The Almanac

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Uneven ground

How unequal land use harms communities in southern San Mateo County

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UNEVEN GROUND

How unequal land use harms communities in southern San Mateo County

By Kate Bradshaw
Almanac Staff Writer

The year was 1957, and two women, one white and one black, set out on an undercover investigation in Menlo Park and Palo Alto.

Their task was to investigate the hypothesis that real estate agents were conspiring to sell homes in certain neighborhoods to white people, and homes in certain other neighborhoods to black people.

They developed a plan that would ultimately prove their hypothesis all too correct: The black woman, who was not named in the study, would approach a real estate agent and express interest in purchasing a home in a predominantly white area. Then the white woman, researcher Elaine Johnson, would follow afterward, saying she was interested in buying a home in East Palo Alto or the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park, whose population had by then become predominantly black. Johnson would play naive, and record what she heard.

Over the course of 19 interviews the duo conducted (these included meetings with real estate agents in San Mateo, San Carlos, Redwood City and Los Altos as well, where similar interactions were reported), the agents nine times explicitly refused to sell the white researcher an East Palo Alto or Belle Haven home, said the area was not desirable, and stated that it was not desirable because the area had African American people living there.

While it's easy to dismiss this history as a time when laws and attitudes were different, the impacts of these discriminatory actions persist in the health outcomes these neighborhoods experience today.

Research has shown neighborhood racial and ethnic segregation to be associated with adverse impacts on health in areas including cardiovascular risk factors, elevated rates of infectious disease, and premature death. Minorities in segregated communities are also more likely to have limited employment opportunities and lower incomes, as well as to face shortages of safe and affordable housing, all factors that affect health.

San Mateo County Health Officer Dr. Scott Morrow, the county's top public health official, said the communities of North Fair Oaks, Belle Haven and East Palo Alto tend to light up as red flags on a number of indices when it comes to health problems because of bad health policy — linked with bad housing policy — compounded over generations.

In short, people with the lowest incomes are stuck in the least desirable and most polluted areas, he said. And now, the housing market is stretching those households to their breaking points.

This is borne out by The Almanac's research: Of 76 people The Almanac interviewed in the neighborhoods of Belle Haven, East Palo Alto and North Fair Oaks, more than half identified the cost of housing as their top health concern.

REVEALING RESEARCH

Below is an excerpt of one of the 1957 interviews the two women conducted with a Menlo Park real estate agent, published as part of a collection of exhibits presented in hearings about housing held by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission in California in 1960.

It demonstrates that the agent



Above, a construction site shows the changing landscape of East Palo Alto. Photo by Selijah Meacham. **Top:** Trash and debris litter an open field in East Palo Alto. Photo by Nathalia Arias.

ABOUT THIS STORY

This is the first of three stories in a series exploring the impacts of how land use affects health in the communities of North Fair Oaks, East Palo Alto and Belle Haven. The series was produced as a project for the USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism's 2019 California Fellowship.

The project was supported by Danielle Fox, engagement editor at the USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism. Three bilingual Sequoia High School students, Nataly Manzanero, Ashley Barraza and Mia Palacios, with the author, conducted more than 100 Spanish and English language interviews used in this report.

Some of the photos are provided by middle school students who live in East Palo Alto and participated in a summer program of Girls to Women, an East Palo Alto nonprofit working to empower girls and women in the community. They were asked to take photographs responding to the questions: "What makes your community healthy? What makes it unhealthy?"

and his colleagues clearly knew the laws regarding segregation and discrimination and flagrantly disregarded the intent of those laws to discourage community segregation.

The black woman reported that during her interview, she was treated well by the agent, who said he had lots of listings to show her.

Johnson, the white interviewer, got a more extensive response.

"Requested homes in my price range. Mentioned I had seen two homes I liked in the East Palo Alto area — one at 1140 Howard and one at 131 Hamilton. Realtor said, "I don't like to say this, and I don't want you to misunderstand, but we have a problem in that area." I asked what the problem was and whether it was a low area in danger of flooding during heavy rains. He said, "No; it is a Negro problem. There is a very high percentage there."

When I questioned how many, he replied, "About 52 percent of the children in the East Palo Alto schools are Negro."

I told him I liked some of the homes there and asked if he could sell me one. He replied, "Yes, but I want you to be happy and I must be honest with you. ... Personally, I am a vet and have fought with Negro troops and I don't mind them — but some people do, and property values drop when they enter a neighborhood."

"What causes that?"

"Well, so many white families get scared and so many houses go on sale at one time that values drop."

"Is it the entrance of the Negro family in the area that brings about this property devaluation, or that so many white families sell in panic?"

"Both; it is the fact that the Negro buys in a white neighborhood that causes the whites to worry and sell."

She then mentioned a Palo Alto home she'd seen that had dropped $700 over the weekend.

The realtor said, "That is a sign they are getting scared, for they are so near the Negro area of East Palo Alto, which is just on the other side of Bay Shore. Here you don't have to worry too much, for you have a fence on the west side, then Bay Shore Highway, then a high fence on the east side of the highway. This gives you a good barrier — at least a geographical barrier — to separate you from the colored area of East Palo Alto."

He then gave me another listing in Palo Alto, and I asked if that was in a "restricted area." He said, "Yes; it is on the west side of Bay Shore, and so far there has been no slopping over across Bay Shore, but there may be soon. So far the Negro people there have kept strictly within their lines."

I asked, "How do you keep them in that area — draw a nice, tight little rope around the East Palo Alto area?"

The realtor answered, "No; one Negro family moves into an area; then others follow. Of course, we realtors have been accused by Nak-Kap of promoting segregated areas along the peninsula."

I asked, "What is Nak-Kap?"

"That is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Why, just today I had a Negro woman looking for homes in this area, but we don't show them any property this side of Bay Shore."

The realtor gave me another listing — this in Menlo Park. I asked whether it was in a "restricted area."

He answered, "Of course, there is no restriction anymore because the Supreme Court says that we cannot restrict areas on the basis of color or creed any more. However, property owners can keep an area all white by banding together and agreeing to refuse to sell to orientals or Negroes."

I agreed to return over the weekend with my husband.

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This practice, called "blockbusting," the researchers found to be widespread across the Peninsula. A real estate agent would try to scare white homeowners in a neighborhood into selling their home at a low price by telling them that black people were buying houses nearby, and then would go back and sell those houses at higher prices to black families, drawing upon white racial fears to gain profit and segregate the community.

Building on this research, a 1961 report by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission on housing found that "In the Palo Alto area ... only 3 of the 600 real estate brokers and salesmen show property on a nondiscriminatory basis."

