured to perform those functions, so without City support they would not happen.

**Street trees:** It's always an option for homeowners to prune street trees privately. The property and aesthetic values of attractive, healthy trees along a home's street frontage make this a solid investment – particularly pruning for proper structure at 4 – 7 years after planting.

Private pruning always requires a permit from the City's Managing Arborist. How to apply is covered on the City's website: [cityofsanmateo.org/3371/Heritage-Tree-and-Street-Tree-Permits](http://cityofsanmateo.org/3371/Heritage-Tree-and-Street-Tree-Permits)

Please also see the related article on page 4 about who's responsible for street trees in our sidewalk areas.

### Replacing The Park's Lost Trees

Like painting the Golden Gate Bridge, replanting the Park never stops

We hope you've noticed some of the 39 new trees planted by the City along our streets and on our islands this winter. Our islands alone received 17 trees, often one-offs replacing those lost to age or disease.

The entrance island at Clark and El Camino, however, got 8 incense cedars. They will reinforce the screen that the stand of redwoods along the island's El Camino frontage provides from street sight, sounds, and vehicle emissions.

We requested this replant because we've lost some mature redwoods there in recent years. By starting new trees now, we aim both to fill the gaps and hedge against further losses: that long expanse along El Camino is not an exposure we ever want to see open up!

Why not plant more redwoods? We would have liked to maintain species consistency, but the City is not planting redwoods now. They aren't doing well here and indeed are suffering throughout the State.

Incense cedars are a handsome alternative:

large, dense, evergreen and (bonus) nicely scented. You can see an impressive one on the island at the intersection of Warren, Crescent, and Greenwood.



*Incense Cedar - a recent replanting*



## CELL TOWERS UPDATE

In August, 2018, a new ordinance by the City of San Mateo controlling the installation of small cell tower equipment became effective. Your Board actively worked with the City on that ordinance to maximize City control over the appearance and placement of equipment, despite severe limitations established by FCC regulations. This ordinance also created a robust process for informing residents of applications, allowing for near-neighbor meetings as well as negotiations on placement and appearance. The Park is notorious for poor cell service. Our goal is to ensure that implementing the better service we need does not have an unattractive visual impact.

Your Board seeks to avoid the visual clutter of dense equipment on utility poles or on boxes located on our islands. We believe that in some circumstances, placing telecom equipment underground on an island could be a desirable approach, if the island does not have well-established trees with extensive root systems. Unfortunately, the City has deemed that undergrounding of the telecom equipment is infeasible due to the noise generated by cooling systems.

We're also interested in street light installations that house the needed auxiliary equipment inside the post and integrate the antenna with the lamp post design. Regardless of how we have felt about more street lighting for the Park, we might now prefer hidden equipment rather than boxes as large as 9 cu. ft hanging off utility poles in front of our houses.

We are monitoring what other cities have done regarding the placement of telecom equipment. Palo Alto has successfully required undergrounding of equipment—without violating their noise ordinance standards. We will continue to work with Public Works to ensure that the Design and Engineering Standards referenced in San Mateo's ordinance are effective in protecting the visual appearance of equipment.

Most experts expect that many more applications will be coming in soon as telecom firms upgrade their existing 4G networks and lay the groundwork for 5G. Telecoms' first choice is to spend as little money as possible, so we will continue to monitor applications for the Park and suggest ways that installation design standards could be improved.

For more information, you can visit the City's website: <https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/3865/Small-Cell-Infrastructure>

Note: If you get a notice in the mail of a small cell tower application on your street, please **request a meeting for neighbors within the 15 day response period**. Email us if you have any questions. Thanks!



*"Small Cell" equipment boxes and antenna added to existing pole in front of San Mateo High School*

*I've been to the Leaning Tower of Pisa. It's a tower, and it's leaning. You look at it, but nothing happens, so then you look for someplace to get a sandwich.*

