

City Manager's



Weekly Update Friday, September 21, 2007

Notes of Interest:

Lawrence Park transients: Police are taking steps to learn more about the transient issues at Lawrence Park and ways to make the park more attractive for neighboring families to visit. Police know that many of the transients also are connected to the Mokelumne River/Highway 99 camps and complaints from businesses in the Victor Road/Cherokee Lane vicinity.

While dealing with the transients congregating in the area of the businesses of Victor and Cherokee, many of the businesses posted their property for trespassing and loitering. Police began citing the transients as requested by the business owners, but it seems to have increased the number loitering in the park.

Police have taken the following steps to reduce the impact of transients at the park:

- Installing bicycle racks in the park. This allows enforcement of a City Ordinance that prohibits leaving a bicycle lying on the ground in the park, if bike racks are provided (No person in a park shall leave a bicycle lying on the ground or paving, or set against trees, or in any place or position where other persons may trip over or be injured by them). Officers have been citing subjects who park their bicycles in areas of the park other than the bicycle racks provided.
- Identification of transients and conditions of probation. Seventy-five transients were identified and officers notified of any special probation conditions they may have, such as no excessive drinking of alcohol.
- Requesting the courts to impose special conditions of probation for anyone arrested in the park for misdemeanor violations. Conditions of probation can include a stay-away order for the park.
- No tolerance for violations in the park. Officers have been citing for violations such as leaving bicycles in areas not designed for bicycles, possession of alcoholic beverage in the park, possession of shopping carts in the park and public intoxication.

Officers have discussed the removal of the picnic tables, or moving the tables to another area of the park with park officials. These tables, however, are often used on weekends by others visiting the park and having assorted celebrations there. This is not strategy police feel would be effective and may adversely affect others who use the park.

Officers have continued to cite offenders trespassing in the Mokelumne River area, as many of these offenders are using the park by day to congregate. Moving them from the river area may make it less convenient to visit the park.

Timber: West Coast Arborists will be removing four elm trees from 220 to 228 N. Stockton Street because they are infested with elm leaf beetles. With thorough watering, a pesticide injection might save the trees, but the homeowner does not water the trees. Removing these large trees is the best way to protect the urban forest, in the City arborist's opinion. ... Additionally, a redwood at 1029 S. School Street is leaning into the street. It is turning brown and dying. The homeowner agrees with the need to remove the tree.

Foreclosed properties: The Community Improvement division has been receiving complaints about dead or weedy lawns in front of homes that have fallen into foreclosure. About a dozen homes are being monitored. An obstacle in getting them abated is following the paper trail to find out who is responsible for the homes' maintenance. A couple of notices have been issued to financial institutions.

Downtown kiosks: The plexiglas in downtown kiosks used to post flyers and other informational items will be replaced soon. The plastic coverings have dulled over the years, making them less attractive. The cost of new plastic covers on the five kiosks is \$1,712.37. Installation is expected to be finished by the end of October.

New Comcast replay hours: City Council meeting rebroadcasts have been moved up 26 hours, showing at 1 p.m. Thursdays following meetings instead of 3 p.m. on Fridays. Comcast cited “staffing and scheduling” reasons for the change.

New work hours for Parks Department: With reduced daylight hours, the Parks Division will on Monday begin working at 7 a.m., one hour later than before, and ending the workday at 3:30 p.m. The tentative date for a return to a 6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. schedule is March 3.