According to the commission report, many families in Belle Haven and the nearby Palo Alto Gardens, which were also subject to blockbusting, wished to buy homes in other neighborhoods, but were "blocked in their efforts by the concentrated efforts of peninsula realtors to keep them within these clearly defined areas east of Bayshore Highway."

At the same time, the Federal Housing Administration and veterans Administration refused to insure mortgages for African Americans in designated white areas and did not insure mortgages for whites in neighborhoods where African Americans were present, according to Richard Rothstein's 2017 book, "The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of how our Government Segregated America."

Rothstein reports that, amid a housing shortage in the area surrounding Stanford in the post-World War II years, Stanford professor and novelist Wallace Stegner joined and helped to lead a co-op, called the Peninsula Housing Association of Palo Alto, that purchased a 260-acre ranch near the university campus. The co-op made plans to develop 400 homes, a shopping area, a gas station, a restaurant and shared recreational facilities on commonly owned land.

But because three of the first 150 families to join the co-op were African American, the banks would not finance construction or issue mortgages to the co-op, following Federal Housing Administration policy. Unable to find funding, the co-op dissolved and in 1950, the land was sold to a developer who agreed not to sell any properties to African Americans. That area became Ladera.

HUMAN IMPACT

A map of the census tracts that bear the most significant environmental health risks, as measured by CalEnviroScreen 3.0, an index of environmental health, aligns strikingly with a dot map of where residents of color live in southern San Mateo County — specifically, in North Fair Oaks, Belle Haven and East Palo Alto. Despite being situated within one of the wealthiest areas in the U.S., these communities face substantially greater environmental threats like hazardous waste, impaired water, excessive traffic, housing burden, linguistic isolation, groundwater threats, poor education opportunities and asthma in their neighborhoods.

East Palo Alto reports that life expectancy in the city is 62 years, 13 years shorter than the San Mateo County average of 75. Children under 17 have the highest obesity rates in the county, and kids with asthma are hospitalized and taken in for emergency visits at nearly three times the county rate, according to the city.

On the Peninsula, these communities have historically, to varying degrees, not controlled their governance.

East Palo Alto became a city only in 1983, while Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood only now has its first City Council representative in three decades, after the city switched to having district elections last year in response to a lawsuit threat. North Fair Oaks, an unincorporated neighborhood nestled between Atherton and Redwood City, has an advisory community council, but is ultimately governed by the county Board of Supervisors. In the words of the community council's chair, Ever Rodriguez, "Our councils are only advisory bodies. ...We are a dog without teeth. We can bark but we don't bite."

POLLUTION

A February 2018 study by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published in the American Journal of Public Health reported that people of color are more likely to live near highways and be exposed to particulate matter that can cause and worsen health problems. Specifically, it found that black people are 1.54 times more likely to be environmentally burdened with exposure to tiny particulate matter of 2.5 micrometers or less, and other non-white people are 1.28 times more likely to bear this burden than their white counterparts.

According to the EPA, exposure to these small particles can, in the short-term, aggravate lung disease, cause asthma attacks and acute bronchitis, and increase susceptibility to respiratory infections; in the long term, it has been associated with reduced lung function, chronic bronchitis, and premature death.

But its guidance on how to avoid the particles is limited. In an informational brochure about the particles and their health impacts, the EPA advises people that they're more likely to be affected by particles the more strenuous the activity and the longer one is outdoors. "If your activity involves prolonged or heavy exertion, reduce your activity time — or substitute another that involves less exertion. Go for a walk instead of a jog, for example.

"Plan outdoor activities for days when particle levels are lower. And don't exercise near busy roads; particle levels are generally higher in these areas," it advises.

It's a tall order to ask someone to avoid exercise or spending time outdoors near a busy street when their neighborhood is surrounded by busy streets, or to perhaps exercise indoors in an area where reasonably priced gym access is a rarity in a sea of exclusive country clubs and private fitness studios.

That's the situation Menlo Park Vice Mayor Cecilia Taylor says she faces as a Belle Haven resident. Belle Haven, a triangle-shaped neighborhood with a population of about 5,000, is bordered on all sides by "busy streets": U.S. 101, Bayfront Expressway, and the ever-congested Willow Road. Taylor likes to exercise on the track at Kelly Park, she says, but only goes at certain times of the day because the air smells polluted during rush hour.

Belle Haven, she said, "was never designed for it to be a prosperous and healthy community. There's no way to do that with the number of homes placed there, and the number of people."

TOXIC WASTE

For many years, Belle Haven was the closest neighborhood to the city's dump, now Bedwell Bayfront Park; many of the region's dumps ringed the Bay. And just across University Avenue along Bay Road in East Palo Alto, Romic Chemical Corporation began operations in 1964 and was a significant source of pollution in

See **UNEVEN GOUND,** *page 16*



Photo courtesy of Zeenat Dhillon

A new bike and pedestrian bridge over U.S. 101 between Newell Road and Clark Avenue in East Palo Alto now gives formerly isolated residents of the Woodland Park area easier access to the rest of the city's services on the other side of the highway.
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UNEVEN GROUND

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the community for many years. Later, community pressure and a series of environmental violations forced its shutdown in 2007.

The corporation had a decades-long history of leaking pollutants into the community. In 1995 it was cited for discharging cyanide into the sewer lines; there were fires there in 1989 and 1993; earlier that year a worker was injured when his safety equipment leaked while he was cleaning toxic residue out of a railroad tank car. In 1999, it was cited for failing to notify the Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant when it detected a compound in its wastewater discharge known to cause cancer. In 2005, the company agreed to pay $849,500 for violations between 1999 and 2004 such as storing waste in the wrong containers, according to the San Mateo County Times.

It wasn't until May 2007 that the chemical recycling operation was ordered to shut down, following incidents in May 2004 and March 2006 when two employees were seriously burned, as well as in June 2006, when 4,000 gallons of solvents were released at the facility. Youth activists involved with East Palo Alto-based Youth United for Community Action are credited for their petitions, marches and rallies that pressured the operation to shut down.

As of February 2018, the site was still closed due to subsurface contamination, according to the California Department of Toxic Substances.

The Romic story made East Palo Alto a poster child for the environmental justice movement. Since then, the city has been taking steps toward those ideals to guard itself against more insidious threats, such as the frenzied Bayside growth of its neighbor, Menlo Park. While the development proposals in the works there are less likely to lead to toxic waste problems, and in fact will have to comply with rigorous green building standards, they threaten to exacerbate gentrification pressures on the community, which has seen a rapid decline of 6% — down to 11.3% — in its African American population between 2010 and 2017, according to census data.

