



# Parkmead Community Association

Fall 2005

## Walnut Creek General Plan Update Show of Support, Kaiser, Broadway Plaza

Thank you for your support in showing the City of Walnut Creek that the Parkmead community cares about the impact of development in the area near us and the anticipated increase in traffic on Newell and Lilac. We turned in a petition signed by more than 500 neighbors and 70 to 80 of us (standing room only) showed up on September 22 at the Planning Commission meeting as 17 or 18 neighbors spoke. The first 8 speakers covered specific points raised in our petition while others gave personal testimony to their concerns as residents of Parkmead. Friends of the Creeks and involved property owners also spoke. The City definitely knows we exist and care. Several commissioners and staff commented that it was one of the best-attended meetings on the General Plan so far and they were impressed with our organization and passion.

As in any political process there are many interpretations of how we did and whether anything will come of our efforts. It will take continued vigilance and participation in the process to make sure we are heard. The specific results of the meeting are being drafted and will be shared with us soon. Basically, we asked for height and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) limits in the entire Land Use Change Area #3 (area between Botelho, S Main, Newell and I-680) while the draft general plan had called for increases. The Planning Commission reached consensus to not change the height limits and Floor Area Ratios (FAR) in "Block A," the plot of land west of California Blvd – i.e. the Kaiser surface parking lot on Newell near the entrance to our community and the block including Pinky's. We

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## Parkmead Fall Pizza Meeting

It's time for our annual Fall meeting and pizza party on Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at Hillside Covenant Church. Come share pizza, conversation and ideas for the Parkmead Community Association. Our program will focus on Emergency Preparedness as presented by our own neighborhood team of certified emergency responders. We will also have "town hall" meeting covering issues of interest to the neighborhood and an opportunity for neighbors to let the board know of their issues. Board elections will also be held.

### Board Elections

We elect representatives to the thirteen-member Parkmead Board in November. It's a great way to get involved in the community and meet your neighbors. The Board meets monthly in the evenings, usually on a Wednesday. We hold 2 annual meetings for the community plus a summer block party. We work with the city and county on issues of interest and importance to the Parkmead neighborhood. We are a community organization; we are not a homeowners' association that enforces "covenants, codes and restrictions." If you are interested in serving on the board, contact a board member (see list on back). Or come to the meeting and get involved. There are seven district and six at-large representatives. We are especially in need of candidates in District 5 and 7 (see map) and some at-large reps. Some board members are "retiring" - so we need some new folks to get involved.

Pete Johnson, *President*

## Fall Pizza Meeting Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup>

Hillside Covenant Church  
2060 Magnolia Way

Emergency Preparedness  
Videos for Kids  
Free babysitting

6:30 Pizza

7:00 Meeting

8:00 Board Elections

Pizza and drinks provided

Desserts appreciated – (we need a few)

Meeting Downstairs

Parking OK in either lot; lower lot has easier access.

## Emergency Preparedness Program

Earthquakes, hurricanes and fires have caused major disasters around the globe and locally. California is long overdue for a major earthquake. After Katrina, authorities are now saying that we should be prepared to be without emergency or basic services for up to 10 days if a major disaster strikes. *Are you prepared? How can we help each other as a community?*

Dawn Kruger, Parkmead resident and CERT graduate, will be speaking at the November 14th Fall Pizza meeting. Attend and find out what CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) is all about, what the Parkmead CERT team does, and how you can be prepared and help in a major disaster. Your neighbors will be conducting a survey around mid November to help you be prepared, document who might have special needs during an emergency, and find out who might join our team.

**WC General Plan Update** — *Continued from page 1*

consider this compromise a victory in that many things in the General Plan tend to get approved as found in the draft. They did, however, agree to the proposed increases in “Block B,” the plot of land east of California Blvd. – i.e. the Albertson’s block across from Kaiser. Most importantly, they approved text to “add consideration of: view preservation and visual corridors, determine traffic modifications that could help traffic mitigation on Parkmead neighborhood, building envelopes, circulation plan, bike safety and access.” In addition they agreed to consider creek goals and land use regulations for Block A (west block) that help meet these goals. And finally they agreed to our proposal for a Specific Plan for Land Use Change Area #3, which means there will be more detail available for review and more public input from neighbors. These plans need city funding, not always an easy task but one we will pursue.

Our Development Committee and Board will monitor upcoming city meetings. Our Traffic Committee has already begun discussions with city staff on suggestions made in the petition and at the September meeting concerning traffic mitigation on Newell between California and I-680. Once the Planning Commission approves its version of the draft General Plan, it will go to the City Council in early 2006. We may need to return to a City Council meeting then to keep an eye on areas of concern to Parkmead and be ready to speak out one more time.

**Kaiser:** Several planning commissioners urged us to be in communication with Kaiser since they own a big chunk of the property on Newell between California and I-680 and would not mind owning more. They informed us that they have no immediate plans for building expansion (except remodeling the old Emergency Room on S. Main) but they definitely need more parking. The surface lot on Newell and the old office building behind the gas station on Newell are prime areas for that.

