

STAGECOACH EXPRESS



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CITY OF ARROYO GRANDE

MAY 2006

STUDY FINDS HIGH PRODUCTIVITY IN ARROYO GRANDE OPERATIONS

Over the past several years, the City of Arroyo Grande has undertaken a number of efforts to maximize efficiency in the organization. To measure and verify the level of success of these efforts, the City recently completed a benchmark study that compares key City services with other jurisdictions in California. All full service cities with similar size, age, area and growth rates were included in the study. This resulted in a total of eight jurisdictions from all areas of the state, including Arroyo Grande. The study is also a key step in the long-range financial planning process because it is

important to first maximize efficiency of existing operations before pursuing supplemental revenues to meet future needs.

Given the variations in characteristics and priorities of different communities, it is difficult to reach specific conclusions based solely on the study. However, it is a valuable tool and the results of the study strongly indicate that the City is managing its resources in an effective and productive manner.

For example, general administrative staff per capita is the lowest of jurisdictions included in the study, which indicates a very

low overhead. The number of land use permits processed per staff position is the second highest of the jurisdictions studied. Full-time paid Fire staffing is both the lowest per capita and per number of service calls when compared to the jurisdictions studied. In addition, the City has maintained the third lowest number of Part I crimes per capita, while at the same time has the second lowest per capita Police staffing of the cities studied.

A copy of the full study is available at City Hall by contacting 473-5400 or on City's web site at www.arroyo grande.org.

FUNDING NEEDS SURVEY RESULTS



The City received over 250 responses to the survey distributed in the last issue of the Stagecoach Express designed to assist in prioritizing funding needs identified in the City's long-range financial plan. The results ranked the needs as follows:

- Repairing and maintaining the City's Streets
- Transportation Projects
- Upgrading the City's aging storm drain system
- Improving storm water and erosion control measures to protect the City's creeks
- Replacement of Fire Department equipment
- Upgrading the City's Police Station to meet existing space needs
- Hiring additional Fire personnel
- Upgrading the City Hall Complex to meet ADA requirements

At the June 27, 2006 meeting, the City Council will consider placing on the November 7, 2006 ballot a 1/2 cent local sales tax measure to generate revenue to address each of these needs on a long-term basis. The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. at the City Council Chambers, located at 215 E. Branch Street. For more information, citizens may contact City Hall at 473-5400.

CREEK WORKSHOP SCHEDULED

One of the features that makes Arroyo Grande such a special place is the several creeks that traverse the community. Therefore, protection and conservation are a high priority. Recently, a number of important efforts have been undertaken.

In September 2005, the City Council enacted a moratorium on any new proposed development within 25 feet of each creek to allow time to establish new

POLICE ORGANIZE SUPPORT FOR IRAQI LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Arroyo Grande Police Department recently collected used and outdated equipment from police agencies in SLO County and Northern Santa Barbara County, which will be sent to Iraqi police. Equipment includes ballistic ("bulletproof") vests, helmets, face shields, batons, leather gear and gas masks. According to organizers, the program is designed to bring the Country's soldiers home sooner by helping Iraqi local police to be successful.

The donated police equipment is in partnership with "Operation Soldier" and the "The Brotherhood of the Badge", which is an organization started by officers with the Fresno Police Department. The equipment will be delivered to American and Allied Forces who will then distribute the gear to Iraqi Police as they complete their training.

PROTECTING CHILDREN - SAFETY GUN LOCKS AVAILABLE FOR FREE AT AGPD

The Arroyo Grande Police Department is distributing FREE gunlocks. This distribution program is in partnership with "Project ChildSafe - Putting a Lock on Safety in Your Home" and is funded by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Project ChildSafe, the nation's largest firearm safety education program, reminds gun owners to properly store firearms in the home in order to prevent a loaded gun from falling into the hands of a child, thereby preventing tragic accidents. Residents with firearms are encouraged to obtain a Project ChildSafe safety kit at the Arroyo Grande Police Station, located at 200 N. Halcyon Road. Each kit contains a safety curriculum and a cable-style gun lock. The locks fit most types of handguns, rifles and shotguns.

For additional information, please contact the Police Department at 473-5100 or visit www.ProjectChildSafe.org.