In 2016, East Palo Alto filed a lawsuit against the city of Menlo Park and won a settlement that is likely to slow the glut of development projects proposed on the city's Bay side. It requires developers that seek to build at the "bonus" level of density, or propose a master plan, such as Facebook's "Willow Village" project, to conduct environmental impact analyses for the projects. Those analyses will have to look at traffic and housing impacts.

THE HOUSING CRISIS

As Morrow, the county health official, explains, the biggest health problem countywide today is the lack of affordable housing.

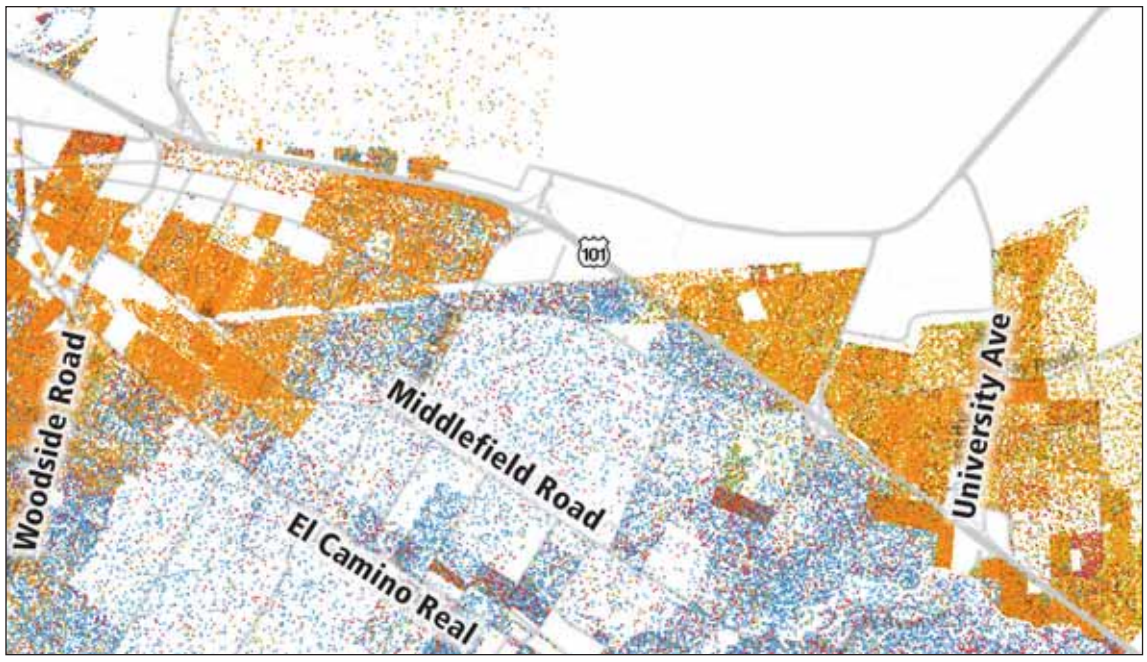
"That has become, in the last two or three years, by far the biggest problem that we have ... It's very frustrating. We don't have the tools to deal with it."

At the core of the housing crisis, he added, are the perverse incentives built into the tax structure that create the motivation for cities to support the construction of office space and not housing in cities.

"Until you fix the underlying policy, we can throw little things at this, but nothing's going to fix that," he said. "You can't be healthy without a home."

The pressures of high-cost housing, he said, are widening the wealth gap in the community. There are low-income folks who don't have the resources to move, and the rich folks, but the people in the middle who can't access subsidies and can't pay for even substandard housing are "leaving in droves," he asserted.

Increasingly, among those



Map by the University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

The racial dot map shows the population density and diversity in the U.S. based on 2010 census data. Each dot represents a person. Blue represents white people; green, black; red, Asian; orange, Hispanic; and brown, other, Native American or multi-racial people. **On the cover:** A map of the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 index is overlaid with the top environmental concerns in unhealthy census tracts.



people in the middle are professionals like doctors and nurses, a fact that is affecting the department's recruitment efforts.

"We don't even pay our doctors enough to afford substandard housing," he said.

The dearth of affordable housing throughout these communities hits low-income people especially hard and can harm their health in an "infinite number" of ways, Morrow added.

Dr. Rakhi Singh, medical director of the Fair Oaks Health Clinic in North Fair Oaks, explained a few of these impacts.

First, there's the immediate risk of living in substandard housing conditions.

Some people can afford to rent rooms only in housing situations where they don't have access to a refrigerator or kitchen, and so don't have access to the tools to prepare nutritious food for themselves. (These are generally the more affordable, albeit uncomfortable, living situations advertised on Craigslist.)

Researchers at U.C. Berkeley's Urban Displacement Project studied displacement in San Mateo County and found that when renters were displaced — whether by being formally evicted, harassed out by landlords, priced out by market forces or pushed out by poor housing conditions — their options were limited by market forces and exclusionary practices.

About one in three displaced households experienced homelessness or marginal housing within two years after being displaced. One-third left the county. These displaced people moved to neighborhoods with fewer job opportunities, worse environmental and safety challenges, and fewer health care resources, the report found.

Because affordable rent can be so hard to come by, people in these situations may also be hesitant to approach a landlord if there is a mold or pest problem. Mold can trigger asthma or allergies and pests can spread disease.

One Menlo Park woman was asked to move out of her apartment after she complained about cockroaches, the Berkeley report noted.

Others end up stuck in cramped housing conditions, which has been shown to negatively impact mental health and increase the risk of exposure to respiratory and other infectious diseases, according to the report.

Luisa Buada, CEO of the Ravenswood Family Health Center, said that while there's been a consistent population of unhoused people who may also experience substance and mental health problems, the unhoused population has expanded substantially in the last three or four years to include people who are working or who lost their previous housing situation. RV living in particular, is on the rise.

A countywide count of homeless people conducted in January of this year reported a 127% increase in the number of people living in RVs since 2017.

Among patients who are unhoused and exposed to the elements, health challenges often reported are feet problems, bad circulation because people don't have good places to sit or sleep, and abscesses and sores, she added.

More widespread and insidious are the ways that rent-related stress affects other aspects of well-being.

"There's an enormous number of people who are housing-stressed and think they're going to lose their house," Morrow added.

This stress, Singh said, seriously hampers people's ability to lead a full life.

Sometimes patients come in with a symptom like sleeplessness, Singh noted. After talking for a while, she added, the patient will reveal that he or she works two jobs to pay rent and has children and family members to care for.