**Broadway Plaza Shopping Center:** As you may know, the expansion of this shopping area was initially part of the General Plan but was removed. They invited the PCA Board to have a representative at a forum they hosted on October 25 to explain their plans and seek our input as a concerned neighbor. Currently they own 24 acres including 9 acres for parking lots. While there are no definite plans yet for the shopping center, they are interested in expanding to include a third anchor store plus 30 to 40 small stores. The new anchor store would go at the corner on Broadway and Newell on the site of the two level parking garage and more stores would be added on the garage site. Some parking would be underground, but limited by the creeks under the area, and more would be added as a level on top of the new small stores. They are currently limited by Measure A height limits to 40’ to 50’ where the parking lot is now. They currently have 700,000 square feet of building space and want to increase that by 50% or about 350,000 more square feet. The current Macy’s Men’s store will also be redeveloped. Concerns over traffic were most prominent along with pedestrian friendly space and keeping view corridors open. They were open to suggestions, and one was to close the street in Broadway Plaza to traffic. More detailed plans will be available in early 2006 and there will be public hearings, which the PCA Board and committees will monitor and keep you informed.

**Pete Johnson, President**

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## Traffic Committee Update

Speeding cars, rolling stops, traffic congestion, cut-through drivers and a lack of safe pedestrian environments have long been a concern for residents who live along Lilac and Newell, and for parents whose children walk to school. Our neighborhood is increasingly seeing more families with young children move in. The Parkmead Traffic Committee is working with the City of Walnut Creek and Contra Costa County to resolve these issues. Bolstered by the excellent attendance of concerned residents at the September Walnut Creek Planning Commission hearing on the 2025 General Plan update, members of the committee will be meeting with traffic engineers at the city and getting the county involved to create a better street environment for all of us.

If you are interested in participating in the committee, we welcome you to attend our meetings. Interested persons can contact [parkmeadboard@comcast.net](mailto:parkmeadboard@comcast.net) to find out when the next committee meeting will be held.

Finally, please do your part to make our neighborhood streets safe for everyone.

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## Trekking Tuesdays and Walking Wednesdays

Walnut Creek is sponsoring Walking Wednesdays in Walnut Creek to encourage everyone to walk or bicycle to work, school and around town. Parkmead Elementary School is joining in but, because Wednesday is trash day on Newell and Lilac, they have decided to encourage kids to walk to school on Tuesday mornings instead, and the Parkmead Community Association is supporting the event by handing out rewards to the walking kids on random Tuesdays. (You are welcome to join in walking the neighborhood on Tuesdays – or any other day.) You can also help the kids who walk and cycle to school by trying not to block the narrow sidewalks with wheeled-bins, if you can avoid it. And please try not to park on the Lilac and Newell pathways, especially during school hours.

511.org has given us some flashing reflector lights to hand out to anyone who likes to walk the neighborhood in the twilight hours and wants to be safe.

On the first day of Walk-Bike to School Week in early October, there was a big turnout of participants and we were joined by State Senator Tom Torlakson and Walnut Creek Mayor Gary Skrel and covered by Channel 2 News. Thanks to Tony for organizing this event again and for the volunteers who assisted and continue to do so.

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## PCA Web Site Returning

The PCA web site, which has been dormant for the past few years, is scheduled to return in November as this newsletter goes to print. Check out [www.parkmead.org](http://www.parkmead.org) as we come back online.

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## News for Neighbors

The Parkmead Community Association occasionally seeks to inform residents of new or changing city and county regulations or to clarify existing ones. Our mission per our bylaws is to “provide an organization to represent the area before governmental bodies and to encourage activity by residents interested in furthering the peace, health, safety, quality of life, and environment in the Parkmead Community Area.” In the case of city and county “rules”, we seek to educate, not regulate – we do not enforce. We encourage neighbors to discuss issues such as remodels, fences, trees, parking, etc. – all in the hope of resolving potential conflicts. Nobody wants to be surprised by an enlarged house or a cut tree next door, nor do we want tensions over our neighbor’s actions (or inactions) to fester. There is a countywide Conflict Resolution Program available for nominal fees. Call (925) 798-6132 or (925) 687-8844 x301 for details.

*Editor’s Note: The following two articles are meant to inform.*

## Parkmead Tree Maintenance

By Francine Podenski

Parkmead trees increase property values, improve air quality, provide shade during summer months, significantly reduce noise and air pollution, enhance natural beauty, and provide wildlife habitat. Preservation of our neighborhood park-like setting requires regular tree inspection/maintenance. Properly maintained trees are less likely to become infested with insects and disease, throw branches, fall down, and/or cause property damage during winter storms. Prevention is often considerably less expensive than cleaning up after storm damage.

Most tree service companies with licensed arborists provide free consultation, expertise, recommendations, and cost estimates by appointment. Fall is a good time to schedule tree work in preparation for winter. Tree maintenance and/or removal should be avoided during the bird-nesting season (March, April, May, and early June).

