



H A Y W A R D   A R E A   P L A N N I N G   A S S O C I A T I O N

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## *The HAPA News*

May 16, 2016

☞ Work Session on Lincoln Landing Thursday May 23, 7 p.m. City Council Chambers ☞



### *Should the Hayward City election move to November?*

What is democracy? One definition of democracy is voting—more voting means more democracy. More people would vote in the Hayward election in November than June.

Democracy, however, also involves the quality of voting and how much can be expected of voters. For example, this June election has a number of judges. I don't know anything about them and I don't want to take time to learn. I might vote arbitrarily and ignorantly, so I won't vote. Too many elections for too many offices expects too much of voters. Also, their votes become more easily subject to influence by vested interest and ideological extremes.

The ballot argument against moving Hayward Council elections to November is concerned about excessive influence by the SEIU, risking the fiscal integrity of the City and fair treatment for other workers. Two years ago, the SEIU tried to elect two people to Council and succeeded with one, but I think they misjudged their candidate, Sara Lamnin, who has not shown any willingness to push a union line that I am aware of. However, the argument applies to any vested interest; it could apply to developers electing their candidates.

The SEIU campaign was slick, but blatant and inept. They need to learn from firefighters and police about how to have influence. They also have unions, but don't need a November vote to have influence. If you go to <http://transparentcalifornia.com/salaries/2014/hayward/> you will find the 50 highest paid employees in Hayward, including regular pay, overtime pay, other pay, and total benefits, and 44 of them are police and fire. Their incomes range from \$248,000 to \$347,000. The "other pay" ranges from \$20,000 to \$61,000, always on top of hefty regular pay and often hefty overtime. Something about this bothers me when you look at the much lower wage workers the SEIU represents. I have a feeling I've already said something politically incorrect, but there it is. Yes, I am not reporting the unions' sides of these stories.

Which brings us back to June. A June election has lower turnout, but the voters who do vote feel more connected to Hayward, usually because of some connection with one or more Council candidate and with family and friends. They usually don't know much about issues and the social relationships are far more important than policy, but that's because Council members know how people think and are careful not to offend more people than me.

Hayward city government, like all government, is incredible complex, and voters don't have time or interest to understand it. They vote for people whose values are similar and whose judgment they trust, and expect them to take care of the details. Government has to hurt people very close to home before they notice it and even then not many do much about it. We can be thankful there are a bunch of us who take an interest, even if Council doesn't do what we tell them to do.

A June election also allows a lot more attention to Hayward and avoids being buried in the huge issues of a national election. The low June turnout is not the responsibility of the calendar. People are free not to feel involved and not to vote; that is also democracy. Better have them stay home and not vote; those of us who do vote are making a hash of it anyway, but probably better than manipulated guess work by uninterested voters who happen to be at the polls to vote on something else.