Another patient might come in with lower back pain because he does heavy lifting all day. A doctor might prescribe rest, but he pushes back, saying he can't take off more than a day for financial reasons. In the informal workforce, if people don't work, they don't get paid, she said.

These patients in particular have difficulty following through with longer-term health programs like physical therapy, she added, since they're losing income every time they go.

Despite these stressors, 60 of the 76 residents of Belle Haven, East Palo Alto and North Fair Oaks The Almanac interviewed said they plan to stay in the community for the next five years, and 59 said they felt a sense of belonging in their community.

"I've lived here my whole life," said East Palo Alto resident Gregoria Villarreal Diaz. "Where else would I go?"

Jesus Ruiz, also an East Palo Alto resident, said that even though he and his family sometimes live paycheck to paycheck and his household's monthly rent has increased by $400 in the last three years, he's been in the community for 23 years and considers himself a part of it. "We have jobs, family and friends here," he said.

Given the urgency and broad health risks that housing challenges create for low-income locals in particular, health care professionals in San Mateo County are increasingly focused on helping people make lifestyle changes to boost their health, or "manage wellness" instead of treat diseases, Singh said.

This shift has prompted health providers including the Ravenswood clinic to try to address broader challenges in the community that affect health, termed the "social determinants of health" — defined by the World Health Organization as "the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work and age, and the systems put in place to deal with illness."

"The reason we exist — while we call ourselves a medical home for patients — is essentially to reduce access barriers to care," Buada said. "It all goes together. Our work is about health justice."

Edward Ehelebe

January 6, 1926 – August 20, 2019

Edward Ehelebe of Portola Valley passed away on August 20th at 93 ½. He was surrounded by family and friends.

Ed studied at the University of Oregon. He was a Merchant Marine with travels from New Guinea to the Philippines as well as ventures to Europe and South America. He was a late draftee to the Army and spent time in Paris where he met his wife of 63 years, Pam, in Paris. Ed worked at IBM as a Systems Analyst for 30 years.

A huge fan of tennis, he was a regular at Alpine Hills Swim and Tennis Club. Until a few weeks ago he regularly attended a dinner set up for all the "Old Guard" at the Club. He was a lover of nature and felt lucky to live in Portola Valley. Ed also owned several acres of land on the coast of Oregon. He first went to that area as a boy scout and later purchased some of the land that he had camped on as a child. He loved aircraft and had a regular breakfast with pilot friends who shared that interest. He made many friends up until the end of his life with his positive attitude.

Ed's family consists of his wife Pam (preceded him in death 11 months ago), son Michael of Washington state and his daughters Diane Ehelebe-Read of San Jose and Nancy Tevanian of Palo Alto. His grandchildren, Zack, Anna and John were his greatest treasures. Ed's spirit was strong until the end.

PAID OBITUARY

Public Notices

995 Fictitious Name Statement

MPH DESIGN
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 282108
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
MPH Design, located at 242 Donohoe Street, East Palo Alto, CA 94303, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
SARAH CAPLAN
242 Donohoe Street
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 2, 2019.
(ALM Aug. 14, 21, 28; Sep. 4, 2019)

JESSICA R. CLARK, LMFT
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 282110
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
Jessica R. Clark, LMFT, located at 655 Oak Grove Ave. #170, Menlo Park, CA 94026, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
JESSICA R. CLARK
655 Oak Grove Ave. #170
Menlo Park, CA 94026
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 2, 2019.
(ALM Aug. 14, 21, 28; Sep. 4, 2019)

MENDOZA TRUCKING
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 282193
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
Mendoza Trucking, located at 200 Santa Inez Ave., San Bruno, CA 94066, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
MARIA GUADALUPE DURAN SALDIVAR
200 Santa Inez Ave.
San Bruno, CA 94066
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 9, 2019.
(ALM Aug. 14, 21, 28; Sep. 4, 2019)

LAW OFFICE OF KHLOE LEE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 282074
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
Law Office of Khloe Lee, located at 303 Twin Dolphin Dr. Ste. 600, Redwood City, CA 94065, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
KYOUNGHWA LEE
138 Fleetwood Dr.
San Carlos, CA 94070
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on Nov. 16, 2015.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 30, 2019.
(ALM Aug. 28; Sep. 4, 11, 18, 2019)

SEAM Partners
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 282199
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
SEAM Partners, located at 592 Sand Hill Circle, Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
ED REV II LLC
592 Sand Hill Cir
Menlo Park, CA 94025
California
This business is conducted by: A Limited Liability Company.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 06-26-2019.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 9, 2019.
(ALM Aug. 21, 28; Sep. 4, 11, 2019)

COLSIN TRUCKING
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 282204
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
Colsin Trucking, located at 1928 Cooley Ave. Apto-60, East Palo Alto, CA 94303, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
ADOLFO LOPEZ LOPEZ
1928 Cooley Ave. Apto-60
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 8/01/2019.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 12, 2019.
(ALM Aug. 21, 28; Sep. 4, 11, 2019)

DUOTECH
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 282260
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
Duotech, located at 1134 Crane Street Suite 216, Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
MUSA AHMADU KIDA
7 Ikoyi Club Road
Lagos Lagos Nigeria
ADEGBOYEGA MABOGUNJE
2353 Thompson Court
Mountain View, CA 94043
This business is conducted by: A General Partnership.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on March 23, 2004.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 15, 2019.
(ALM Aug. 21, 28; Sep. 4, 11, 2019)

EQUIST PERFORMANCE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 282279
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
Equist Performance, located at 130 Hildebrand Rd., La Honda, CA 94020, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
SUZETTE HAINES
130 Hildebrand Rd.
La Honda, CA 94020
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 19, 2019.
(ALM Sep. 4, 11, 18, 25, 2019)

WPV-READY
WPV-CERT
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 282373
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) WPV-Ready, 2.) WPV-CERT, located at 808 Portola Valley, Portola Valley, California 94028, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
CITIZENS FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM, INC.
808 Portola Road,
Portola Valley, California 94028
California
This business is conducted by: A Corporation.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 26, 2019.
(ALM Sep. 4, 11, 18, 25, 2019)

997 All Other Legals

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 19CIV04452
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: DAVID ZEKE CHEN filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
DAVID ZHANG to DAVID ZEKE CHEN.
THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING: September 24, 2019, 9:00 a.m., Dept.: PJ of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.
A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
THE ALMANAC
Date: August 8, 2019
/s/ John L. Grandsaert
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Aug. 21, 28; Sep. 4, 11, 2019)

Uneven Ground, Part II: Navigating food deserts and swamps

By Kate Bradshaw
Almanac Staff Writer

When Kendy Mendoza of East Palo Alto and his wife experienced health scares over the last few years, they took action to turn their lives around. Eight years ago, when his wife was diagnosed with diabetes, she cut out bread and tortillas from her diet, he said.