A permit is required prior to removal of most trees in the city and county. Trees can be monitored using satellite imagery and removals are easily identified by parcel number. Cutting down a tree without a permit may result in a fine. In addition, some trees have protected status in both the city and the county. Building a structure or installing an impermeable surface within the drip line of a tree without a permit may also result in a fine.

The City of Walnut Creek requires a permit for removal of trees nine inches in diameter or 28 inches in circumference or larger when measured at 4-1/2 feet above the natural grade. Property owners within the city can request a permit at 925-943-5834 and there is no charge. Contra Costa County requires a permit for removal of trees six inches in diameter or 20 inches in circumference or larger when measured at four feet above the natural grade. Property owners within the county can request a tree permit package be sent to their home by calling 925-335-1360.

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## PCA E-Mail List

The PCA Board has established an e-mail list of neighbors who want to be informed on events and issues of interest to the neighborhood. This is an attempt to improve communications during the months between our three newsletters. There will be no commercial or political use of your e-mail address, no attached files, and no sharing of the list. We do not expect more than one posting a month. You will be listed as “blind copy” so others will not see your email address. If you want to be on this list, send e-mail to parkmeadboard@comcast.net with your name and (optional) home address.

## Storage Guidance — RVs, Boats, Trailers

Contra Costa County recently updated its ordinance on boats, RVs, and trailers as to proper storage on one’s property. With this in mind, we wanted to make neighbors aware of the new rules and remind folks of the Walnut Creek rules. Basically, the intent is to establish how these vehicles must be stored out of sight and/or how long they can be kept in public view.

Contra Costa County Ordinance Code Section 84-68.1404 states that “The storage in any land use district of a mobile home, travel trailer, camp car, vessel, or vessel trailer at the residence of the owner or any other residence is permitted when not used for living or sleeping purposes; provided, that the mobile home, travel trailer, camp car, vessel, or vessel trailer shall be adequately screened from view from public roadway or thoroughfare”. The updated County ordinance (as of 7/05) “requires 90% of the massing of the vehicle being screened either through the utilization of landscaping, fencing, or intervening building mass, would provide adequate screening for today’s modern vehicles”. This replaces the old rule of a six-foot fence with 90% coverage.

Walnut Creek City Municipal Code Sec. 10-2.3.111. “Motor Homes, Trailers, Boats, Buses and Campers” covers homes in the City and states such vehicles may not “be parked or stored within any required front or street side yard in any residential district” except for loading and unloading (24 hours) or accommodating visitors who are traveling (for one week) nor may they be used for living in except for traveling visitors.

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## Hillside Covenant Church Newsletter

By now you may have received a newsletter produced by Hillside Covenant Church identified as a “Parkmead community newsletter.” As stated in their first issue: “We are pleased to introduce this newsletter as a new resource for the Parkmead vicinity. It features announcements about neighborhood events and various aspects of our community with the hope of fostering an even greater sense of community within our environs. It complements, not replaces, the periodic newsletter distributed by the Parkmead Community Association and includes information provided by this organization. The distribution area of this newsletter is larger and includes the administrative staff of Parkmead Elementary.” The Parkmead Community Association Board was consulted by the church prior to the newsletter being produced.

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## Newsletter Editor Needed

Our esteemed PCA newsletter editor, Craig Pollock, has decided to “retire” after five years of doing our newsletter. Thanks Craig for the great job.

We need a new layout editor and Craig is willing to work with them on the next issue in April. We do 3 newsletters per year – late April for the spring Ice Cream Social, late August for the summer Block Party and late October for the fall Pizza party – which range from 2 to 6 pages. Responsibilities include layout, minor editing, and coordinating printing. Text is provided and a board member will help with priorities and article importance. As with any volunteer group, things often reach a time crunch and the layout editor may have to put the newsletter together fairly quickly (a week or less).

Interested? Questions? Contact [parkmeadboard@comcast.net](mailto:parkmeadboard@comcast.net)

## Holiday Decorations Contest First Ever Parkmead Neighborhood Holiday Decorating Contest

Decorate the outside of your home for the holidays. Any tasteful theme is acceptable...just have fun!

To Enter: Contact [parkmeadboard@comcast.net](mailto:parkmeadboard@comcast.net) and leave your name, address, and phone number. Entry deadline is Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup>.

A secret panel will judge entries for both day and night presentations to include your hard work and creativity. Judging will be done December 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>. The winning family will be awarded the Grand Prize on Monday, December 19<sup>th</sup>.

We hope you participate in the fun!

District	Board Member	Phone
1	Jodi Hayes	
2	Tony Almeida	
3	Paul King	
4	Joseph Curtis	
5	<i>Vacant</i>	
6	Tony Phillips	
7	<i>Vacant</i>	
At Large	Ann Hinshaw	
At Large	Sirkka Lonzo	
At Large	Francine Podenski	
At Large	Cris Tarozzi	
Editor	Craig Pollock	

Officer	Position	Phone
Pete Johnson	President	
Joseph Curtis	Vice President	
Mary Andre	Treasurer	
Tony Almeida	Secretary	
Francine Podenski	Development Committee	
Sue Chan	Traffic Committee	