POLICE STATION NEEDS EXPANSION



A number of efforts are under way to address space needs at the City's existing Police Station, which are negatively impacting the ability of public safety staff to perform their tasks in the most effective way. The telephone company originally constructed the Police Station building in the 1950's. It was later acquired by the City and began to serve as the City's Police facility in June 1973. Since that time, the Police Department has grown from 12 full-time and 6 part-time staff to 36 full-time and 20 part-time. As a result, space is limited and new needs have occurred for storage of records and equipment, meeting places for community programs, and expansion of the City's Emergency Operations Center.

Concept drawings were prepared in March 1998 to construct a second level on the building. Grant funding was approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, but Congress never appropriated funding for the program. As a result, the project has yet to move forward and has been identified as one of the key needs in the City's long-range financial plan.

In the meantime, a modular office building has been installed as a temporary measure on property originally acquired for employee parking next to the Police Station. The unit is used and was purchased at a reduced cost with revenue from Police Department development fees. The permanent expansion of the Police Station is proposed to be constructed with revenue from the sales tax measure, if approved.

CITY PROMOTES ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

The City is nearing completion of a long-time objective to improve circulation and alternative transportation with preparation of the 2006 Bikeway and Sidewalk Enhancement Plan. The Plan includes recommendations for new bike lanes, sidewalks and bike storage facilities to increase safety and convenience for cyclists and pedestrians. Once adopted, the Plan will help the City obtain special transportation grants and funds to encourage alternative circulation/transportation improvements for residents and visitors.

Members of the Traffic, Parks and Recreation, and Planning

Commissions reviewed proposed new bike lanes and sidewalks during an April tour. These advisory bodies have been making recommendations on project ideas and priorities over the past month. The final Plan will be considered by the City Council in July. For more information or a copy of the Plan, please contact the Community Development Department at 473-5420 or visit the City's website at www.arroyogrande.org.



COMMITTEE STUDIES JOINT FIRE PROTECTION EFFORTS



The City is participating on a committee with representatives from the City of Grover Beach, City of Pismo Beach and the Oceano Community Services District to develop recommendations on potential joint fire

protection efforts to improve service levels and efficiency. The Committee was developed after a joint meeting of the elected bodies from all the Five Cities jurisdictions. The Committee is reviewing options for dispatch, training, purchase and maintenance of equipment, and administration. The Cities of Arroyo Grande and Grover Beach are already sharing administrative and training staff, which has increased service levels, while managing resources more efficiently. Recommendations of the Committee are expected to be completed by the end of the calendar year.

CITY PROJECTS PROVIDE NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

A number of important sewer, water and street improvements are under way. Upgrade of Sewer Lift Station No. 1, which is located at Oak Park Boulevard and West Branch Street, will improve capacity of the City's sewer system. Meanwhile, construction of a new water well on Deer Trail Circle is nearing completion and will provide an important increase to the City's water supply. Projects coming up this summer include the resurfacing of Farroll Road, Oak Park Boulevard, and James Way. The City thanks all residents impacted by the construction activities for your patience and cooperation. For more information on the City's Capital Improvement Program, please contact the Public Works Department at 473-5440.

DEVELOPMENT CODE UPDATE FOCUSES ON RESIDENTIAL LAND USE ISSUES

During the last three years, the City has been involved in an extensive process of updating the Development Code to achieve consistency with the 2001 General Plan. The focus is now on amending design overlay districts, improving the viewshed review process, and refining residential zoning changes needed to maintain and enhance the Arroyo Grande's "small town, rural" character. Among the issues being reviewed are lot sizes, building height allowances, coverage and floor area limits, setbacks, parking requirements and other design standards. New water conservation and drought tolerant landscape and irrigation standards are also being considered for future development projects within the City. For more information, call the Community Development Department at 473-5420.

LOPEZ WATER SYSTEM UNDERGOES IMPROVEMENTS

Lopez Lake is an extremely valuable water supply to all of the Five Cities, and provides 2/3 of Arroyo Grande's drinking water. A number of significant investments have been under way to protect, preserve and improve this valuable resource.