Two years ago, after a heart-related health scare, he added, he changed his diet and exercise habits, and now hikes and eats 70% more fruits and vegetables.

"My life is changing," he said.

He explained all of this during an interview with The Almanac while he cooked fried chicken in front of St. Francis Church in East Palo Alto to feed the post-service crowd one Sunday because, he acknowledged, it still sells better than vegetables.

As The Almanac discussed in part one of this series, a number of local health clinics are increasingly focused on trying to address the "social determinants" of health, seeking to help people to proactively develop healthy habits that reduce their need for acute medical services.

One of those key determinants of health is diet and access to healthy food, an area in which there are significant differences in access based on neighborhood.

The discrepancy isn't hard to see: In Palo Alto, Redwood City and Menlo Park, there are four Safeways, two Trader Joes, two Whole Foods, two Grocery Outlets and a number of other specialty and local grocery stores. But head across U.S. 101 and the grocery stores become few and far between, making it harder for residents to access healthy food and impacting the health of that area's residents.

ABOUT THIS STORY

This is part two of a three-part series exploring why the communities of the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park, North Fair Oaks and East Palo Alto experience greater environmental health burdens than their neighboring jurisdictions; how these burdens impact people's lives; and what people are doing to help or worsen them today. This section explores how disparate access to healthy food impacts these communities. Part one presented some theories about why these three communities experience greater environmental burdens and examined the area's history of segregation. It also discussed how the high cost of housing in these areas is disproportionately affecting the health of low-income families.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Belle Haven and East Palo Alto — as well as some areas on the Stanford campus — are considered to be "food deserts": areas where low-income people have limited access to healthy foods. A food desert is defined as an area, in an urban setting, where a significant number or portion of residents are more than a half-mile from the nearest supermarket.

Sandra Green, a Belle Haven resident who has lived in Menlo Park since 1957, supports two grandchildren and has diabetes, said that if there were one thing she could change about the community to make it healthier, she'd install a grocery store in the neighborhood.



Photo by Magali Gauthier

Green peppers and apples are some of the diabetes-friendly foods offered at the food pharmacy at a clinic run by Samaritan House in North Fair Oaks.



Photo by Magali Gauthier

Tim Purdy, a volunteer with Samaritan House, grabs some rice and beans from the North Fair Oaks facility's "food pharmacy," which provides foods tailored to help diabetic patients control their blood sugar levels.

The need for grocery services in Belle Haven is particularly acute as high-rise apartments and office buildings spring up around it, adding more residents and blocking them all in with dismal traffic gridlock. As Menlo Park developed its new zoning on the city's Bay side to allow for all this growth, residents responding to a range of surveys over and over again identified their top priority for a retail space to be a grocery store — outranking restaurants, a pharmacy, a bank or an ATM.

As part of Facebook's proposed "Willow Village" project, the city's largest-ever development proposal, the corporation has said it's committed to bringing a grocery store to the community. But residents have wondered whether the specific vendor chosen will offer groceries that are both affordably priced and high quality. They also question why they should have to bear the burden for so much new growth and traffic to get a service that they believe should always have been in the area.

According to researchers, it's not enough just to have nearby access to food; that food has to be nutritious to be a true community asset, otherwise the area is considered a food "swamp."

A 2012 report by San Mateo County calculated the ratio of fast food restaurants and convenience stores to produce vendors, supermarkets or farmers' markets. The report found the ratio to be about seven to one in Redwood City, four to one in Menlo Park, and about one to one in East Palo Alto. Portola Valley is the only town where there are more "healthy" options — produce vendors, farmers' markets and supermarkets — than "unhealthy" options, or fast food restaurants and convenience stores, with a ratio of 0.7 to one.

But even in areas where there is a supermarket nearby, many households struggle to afford fresh fruits and vegetables. A 2015 report by SPUR, the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association, found that in the Bay Area, it's more common for households to be unable to afford fresh fruits and vegetables than to be unable to find them nearby.

Health care challenges

In addition to the fact that these neighborhoods experience greater difficulty in accessing nutritious foods to bolster long-term health, many residents worry about the cost of health care. Yet others in immigrant families must also contend with the potential impacts to their immigration status that accessing both health care and food aid through the government could have with a new Trump administration policy set to go into effect next month.

When asked if they had ever delayed seeking health care because of the cost, 34 of the 101 people The Almanac interviewed said yes.

"If we do get sick, I think a lot before we go to the ER or the doctor," North Fair Oaks resident Alejandra Juarez said.

A 10-year-old from North Fair Oaks who didn't want his name to be used said he hasn't had to delay accessing health services because he has Medi-Cal, but he notices that the adults around him worry.

Among the 101 people who live in Menlo Park, North Fair Oaks, Palo Alto and East Palo Alto that The Almanac interviewed about their health concerns in the community, key concerns that emerged, following the predominant concern about the cost of housing, were the cost of health care, access to healthy food, and diabetes.

Twenty-one people rated the cost of health care, 10 rated diabetes, and 11 rated access to healthy food among their top three health concerns.

Diabetes and heart disease, both of which can be the consequence of a poor diet, are the leading causes of death and severe illness in San Mateo County, according to the county health department.

See **UNEVEN GROUND,** *page 8*

UNEVEN GROUND

continued from page 5

About 12% of the adults in San Mateo County have diabetes, and of those, about 25% are Latino. About 15% are Asian and 8% are Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Black residents are more likely to be hospitalized due to short- and long-term complications from diabetes, according to county data.

Dietary supplements

A free clinic run by Samaritan House in North Fair Oaks, which mainly serves people without insurance, has taken an innovative approach to helping some of the most vulnerable patients in the community manage their diabetes through diet.

Through a partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank, the predominant food bank in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, the clinic runs a "food pharmacy" aimed at helping people diagnosed with diabetes manage their blood sugar.

Recently, the clinic's medical director of health care services, Jason Wong, showed The Almanac a small storeroom at the North Fair Oaks clinic full of foods like beans, fresh produce, milk, eggs, cheese, turkey, fish and tofu.

Clinic patients with diabetes are given a quarter-sheet "prescription" form from their doctor encouraging them to stock up on whatever food they want from the storeroom, Wong said.

