



PARK BEAT

The Pulse of Greater Boulevard Park

Boulevard Park Neighborhood Association # Box 163179, Sacramento 95816 # March 2018

A Brief Report from the BPNA Board

The 2018 BPNA board members met for the first time on Tuesday, February 6. Topics on the evening's agenda included Neighborhood Watch, proposed changes in the traffic lanes on central city streets ("Sac Grid 3.0"), safety issues related to electromagnetic fields associated with overhead transmission lines, and other issues of neighborhood concern. Board members also reviewed the calendar of events typically hosted by the BPNA each year. More details will be printed in *Park Beat* as plans are finalized, but, for the moment, residents can look forward to a community yard sale in the late Spring (please set some gently-used items aside from any seasonal clean-outs!), a barbecue in mid-Summer, a progressive dinner on National Night Out (always held the first Tuesday in August), the traditional spaghetti dinner in September (typically the second Saturday of the month), and the holiday party in December (also usually scheduled on second Saturday). The next BPNA board meeting will be on Tuesday, March 6.

Central City Specific Plan: Final Steps to Approval

Articles in recent issues of *Park Beat* have described the importance of the Central City Specific Plan (CCSP) in shaping Central City development in the coming decade. An accompanying document, the revised Central City Neighborhood Design Guidelines, will guide the size, shape and design of infill projects. It is particularly important because specific infill guidelines for historic districts and alleys will not be issued until later in the year. The draft of the Design Guidelines (with staff responses) is included in the Preservation Commission's February 21 report (http://sacramento.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=21&event_id=3161&meta_id=514734).

The good news is that Planning staff incorporated many, if not all, of the Preservation Commission's recommendations, which the BPNA had endorsed. Staff also states that the "transitional height" language for commercial (C2) zones that are next to residential R3A zones has been added to the CCSP Ordinance. The BPNA and other midtown neighborhood associations had requested that change. The next steps in the process—and the last opportunities to comment—will be at the three meetings listed below, each at **New City Hall (915 I Street)**. BPNA members are strongly urged to attend one or more of the meetings to show support for these items.

Thurs., March 8, 5:30 p.m.: Planning & Design Commission Meeting: the full CCSP Zoning Ordinance and Central City Neighborhood Design Guidelines will be presented for approval. The staff report (covering both the ordinance and the design guidelines) will be available for review the previous Friday, March 2. The Commission may (or may not) suggest changes after hearing testimony.

Tues., March 27, 5 p.m.: City Council Meeting: the CCSP and the Design Guidelines will be presented for review and Ordinance Adoption. Council may (or may not) ask for changes after hearing testimony. If no changes, or only minor changes, are requested, the Council will "pass for publication review," that is, ask for a final version to vote on the following week.

Tuesday, April 3, 5 p.m.: City Council Meeting: if the documents were passed for publication review at the March 27 meeting, there will be a final vote to publish the CCSP Zoning Ordinance.

**Public Invited to New
Voting System Demo**

March 5, 2-7 p.m.

Dept. of Voter
Registration and
Elections

7000 65th Street,
Suite A, Sacramento,
CA 95823

Website on Pg. 3

Station E Substation Project

SMUD hosted a community information meeting at the Washington Elementary School on Tuesday, February 20. The main speaker was Mike Deis, Director of Substation, Telecommunications & Metering Assets. There also were information stations for different aspects of the project arranged around the meeting room and staffed by other SMUD employees. Most of the material presented is covered on the website (<https://www.smud.org/StationE>).

The meeting's purpose was to bring the public up-to-date on the eventual replacement of the North City Substation, located just off 20th Street and on the north side of the railroad tracks, with a new structure (called the Station E Substation). Dating back to the early fifties, the existing substation has reached the end of its planned operational use. The new substation, to be erected on a site just to the southeast of the old one, will be somewhat larger in size with a 20% increase in its electrical service capacity. The project has been underway since 2013 but was halted in 2015 when SMUD's engineers became aware of the full extent of the soil contamination on the property. Decades ago, a landfill was located here. Waste materials often were burned, resulting in elevated levels of arsenic, lead, and other hazardous substances. The mitigation of these conditions had to be addressed in an addendum to the original CEQA report, completed in March 2017 (all of these documents are posted on the website listed above). Another problem was the looseness of the soil on the site, as the result of its being mainly fill. The ground will need to be more compact to support the weight of the new substation.