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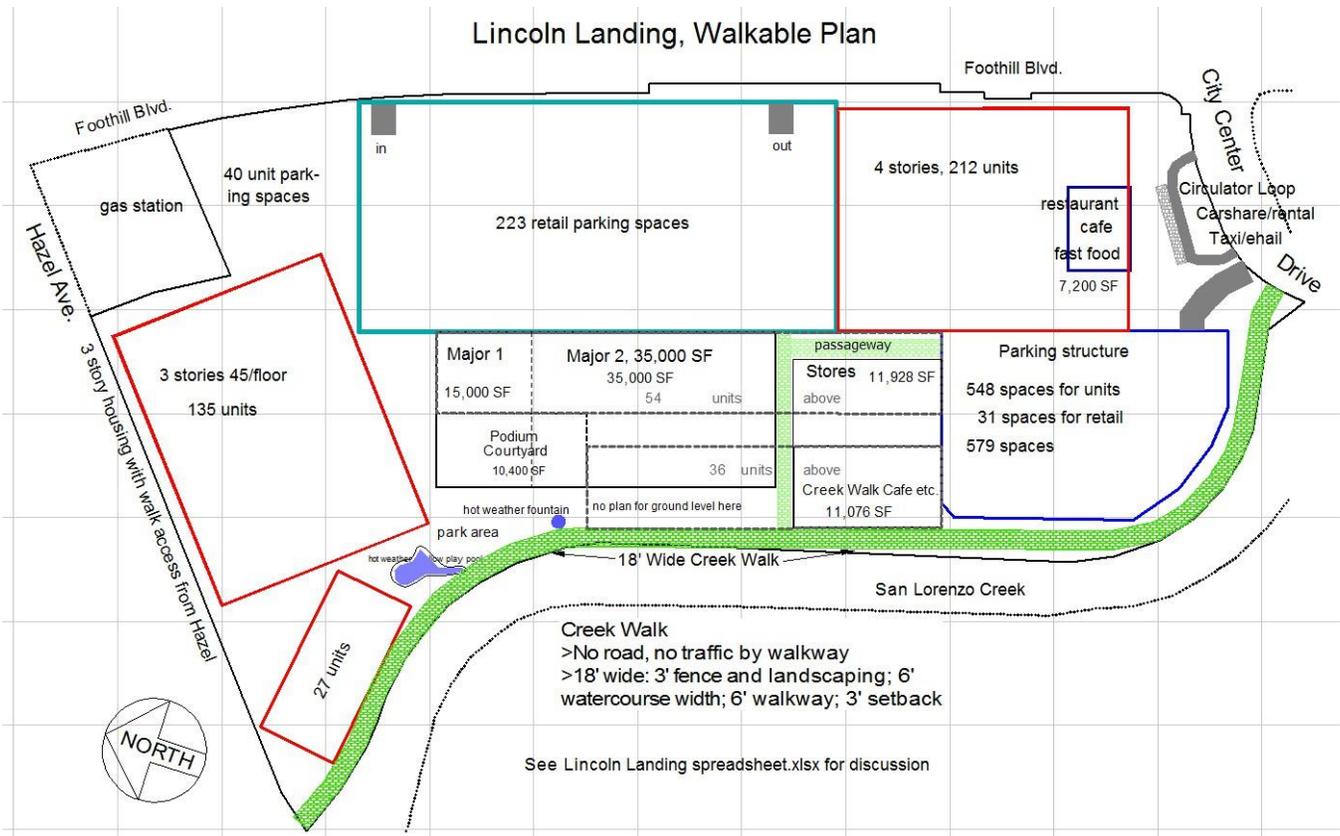


## *Short Notes*

**Library community center.** Should the current downtown library be reused as a community center? The answer seems to be yes, if enough people have enough good ideas about what to use it for. Otherwise it will be demolished on schedule. If demolished, we will have a nice Historic Heritage Park. If not, we will have a nice Historic Heritage Park with a community center. What we know of cost indicates that reuse would be very affordable, considering the size of the building. If interested, let us (Julie Machado or me) know your ideas. Our idea is to fantasize about uses and then organize if enough people want a center.

**Maple Main.** It is my understanding from City staff that the Maple Main application is complete, but the evaluation for environmental review is pending. There may be some request to the developer for a study of parking needs and review of the study by Nelson Nygaard, a consulting firm which is also doing the Downtown Specific Plan traffic analysis. I will be recommending sustainable mobility ideas to evaluate if all that subsidized parking is really needed.

**Lincoln Landing.** I presented my PowerPoint and site plan to the Prospect Hill Homeowners Association a few days ago and they like it. We can give the developer all of the units they want, all of the retail, all of the parking, and 1.24 parking spaces per unit. We propose a "creek walk" on the property along the flood control channel using rainwater for irrigation of a landscaped walkway that would also have a Parisian sidewalk café. Lincoln Landing is undergoing the same parking need review as Maple Main.