About 20% of the patients seen at the clinic, or about 200, are seen for diabetes, he said. While the paper prescriptions are largely symbolic, he added, the clinic's emphasis on healthy food and the results they've achieved in helping people manage their diabetes are anything but.

The food pharmacy has been running for about three years now, and in that time, Wong said, the clinic has found that patients who access the service have had as much success managing their diabetes as they would with an oral medication, as determined by the A1C test, a measure of how much glucose or sugar is in one's bloodstream.

Type 2 diabetes is diagnosed when one has an A1C level of 6.5 or greater; on average, Wong reported, the program lowered diabetes patients' A1C levels by 1%, from 9% to 8%. A normal A1C reading is considered to be 5.7% or lower.

About 200 patients are enrolled in the food prescription program, and the clinic sees about 70 of those patients a month, he added.

The shift is helping patients feel better, have more energy and save money, he said.



Photo by Magali Gauthier

Dr. Jason Wong, medical director at Samaritan House's North Fair Oaks clinic, says the food pharmacy has been as helpful for patients seeking to control their diabetes as an oral medication.

Demo-ing deliciousness

Still, Wong noted, there are yet more steps to supporting people who are trying to eat more healthfully than just sending them home with some kale or tofu — for example, teaching people how to prepare those foods, and making sure they can access enough of it to satisfy their hunger.

> 'It's not good policy for our community for people to not have access to basic food supports.'
>
> Tracy Weatherby
> vice president of strategy and advocacy at Second Harvest Food Bank

Second Harvest has been a leader in eliminating these final barriers, said the organization's director of nutrition, Maya Murthy.

The nonprofit offers cooking classes and has a team of people who, at food distribution events, give cooking demonstrations using simple recipes, as well as teach people how to read a food label and understand what the right portion size for a given food should be.

Murthy understands that for low-income people working long hours or waking up at the earliest hours of the morning for long commutes, there's hardly time to indulge in preparing elaborate "foodie" meals with the freshest produce money can buy — let alone hire private chefs to prepare those meals for them.

In the last couple of years, she said, the program has been focused on helping people to make the best choices for their health, recognizing that this may not look the same for everyone.

Her goal, and that of her team of volunteer "health ambassadors," is to help people feel good about picking up a new piece of produce they've never had before and leave feeling confident they can go home and prepare it into something delicious.

It's an empowering thing, she explained, to feel good around food, and to treat cooking as a nourishing act of self-care. It's a ritual that can be particularly valuable in communities that have experienced trauma, she added.

She tests the recipes herself to make sure they're not too complicated.

"Everybody has some complicated relationship with food, for whatever reason that is. I think one of our roles as being on the nutrition team here is the start of the process of healing that," she said.

Second Harvest works closely with local clinics to ensure that vulnerable families not only access the free food the food bank offers, but that they enroll in food assistance programs for which they might be eligible.

According to Tracy Weatherby, vice president of strategy and advocacy at Second Harvest, CalFresh, California's federal food aid program, can provide monthly benefits as low as $15 worth of food, but the average CalFresh recipient the nonprofit helped sign up last year received more than $350 worth of food per month. Households that attend distributions at Second Harvest receive an average of $245 a month in food, she said.

Changing rules

The impacts these programs have in bolstering the acute- and long-term health of community members are under threat, however.

Under a new policy set by the Trump administration set to take effect on Oct. 15, immigrant families in some circumstances who access services like CalFresh, as well as Medicaid and housing assistance, will be considered a "public charge" and may denied green cards.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services uses the "public charge" test to decide who to let into the U.S. and who should get a green card, as well as whether to adjust or extend someone's immigration status.

This test is not used when people apply for citizenship, according to the Health Consumer Alliance. The rule does not apply to children under 21 who use Medi-Cal or to pregnant women, according to the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County. It also would not apply to people who already hold green cards or to people who have any kind of humanitarian visa.

"There's a very large number of people for whom it would have no effect at all. That being said, the intent of the rule is to scare people off of all public programs ... . It's going to make our communities hungrier and less healthy," Weatherby said.

According to a letter of opposition to the rule change signed by county Supervisor Dave Pine last year, while it's not known exactly how many people will be impacted by the rule change, an analysis by the Migration Policy Institute found that under the new policy, 41% of San Mateo County residents who are not U.S. citizens, or about 32,600 people, are members of families that use at least one of the four means-tested benefits that might be considered in a public-charge determination, compared with 2% under the current policy. About 72% of these residents work.

The rule is expected to face major legal challenges and would not apply retroactively, Weatherby noted.

However, she added, since the rule was proposed, it has already created fear, apprehension and government distrust in the communities Second Harvest serves.

"Taking away nutrition from people who are trying to get themselves settled, who are working hard, is a very counterproductive policy for our communities," she said. "CalFresh is a basic safety net program. If people need a few months or a year to get set up to be successful, that should not be held against them in any way, shape or form."

These concerns could impact children's access to nutritious food: About 76% of households receiving CalFresh in East Palo Alto are households with children; the same applies to about 86% of North Fair Oaks families.

Weatherby said that Second Harvest staff members have reported that it's been more difficult to get people to sign up for CalFresh since the threat of the rule change went public last year. In some school districts, she said, it's been reported that families are not signing their children up for free or reduced-price lunch programs at school, even though those are not connected to the public-charge rule.

The Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County signed on to a lawsuit, filed Aug. 14, seeking to block the implementation of the policy, arguing that it is unlawful and unconstitutional and would disproportionately threaten immigrant families, particularly those of color.

"The Trump administration has deliberately designed this policy to target families of color, which is part of its overall blueprint to change the face of what we look like as a nation and who is considered worthy of being an American. It threatens immigrants of color with exclusion and Americans of color with deprivation or family separation. And it aims to deny working-class immigrants of color the ability to thrive in the land of opportunity," said Marielena Hincapie, executive director of the National Immigration Law Center, another group that supported

See **UNEVEN GROUND,** *page 17*



Photo by Selijah Meacham

The Ecumenical Hunger Program is another nonprofit that provides nutritious food support to families and individuals, including to those who do not have means of cooking or refrigerating their food.

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the lawsuit, in an Aug. 16 press statement. "We will not stand for it. We're fighting back against this racist policy, and we're going to win the fight to protect immigrant families."

When the rule takes effect, Weatherby said, the nonprofit is planning to coordinate with nearby free immigrant legal aid organizations to help clients work through their options. If they determine they have to stop using food programs, people will still be able to access food from Second Harvest.

That, of course, will put increased pressure on the food bank to fight local hunger.