Some attendees at the meeting expressed concern about the high level of soil contamination and the way in which the clean-up was being handled. The other issue that was not fully addressed, either at the meeting or in the CEQA documents, was the potential impact of the project on electromagnetic emissions (specifically, from the above and underground wires that serve the substation).

Station E Substation (cont.)

The next phase of the project—involving the preparation of the site prior to the construction of the substation—will last from the Spring through the Summer. Residents should know that there will be steady truck traffic on the north side of the railroad tracks as about 64,000 tons of debris and soil are hauled away and new fill is brought to the site. The 28th Street crossing also will be impacted because the trucks will use it and 28th Street to access the freeway. The construction of the substation should begin before the end of this year, with completion in 2020. If you would like to receive project updates via email or mail, write to: StationE@smud.org or call 916-732-5715. There also will be another meeting in the Fall.

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EMF are of Ongoing Concern in Boulevard Park

As reported in the November 2017 issue of *Park Beat*, 20th Street residents have been concerned about the health risks posed by the electromagnetic fields (EMF) created by the power transmission lines in that area. They met with an electromagnetic radiation specialist in early November, submitted a signed petition to SMUD (with over 50 names), and then met with SMUD officials in late February. If you would like to learn more about this important issue, there are many resources to consult. The 2016 European guidelines on EMF-related health problems are informative (<https://www.degruyter.com/downloadpdf/j/reveh.2016.31.issue-3/reveh-2016-0011/reveh-2016-0011.pdf>). BPNA board member Whitney Leeman has compiled a list of additional sources (including peer-reviewed articles on specific EMF-related health issues). She also can help with exposure assessment (whitney.r.leeman@gmail.com). Any resident can contact SMUD to arrange for the free loan of a magnetic field meter to test EMF levels in and around the home (<https://www.smud.org/en/Giving-Back-to-Community/Safety-Tips>). 20th Street residents are specifically encouraged to contact Patrick Durham to have their homes measured for elevated magnetic fields (Patrick.Durham@smud.org).

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Boulevard Park Neighborhood Association purpose: The BPNA is created to support, promote, and improve the quality of life for the residents of the greater Boulevard Park neighborhood. By achieving this goal we strive thereby to improve the quality of life for others who work and live in and around Boulevard Park and therefore Sacramento as a whole.

Committees

2018 committee memberships will be announced after the March 6 Board Meeting.

Park Beat Production Team

Designer: **Open - Contact Ty Dockery to volunteer**
Webmaster: **Open - Contact Ty Dockery to volunteer**
Editor: Catherine Turrill Lupi, sac16712@csus.edu
Block Captain Coordinator: Joe Cress, 916 698-7938
cressj@saccounty.net
Ad Manager: Dave Herbert, davidmather446@gmail.com

Places to Go, People To See

Every Saturday:

Free Yoga in the Park: 9 a.m., McKinley Park (behind the H St. Rose Garden). For more information, go to:

<http://yogamovesus.org/calendar-items/yoga-in-the-park-mckinley-park/>

Midtown Farmers' Market: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., 20th Street between J and L Streets.

Sat., Mar. 3: 11th Winter Shorts Fest, hosted by the Sacramento French Film Festival (Crest Theatre; screening starts at 7 p.m.; fee charged). Information:

<https://www.sacramentofrenchfilmfestival.org>

Mar. 3 & 4: Sacramento Camellia Show, Memorial Auditorium (3-6 p.m. on Sat.; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sun.; free admission).

Mon., Mar. 5: Community Voter Education Open House, with demonstration of new voting system. Dept. of Voter Registration and Elections, 7000 65th Street, Suite A, Sacramento (2-7 p.m.).
<http://www.saccounty.net/news/latest-news/Pages/Public-Invited-to-New-Voting-System-Demonstration.aspx>

Tues., Mar. 6: Screening of *Felled*, a film about salvaging wood from city trees (Tower Theatre, 6:30-8 p.m.; admission, \$1-\$25).

Tues., Mar. 6: BPNA Board Meeting, open to BPNA members and interested neighbors (6:30-8 p.m.). Contact Eric Knutson for location or to suggest agenda items.