Danny DeVito

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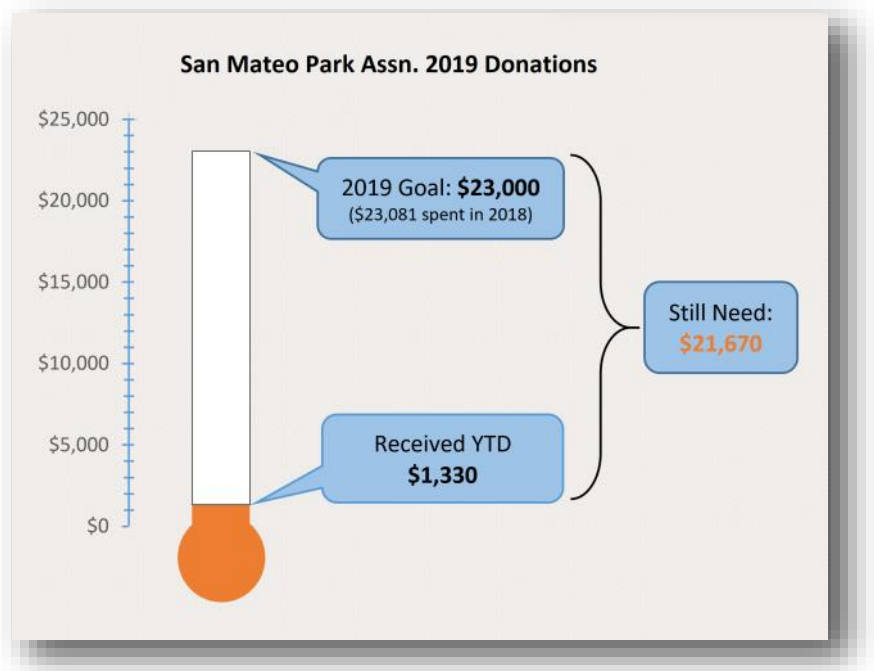
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*These donor lists include those who contributed in calendar year 2018.*  
*Our apologies if we've made any errors or omissions.*  
*Please email us if you catch a mistake. Thank you!*

### SAN MATEO PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION 2019 DUES

We offer PayPal for your convenience. Click on our direct link at: [www.sanmateopark.org/contribute](http://www.sanmateopark.org/contribute). Prefer a check (payable to SMPNA)? Please fill out the form below and mail to:  
**San Mateo Park Neighborhood Assn., P.O Box 1271, San Mateo, CA 94401**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email(s): \_\_\_\_\_

#### DONATION LEVEL

Supporter: \$50\_\_\_\_\_ McLaren: \$100\_\_\_\_\_ McLaren Patron: \$200\_\_\_\_\_ Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

Annual dues are voluntary and are not a condition of membership. Contributions are tax-deductible (Fed EIN 56-2631949) and are credited for recognition in the calendar year received. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Comments/Suggestions - email us at [board@sanmateopark.org](mailto:board@sanmateopark.org) or mail in your comments below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*If your address label on reverse of this page is incorrect, please mail or email us a correction*



## SMPNA FINANCE AT-A-GLANCE

Where your dues are put to work—

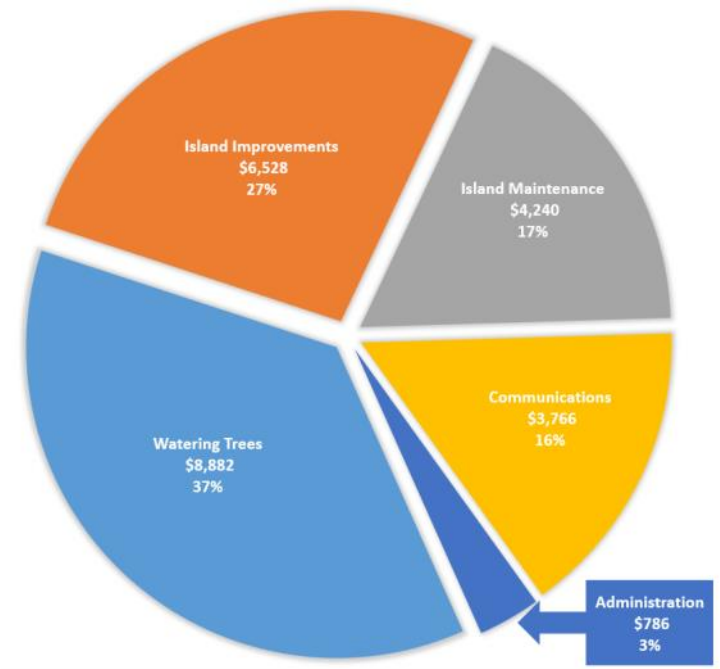
In 2018, you helped your Association accomplish its objectives to enhance the beauty and livability of San Mateo Park. We were able to increase our expenditures in 2018 to water young trees, rehabilitate islands, and fund increased maintenance frequency for our island grounds from 4 times to 6 times per year.

Overall, in 2018 we had expenses of \$24,200. The top three expenditure categories were island improvements (\$6,500), island maintenance (\$4,200), and watering young trees (\$8,900), totaling \$19,600.

We expected to incur a deficit during 2018. With a terrific end of year push, you and your neighbors contributed \$23,210 to our programs during 2018, keeping our deficit less than \$1,000. THANK YOU!

For 2019, we expect to spend approximately the same amount. Because the City is picking up

*(continued on page 3)*



Thanks to: **Linda Bogue** for trees/islands updates, **Dave Pearson** for financial and tower updates, **Virginia McIsaac & Margaret Handlery** for writing/editing/layout. **David Long** for website & newsletter.

And special thanks to our **generous residents** who support the efforts of the SMPNA!



SAN MATEO PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN.  
P.O. BOX 1271  
SAN MATEO, CA. 94401