**The circulator!** Both projects should be served by a circulator, which is a rapid bus from BART to a multimodal turnaround at Lincoln Landing, using Maple Court, A, B and C Streets, and a mid-block connection by Bank of the West and Salvation Army. The distance is so short that one bus can provide service every 14 minutes. The cost is so low that the developers could pay for it as mitigation for their traffic impacts.

**Loop reform!** The longer I work on loop reform, the more I think the City Council is living in a bubble. I keep asking people, very casually, how they feel about the loop, and I keep getting extremely critical answers. I have tried to be as fair as possible to the loop, but it really makes absolutely no sense. It needs to revert to a two-way system with parking and be a lot friendlier to pedestrians. Maple Main, for example, has an easy walking distance to CVS, the Lucky store, restaurants, and BART, but only athletes can cross A Street with its four lanes of high speed traffic. The data from the Alameda County Transportation Commission shows that loop traffic is slower in all directions except one. We have gone to service level F in directions going opposite to the one-ways.



## *LSA 2015 Report on Mitigation at Stonebrae*

A legal settlement requires Stonebrae (formerly Blue Rock) to enhance 100 acres of habitat in the middle of the golf course for Alameda whipsnakes and California red-legged frogs. LSA, a biological consulting firm, monitors and works on the habitat protection area. Biologists don't just look at nature; they count everything. This is what a little litigation can get you. If interested in the [full](#) report, contact me. Nancy Schluntz has excerpted the high points shown below.

### **Mitigation status**

Results of monitoring at Stonebrae were significantly influenced by the amount and timing of annual rainfall. Precipitation in the previous three years was over 6 inches below average for the area. While annual rainfall for the 2014-2015 water year was near the region's long-term average, more than half occurred in December 2014, with over 25% occurring in a single storm on December 11. As a result of this rainfall distribution and dry winter and spring, drought conditions dominated the region.

### **Ponds**

The primary target of wildlife habitat creation and enhancement at ponds is for California red-legged frog (CRLF). As reported in 2014, 13 new ponds covering 1.64 acres have been constructed and 7 existing ponds covering 0.63 acres have been enhanced/repared, totaling 2.27 acres of aquatic mitigation, or approximately 192 percent of the mitigation commitment. In 2015, 7 of the 13 constructed ponds met vegetation performance criteria for CRLF mitigation habitat. Pond construction and enhancement resulted in an increase in CRLF presence compared with prior to construction. CRLF observations declined as a result of the drought, but increased in 2015. Fluctuation appears related to the drought and not a failure of the mitigation.

All of the constructed and enhanced existing mitigation ponds met hydrology performance criteria by drying out before mid-October; however, due to the extremely dry conditions these ponds did not hold the performance requirement of 1 meter of water on July 1. Erosion repairs remained stable and will be monitored again in 2016.

Native plant species observed growing within and around the mitigation ponds included willows, cattails, rushes, sedges, and blue-eyed grass. Wildlife regularly observed using the ponds include Pacific tree frog, California newt, aquatic garter snake, western fence lizard, and numerous other bird and invertebrate species.

### **Seasonal Wetlands**

The total area of seasonal wetland mitigation constructed at the project site to date is 16.97 acres, or 106% of the 2:1 in-kind mitigation commitment. Weed control includes mowing Harding grass to improve native plant cover. The ongoing lack of precipitation resulted in wetland monitoring wells that were nearly or completely dry throughout the year. Density of all vegetation was again significantly lower than in previous years. All of the wetlands were dominated by

dry stubble. The relative cover of wetland and native plant species is expected to increase when normal precipitation returns. Soil organic matter has increased at all sampled wetlands in 2013 compared to the first year of sampling. Soil organic matter sampling will be continued in the fall of 2016.

## Riparian Enhancement

In 2015, the 6,610 linear feet of enhanced riparian areas were surveyed for evidence of new erosion. The majority of biotechnical structures [like check dams] continue to function and promote channel stability. Some brushy check dams have deteriorated as designed after establishing stabilized channel sections. No new evidence of erosion was observed.