Thurs., Mar. 8: International Women's Day rally on the west steps of the State Capitol (10-11 a.m.). For more information:

<https://www.womensmarchsac.com/international-womens-day/>

Sat., Mar. 10: Second Saturday ArtWalk. Galleries around town will be open to present individual and group shows of artists' work. Website: <http://www.2ndsaturdaysacramento.com>

Sun., Mar. 11: Sacramento Antique Faire, under the freeway at 21st and X Streets (6:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.; \$3 admission fee for adults). Website: <http://www.sacantiquefaire.com>

Sat., Mar. 17: "Everyone's Irish on Saint Patrick's Day:" walking tour in the Old City Cemetery (1 p.m.). Website: <https://www.historicoldcitycemetery.org/upcoming-events>

Sun., Mar. 18: "Pay-What-You-Wish" at the Crocker.

Sun., Mar. 18: "Downtown Drives," California Automobile Museum, 2200 Front St. (ride around Sacramento in a 1931 Model A; 10-noon; free with museum admission). Website: <https://www.calautomuseum.org/event/downtown-sunday-drives/>

Sun., Mar. 18: Sunday Matinee Classics, Central Library: *All the King's Men* (12:30-3:30 p.m.; film screening accompanied by before-and-after commentary; free admission).

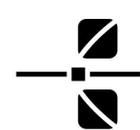
94th Annual Camellia Show

Sacramento, the self-proclaimed "Camellia Capital of the World," also hosts the oldest camellia show in the United States. First held nearly a century ago, this year's Camellia Show features beautiful blooms to admire (and many to buy, with over 200 plants for sale); a display by Sacramento's sister city in Matsuyama, Japan; information about camellia care and culture; and, on March 4, a "paint in" for watercolorists. The two-day show will be held in Memorial Auditorium (1515 J Street) from 3-6 p.m. on Sat., March 3; and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sun., March 4. For more information, go to the Camellia Society's website:

<https://www.camelliasocietyofsacramento.org/events.html>

Felled: New Life for Fallen Urban Trees

This year Sacramento will launch the state's Arbor Week (March 7-14) on Tuesday, March 6 with the screening of an hour-long documentary, *Felled*, at the Tower. Tickets range in price from \$1 to \$25 and can be purchased in advance on-line (<https://urbansalvagedwoods.com/march-6th-2018-showing-felled-tower-theater/>). The screening will start at 7, but the theater's doors will open at 6:30 to give attendees the opportunity to learn more about the film's sponsor, the Urban Salvaged and Reclaimed Woods Network, at the display booths set up in the theatre foyer and courtyard. Beautiful slabs of salvaged urban wood will be on view as well. However, the main event is the film itself. Built around the story of two Arizona woodworkers, *Felled* highlights the growing movement of artisans and makers who are devoted to rescuing and using the wood from fallen city trees.



You may have noticed, and been annoyed by, an upsurge in graffiti around the neighborhood. If you have been wondering what to do about the problem, the short answer is: **Record, Report, and Remove** (see also: <https://www.cityofsacramento.org/Community-Development/Code-Compliance/Neighborhoods/Graffiti>).

Record: Photographs help the police identify graffiti hot-spots, trends in tagging, and patterns for noted taggers, and provide evidence helpful in convictions. The City website describes submittal for hard copy photos, but you can also submit digital photos by using the City’s 311 app or email address (311@cityofsacramento). Be sure to include the physical location of the graffiti—e.g., the utility pole at Government Alley and 22nd Street—as well as your contact information. You should keep a copy of the photo.

Report: The act of creating graffiti is a misdemeanor, which is elevated to a felony for multiple acts. It is critical to report to the appropriate agency. **For your property:** after recording, simply call the Police Department's non-emergency number, (916) 264-5471, to report it as a crime, or submit the information to [311](tel:311) as described above. **For someone else’s property:** Call the Police Department's non-emergency number (above); also, refer to the “Get Permission First” phone list on the City’s website or [311](tel:311) to report the graffiti to the appropriate agency. Some agencies, like PG&E or the Post Office, have specific ways of handling tagging.