While Weatherby said she was confident the food bank could rise to the challenge, she added, "It's not good policy for our community for people to not have access to basic food supports."

Another less well-known shift that could dramatically affect who accesses services like CalFresh is a proposed rule change that would eliminate the concept of "broad-based categorical eligibility."

Currently, that rule permits states to have some flexibility in how they administer programs like CalFresh; the state can now cross-qualify households without requiring separate applications, and screen households at higher income levels based on other significant household expenses like housing, medical and child care costs.

"That's really important to an area like here (with) an extremely high cost of living," Weatherby said. If it takes effect, many people Second Harvest works with would be taken immediately off of CalFresh, she noted.

The proposed rule is open to public comment until Sept. 23. Go to is.gd/CalFresh304 to submit comments.

Kate Bradshaw reported this story as part of her University of Southern California Annenberg Center for Health Journalism 2019 California Fellowship, with engagement support from the center's interim engagement editor, Danielle Fox.

LEHUA GREENMAN



"The loving memories of those we lost on 9/11 will never fade away. Wishing you Peace on Patriot Day and always."

650.245.1845 COMPASS

Resolution No. 2169_ (2019)

RESOLUTION OF INTENTION TO ANNEX CERTAIN TERRITORY TO THE WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT ON-SITE WASTEWATER DISPOSAL ZONE

Lands of Stone

The District Board of West Bay Sanitary District finds and determines as follows:

A. This Resolution of Intention is adopted pursuant to the District's "Zone Master Annexation Resolution" ("ZOMAR"), which was adopted by the District Board August 12, 1996. The provisions of ZOMAR are incorporated by reference into this Resolution of Intention.

B. The District has received an application to annex a parcel of real property (the "Parcel") to the District's On-Site Wastewater Disposal Zone (the "Zone"). The Parcel is described in Exhibit "A" attached to this Resolution of Intention and the description contained in the Exhibits are incorporated by reference. The name and address of the applicants and the number, type, volume and location of on-site wastewater disposal systems which are proposed to operate on the parcels to be annexed are described in Exhibit "B" attached to this Resolution of Intention and the information contained in the Exhibit are incorporated by reference.

C. The applicants have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the District Board that the Parcel constitutes "real property" for the purposes of Section 2(b) of ZOMAR in that:

X All of the conditions described in Subsections i., ii., iii., iv. and v. of ZOMAR Section 2(b) are satisfied; or

Other conditions exist which demonstrate that the Parcel will benefit directly or indirectly from the activities of the Zone. If appli cable, those conditions are also set forth in Exhibit "B" and are incorporated by reference.

D. All of the conditions and requirements of ZOMAR Sections 2(a), 2(c), 2(d) and 2(e) have been fully satisfied.

In consideration of the foregoing findings and determinations,

IT IS RESOLVED by the District Board as follows:

1. It is the intention of the District Board to annex the Parcel to the Zone pursuant to the provisions of ZOMAR and applicable provisions of law.

2. In conjunction with a meeting of the District Board to be duly and regularly called and conducted, the Board will conduct a Public Hearing for the purpose of considering all matters pertaining to this Resolution of Intention.

The time, date and place of the Public Hearing are:

Date: October 9, 2019

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Bay Sanitary District Offices, 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025

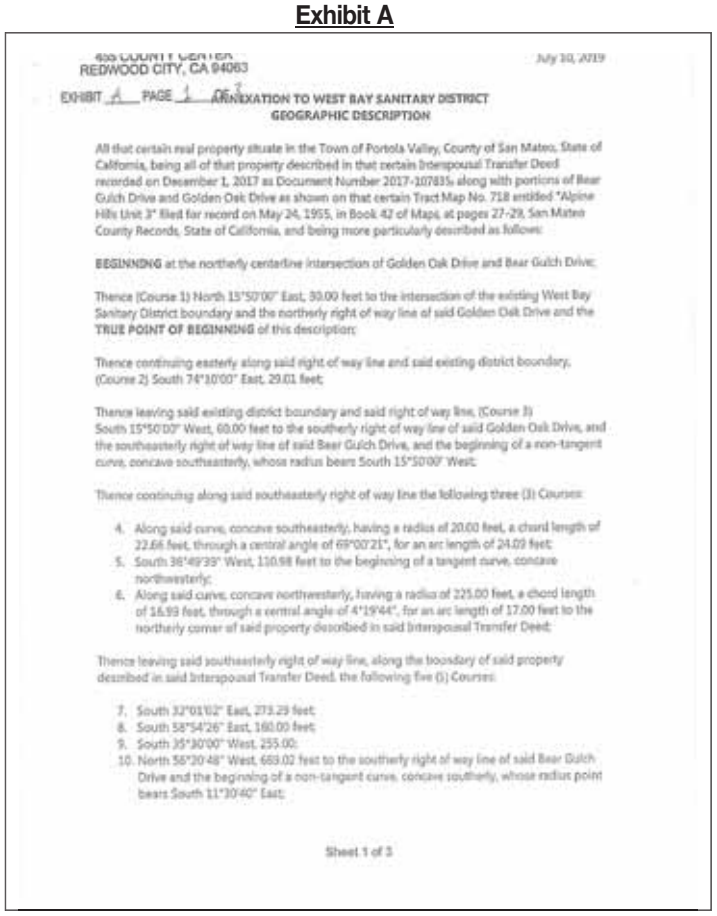
At the Public Hearing, all interested persons will be heard.

3. This Resolution of Intention shall be published and copies shall be delivered to the persons and entities as specified in ZOMAR Section 2(e)(i.).

4. A true copy of this Resolution of Intention shall promptly be filed for record in the office of the County Recorder of the County of San Mateo.

5. The District Manager shall cause the matters set forth in Sections 3 and 4 of this Resolution of Intention to be completed as directed.