The Lopez Dam retrofit program was completed in 2003 at a total cost of \$28.9 million financed by a 20-year bond. The project used stone columns built to support the dam and withstand a 7.0 earthquake. The retrofit project was required in order to meet current State seismic standards.

Upgrade to the water treatment plant is now under way and projected to be complete by Fall 2007. Implementation of the new microfiltration system is necessary to

meet State standards for water treatment. Total cost for the project is \$26 million, funded by a 20-year State loan that will be repaid by Flood Control and Water Conservation District Zone 3. The District primarily includes Arroyo Grande, Pismo Beach, Grover Beach and Oceano.

Lastly, a Habitat Conservation Plan has been prepared for Arroyo Grande Creek. The purpose of the Plan is to allow for more efficient water releases from Lopez Dam to the creek. This will help better manage water supply, while at the same time protect wildlife habitat and meet Federal regulations. The Plan is now under review by State and Federal regulatory agencies.

For more information, contact the Public Works Department at 473-5440.



LET THERE BE LIGHTS IN THE VILLAGE

This may be your last chance to be part of the "Let There Be Lights" program. Recent additions to the Village include 12 heritage character streetlights on the Traffic Way Bridge, 12 streetlights along the Creekside Path, and now 16 new streetlights in the heart of the historic Village along Branch Street from Traffic Way to Short Street. These 30 new, but "old style," street lights will soon be joined by 25 more, replacing the existing lanterns on East Branch Street from Short to Crown Hill and around Heritage Square and the Village Green. These lights that enhance the historic Village area are being donated by local businesses, families and organizations that have contributed from \$1,500 to \$3,000 per light as part of this very successful voluntary program. Contributors are recognized with a plaque installed on the light pole. If you are interested in helping to complete this community improvement by making a donation or pledge to the "Let There Be Lights" program, please call 473-5420.



SUMMER CONCERTS ON THE GREEN

The City of Arroyo Grande and Village Association are pleased to announce the new Village Summer Concert Series beginning on Sunday, June 4th from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Rotary Bandstand in the Village Green. Concerts will feature a variety of acts, both local and regional, every other Sunday through September 3rd. Bring your families to enjoy music in the park in what is sure to be a wonderful community event. Please call 473-5474 for more information.

TRAFFIC RELIEF ON THE WAY

The City is making progress towards addressing congestion at one of the community's worst problem intersections. A construction contract has been awarded to install a new four-way traffic signal at Camino Mercado and West Branch Street, which should significantly reduce traffic delays at that location. Traffic signal equipment has been ordered and will take approximately eight weeks to arrive. Once delivered, the installation is expected to take 30 days.

"Creek" continued from Page 1

regulations. Project applications already submitted to the City were not impacted.

Since then, the City has been working with representatives of the County, Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District, Central Coast Salmon Enhancement, Regional Water Quality, State Department of Fish and Game, and other agencies on development of a comprehensive creek study. The purpose is to develop recommendations on how to better prevent storm water pollution, erosion and siltation, improve riparian habitat conservation, and refine creek setback and development policies and standards in the City's watershed areas.

The intent is not only to better manage the creek areas within the City, but also to prevent negative impacts downstream from erosion and unnecessary storm water runoff. In addition, one of the objectives identified in the City's long-range financial plan and proposed sales tax measure is to generate funding sources for drainage improvements and projects to improve creek protection.

A special public workshop is scheduled on May 31, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers,

YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Your presence and participation at City meetings are contributions to good government! The following Council, commissions, committees, and boards meet at City Council Chambers, 215 East Branch Street:

CITY COUNCIL

2nd and 4th Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.

PLANNING COMMISSION

1st and 3rd Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

2nd Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.

SENIOR ADVISORY COMMISSION

Meets Quarterly (*Call for schedule.*)

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

1st Monday, 2:30 p.m.

TRAFFIC COMMISSION

Monday previous to 3rd Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.

DOWNTOWN PARKING ADVISORY BOARD

Meets as needed

located at 215 E. Branch Street, to discuss the study's findings and recommendations. Public hearings on new development policies and regulations will be held during the summer. For more information, please contact the Community Development Department at 473-5420 or visit the City's website at www.arroyogrande.org.



City of Arroyo Grande

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We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Please call 473-5414

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www.arroyogrande.org