Remove: If your property has been tagged, remove the graffiti as quickly as possible once you have recorded and reported it. Graffiti may seem harmless, but, if left in place, it invites more graffiti and sends a message that the community does not care. The City recommends trying soap, water, and a soft brush first before trying other methods described below.

Surface	Graffiti method	Removal
Painted wood or metal	Pens	Denatured alcohol or Lift Off/similar product
Painted wood, concrete, metal	Spray paint	Denatured alcohol or repaint
Traffic signal boxes	Any	Lift Off/similar product
Unpainted concrete/stucco	Pens, spray paint	Lift Off/similar product, then water under pressure with a brush
Glass or plastic	Pens, spray paint	Window scraper, then denatured alcohol

If you use chemicals, follow the manufacturer's instructions and wear proper protective equipment. Remember that some removers may damage painted surfaces. Do **not** remove graffiti from reflective signs, such as traffic signs—graffiti removal materials can ruin the reflectivity.

The City assists residents and businesses in graffiti removal by:

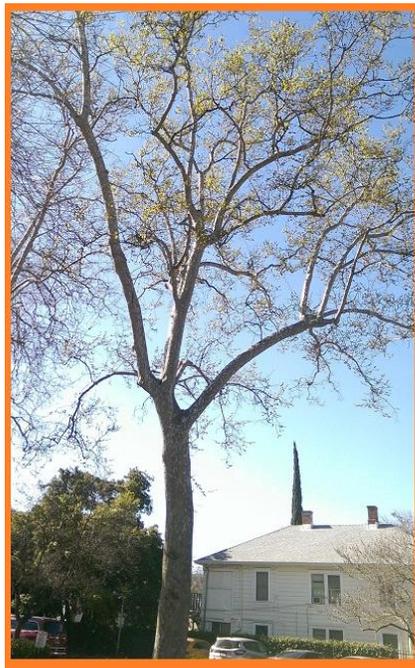
- Providing anti-graffiti information through GAP, its Graffiti Abatement Program
- Lending paint removal supplies free of charge
- Providing property owners with a computerized paint-matching service (one-time basis only)

The City will remove graffiti on private residences whose owners do not tackle the problem within ten days of being contacted. But, be forewarned—these owners are subject to a service fee and a clouded property title.

The Trees of Midtown: California Sycamore

The California Sycamore tree, a California native, is found along streams in the state's foothills and coast ranges as far north as Tehama and Humboldt Counties. For many years it was planted along Sacramento streets. A few of these older trees survive. Now the City tends to plant a close relative, the London Plane tree, which remains one of the most common street trees in Boulevard Park.

The California Sycamore is a large tree up to 110 feet in height with a trunk diameter of up to 3 feet. The bark is an attractive patchwork of white, tawny beige, pinkish grey, and pale brown. Older bark darkens and peels away. This deciduous tree drops copious amounts of dry golden to orange red leaves in the Fall. In Winter, the ball-like seed clusters hang 3 to 7 together along a single stalk. The tough coarse-grained wood is difficult to split and difficult to work. Its uses include meat preparation blocks for butchers.



Some of the oldest street trees in Sacramento are the California Sycamores on the north side of "J" Street between Alhambra Boulevard and 33rd Street, and three massive California Sycamores on Alhambra between "I" and "J". These trees are thought to have been planted in the 1850's to surround the New Helvetia Cemetery, now the site of Sutter Junior High School. Another good place to see several California Sycamores all in a row is on the west side of 20th Street between "F" and "G" Streets (as shown in the photo).



Neighborhood Treats - Rocks in the Wild

Painted rocks have been showing up all over Boulevard Park! The top side is brightly colored; the underside has a typed label directing the lucky finder to take a photo of the rock, then post the photo and the rock's location on Facebook (look for "Art Stones: Rocks in the Wild"). The finder can keep the rock or hide it again, following the Facebook site to see where it pops up next. If you have a "treat" to share, please send the location and a photo to Margaret Buss (bussmlou@gmail.com).

Thanks to neighbor Clary Tepper for this month's tip!