**Erosion** caused by the 2014 discharges from the City of Hayward water tank outfall along Reach C East remained unchanged in 2015. The eroded area consists of gullies and head cuts up to 6 feet in depth. Stonebrae has continued to work with the City and LSA to develop and implement a remediation plan, which is scheduled to be implemented in 2016.

In the winter of 2015 LSA biologists counted **container plantings** within riparian enhancement areas and found 129 trees and 220 shrubs alive and in good condition. In addition, over 450 installed willows continue to exhibit robust growth and contribute to stabilization of the enhanced reaches. Combined, 799 planted woody riparian plant species are alive and in good condition. Biologists also counted over 445 volunteer tree and shrub recruits within approximately 4,200 linear feet of other preserved reaches. To date, over 1,244 trees and shrubs have been established by plantings and passive recruitment within the restored and preserved riparian areas. The currently implemented structural work and planting yields about 2.28 acres of riparian enhancement at maturity or 200 percent of the MMP [Mitigation and Monitoring Plan] mitigation commitment.

## Rock Outcrops and Scrub enhancement

Rock outcrop and scrub mitigation enhancement implemented in previous years exceeds the MMP acreage requirements. Thirty-four (34) mitigation rock outcrop areas (totaling 48.2 acres) have been constructed and 27 of these areas included scrub enhancement.

Monitoring for **wildlife** in mitigation rock outcrops showed consistent use by western fence lizards, a primary prey of the Alameda whipsnake. Year 10 monitoring in October 2015 indicated that western fence lizards continue to utilize the outcrops and this is expected to remain unchanged.

## Alameda whipsnake

All whipsnake traps have been removed from the site. Non-mitigation related construction continues to be limited to the developed residential areas, which are surrounded by the completed golf course. Monitoring of mitigation habitat for whipsnakes (i.e., grassland, rock outcrops and scrub enhancement) will continue as required. No whipsnakes were observed by LSA biologists or Stonebrae staff in the golf course or open space areas in 2015. [?]

## California Red-Legged Frog

Twenty ponds within the designated habitat preserves are surveyed for an on-going species count of CRLF adults, larvae and egg masses. In 2014-15, nine ponds provided documented CRLF breeding (six more than in 2013-14) and LSA also observed adults in four additional ponds, and 10 existing and created breeding locations. These observations occurred following the December 2014 rains that filled the ponds to water levels not seen at the project site in the previous three years. Numerous CRLF egg masses or larvae were observed in three existing ponds and at six mitigation ponds.

**Water quality** monitoring focused on chemicals found in urban and golf course runoff, and will resume at the project site in 2016 (year 10).

All ponds on the site are surveyed at least twice annually for presence of **exotic species**, such as bullfrogs and/or predatory fishes (e.g., gambusia, carp, sunfish). None has been observed in any pond.

## Other habitat management activities

**Feral pig control** was conducted by Rural Pig Management, Inc. Eleven pigs were caught and disposed of on site. All were males.

**Grazing** within the golf course open space and other conservation areas is to enhance **weed management** efforts within the rock outcrops and seasonal wetlands. Sheep grazed around the golf course open space in spring 2015. Cattle grazed in the northern and southern conservation areas in spring, summer, and fall 2015.

Grazing is a grassland management tool providing for dispersal of young whipsnakes in the fall and, secondarily, for potential whipsnake breeding/egg laying in the spring. Grazing continued in remote open space areas in 2015.

In the spring and fall of 2015, LSA biologists analyzed grassland monitoring data (grass height and estimate residual dry matter) collected at 15 monitoring sites. Grazing of Parcel A and Section 32 was prescribed throughout the summer to reduce the build-up of thatch throughout open space areas, reduce wildfire loads, and increase overall grassland productivity.

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