The Little Free Library Movement

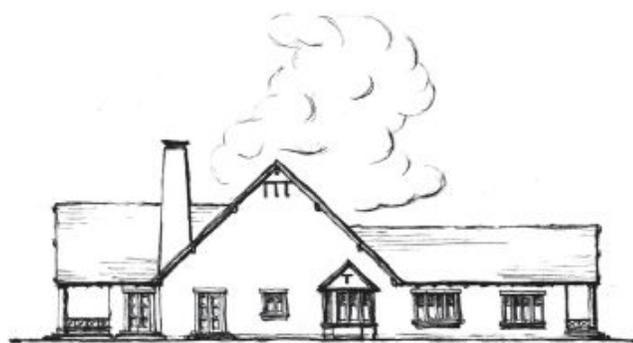
Once we started looking for the Little Free Libraries in Boulevard Park, we found them on almost every street. Neighbor Clary Tepper clued us in to the Little Free Library website, and here's what we learned:

"Little Free Library" (LFL) is a nonprofit devoted to creating neighborhood-based reading exchange with the goal of improving literacy and fostering a sense of community.

A Little Free Library is a "take a book, return a book" free book exchange, most commonly using a small wooden box with a gable roof for the books. Anyone may take a book or bring a book to share. Little Free Library book-exchanges have a personal touch because real people are sharing their favorite books with their neighbors. Installed outdoors near sidewalks or in other public spaces, the wooden boxes provide 24/7 access to books and encourage a love of reading by example. The Little Free Library is an international phenomenon, with locations around the world.

Would you or neighbors like to set up a book exchange on your block? LFL has starter kits—you can buy a book-box pre-made or you can use one of their templates to build one. If you register and map your book-box, the location will be posted on the LFL website. For all this and more, visit <https://littlefreelibrary.org>.

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J Street Goes on a Diet

As reported in the *Sacramento Bee* and other news outlets in late January, the city will be putting J Street on a so-called “road diet” between 19th and 30th Streets, reducing the existing three traffic lanes to two and installing a bike lane along the south side of the street, between the parking strip and the sidewalk (<http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/transportation/back-seat-driver/article195679994.html>). “Parking protected bike lanes” provide cyclists with safer commute routes. They are new to Sacramento but are being tried in a number of cities, including Oakland and Los Angeles. The traffic lane reduction also should reduce traffic speed. Studies show that three lanes unconsciously signal a fast arterial to drivers, whereas being confined to two lanes leads them to drive more slowly. Restricting lanes does not necessarily mean more traffic congestion or delays. Some traffic studies show that the same volume of cars may get through, as long as speeds are steady and well-regulated. The city believes any delays will be measured “in seconds, not minutes.” Spillover to adjacent streets is possible, however, as homebound commuters seek a faster way to go east. But the advantage of the central city’s grid system is that drivers can cut over to other streets at almost any time, diffusing the volume of traffic. In Boulevard Park, the half-street diverters created by the Midtown Traffic Plan in 1999 encourage that diffusion. Except for D Street, the diverters are staggered so that drivers can proceed on through by traveling one block in either direction. The choice of two streets at those intersections automatically spreads the traffic load. South of J, there are no diverters, but existing traffic calming devices may encourage drivers to use different streets.

J Street Goes on a Diet (cont.)

The eventual impact of the J Street Diet and other street modifications on city traffic are uncertain. The city will be doing studies, and any results involving our neighborhood streets will be reported in *Park Beat*. Information about the project, “Sacramento Grid 3.0” (addressing pedestrian needs and multiple modes of transportation--bike, car, and bus), is in the report approved by the City Council in 2016. (http://www.sacgrid.com/img/Grid3.0_FinalReport_080816.pdf). Questions also can be directed by email to Jennifer Donlon Wyant, the City’s Project engineer (jdonlonwyant@cityofsacramento.org).

Free Income Tax Assistance

Residents with low to moderate income can get free help preparing their 2017 tax returns. Certified AARP volunteers will prepare tax forms for seniors (age 60 or older) during the week; on Saturdays, volunteers from the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program will help people of any age with annual incomes of \$54,000 or less. All forms will be filed electronically. Appointments are required.

For contact information, go to:

<http://www.cityofsacramento.org/HR/Volunteer-Opportunities/VITA>

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dave@davephilipp.com



Liz Edmonds
REALTOR
916.838.1208
liz@lizedmonds.com



Reminder - Renew your BPNA Membership for 2018

Boulevard Park Neighborhood Association Membership Form

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Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

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