Exhibit A



REDWOOD CITY, CA 94063

July 10, 2019

EXHIBIT A PAGE 1 OF 3 ANNEXATION TO WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT
GEOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

All that certain real property situate in the Town of Portola Valley, County of San Mateo, State of California, being all of that property described in that certain Interspousal Transfer Deed recorded on December 1, 2017 as Document Number 2017-107835 along with portions of Bear Gulch Drive and Golden Oak Drive as shown on that certain Tract Map No. 718 entitled "Alpine Hills Unit 3" filed for record on May 24, 1955, in Book 42 of Maps, at pages 27-29, San Mateo County Records, State of California, and being more particularly described as follows:

BEGINNING at the northerly centerline intersection of Golden Oak Drive and Bear Gulch Drive;

Thence (Course 1) North 15°50'00" East, 30.00 feet to the intersection of the existing West Bay Sanitary District boundary and the northerly right of way line of said Golden Oak Drive and the **TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING** of this description;

Thence continuing easterly along said right of way line and said existing district boundary, (Course 2) South 74°10'00" East, 29.01 feet;

Thence leaving said existing district boundary and said right of way line, (Course 3) South 15°50'00" West, 60.00 feet to the southerly right of way line of said Golden Oak Drive, and the southeasterly right of way line of said Bear Gulch Drive, and the beginning of a non-tangent curve, concave southeasterly, whose radius bears South 15°50'00" West;

Thence continuing along said southeasterly right of way line the following three (3) Courses:

4. Along said curve, concave southeasterly, having a radius of 20.00 feet, a chord length of 22.66 feet, through a central angle of 69°00'21", for an arc length of 24.09 feet;
5. South 36°49'39" West, 110.98 feet to the beginning of a tangent curve, concave northwesterly;
6. Along said curve, concave northwesterly, having a radius of 225.00 feet, a chord length of 16.99 feet, through a central angle of 4°19'44", for an arc length of 17.00 feet to the northerly corner of said property described in said Interspousal Transfer Deed;

Thence leaving said southeasterly right of way line, along the boundary of said property described in said Interspousal Transfer Deed, the following five (5) Courses:

7. South 32°03'02" East, 273.29 feet;
8. South 58°54'26" East, 160.00 feet;
9. South 35°30'00" West, 255.00;
10. North 56°20'48" West, 663.02 feet to the southerly right of way line of said Bear Gulch Drive and the beginning of a non-tangent curve, concave southerly, whose radius point bears South 11°30'40" East;

Sheet 1 of 3

Exhibit B





Mutts under the spotlight

Fremont Park was the place to be on Sunday, Sept. 8, if you were a dog, a dog companion, or a dog lover. That's where the first annual Mutt Strutt Super Heroes Dog Show took place, and the canine stars competed in talent, costume and other categories. The event was organized by Friends of Muttville, Silicon Valley, founded and headed by Woodside resident Mary Ancell in support of the nonprofit Muttville Senior Dog Rescue. See the story on Page 12. Photo by Robert Most

Survey: Woodside, PV in the same fire-risk league as Paradise

By Rick Radin
Almanac Staff Writer

Imagine a day with temperatures in the 90s and gale-force winds blowing in the San Mateo County hills.

Then imagine that someone or something ignited a fire, perhaps a sparking power line or an unattended campfire.

According to a survey of small towns in 11 Western states, such a scenario could trigger a disaster similar to the Camp Fire in Northern California last November that killed 85 people, burned 19,000 structures and destroyed the town of Paradise in Butte County.

The survey, undertaken by USA Today and the Arizona Republic before the Camp Fire and published in July, gave Woodside a rating on a one-to-five scale of 3.39 and Portola Valley a 3.63 rating for fire vulnerability — the potential for death and destruction from a wildfire — compared with 3.89 for the town of Paradise. (Towns closest to five on the scale are considered to have the highest vulnerability.)

The median wildfire risk in the study was 2.08 for more than 5,000 communities that were surveyed.

Portola Valley was also rated on a one-to-five scale at 3.09 and Woodside at 1.24 in a category called evacuation constraint, meaning the degree of difficulty in escaping a fire, compared with a median of 1.10 nationwide. Residents of towns with

See **FIRE SURVEY,** *page 7*

Uneven Ground III: Chasing equity in a changing climate

By Kate Bradshaw
Almanac Staff Writer

ABOUT THIS STORY

This is the last of a three-part series exploring why the communities of Belle Haven, North Fair Oaks and East Palo Alto experience greater environmental health burdens than neighboring jurisdictions. Kate Bradshaw reported this story as part of her University of Southern California Annenberg Center for Health Journalism 2019 California Fellowship, with engagement support from the center's interim engagement editor, Danielle Fox. Three bilingual Sequoia High School students, Nataly Manzanero, Ashley Barraza and Mia Palacios, with the author, conducted more than 100 Spanish and English language interviews used in this report. Some of the photos are provided by middle school students who live in East Palo Alto and participated in a summer program of Girls to Women, an East Palo Alto nonprofit working to empower girls and women in the community.

The Almanac has partnered with Cafe Zoe and will be displaying some of the photographs from this project at the Menlo Park cafe throughout the month of October. We'll share more information as details are finalized.

Go to is.gd/unevenground1 to access part one and is.gd/unevenground2 to access part two of this series.

East Palo Alto is a cut-through haven, observes Susan Barnes, who has spent the last year puzzling exclusively over how to solve the city's traffic woes. For the former city of Palo Alto economic development and redevelopment manager, it's a huge challenge, but one that excites her.

As an executive fellow with Fuse Corps, a nonprofit that positions professionals to tackle year-long projects in local governments, she's been tasked with helping East Palo Alto, slammed by the rampant commercial growth of its neighbors — including the one she used to work for — make its roads work for its residents.

She's leading a mobility study to try to figure out how to help residents get around a city where a staggering 84% of trips don't start or end in city limits, and where residents themselves drive far less than people who live elsewhere in San Mateo County. According to county health data, East Palo Alto residents travel by car only three miles per day, substantially less than the city's neighbors in more affluent areas: Menlo Park residents average nine miles per day; Portola Valley, 11 miles; Woodside, 13 miles; and Atherton, 19 miles.

"We have plenty of housing, but we don't have jobs that are available to employable residents. People have to traverse out of East Palo Alto to go to their workplace," Barnes said.

As one of the three primary routes to get to Bayfront Expressway and the Dumbarton Bridge, University Avenue is a critical artery for commuters from the East Bay. Those commuters have access to a few transbay buses but overall limited public transit options. At the peak evening traffic hour, drivers crossing the Dumbarton Bridge average speeds as low as 4 to 7 mph.

The congestion results in pollutants emitted into the air, which is likely part of the reason that East Palo Alto residents suffer three times the county asthma rate, and kids, in particular, are being impacted.

Sandra Nova, a pediatric nurse at the Ravenswood Family Health Clinic, told the Palo Alto Weekly earlier this year that asthma is the most common physical health problem among children in East Palo Alto.

The distances between where the Bay Area's job centers are and where the housing units are have led to a regional problem many decades in the making, and East Palo Alto and Belle Haven are stuck in the middle. That locals are being impacted so severely, Barnes said, is part of the reason that she's exploring some bold ideas in the city's mobility study, like congestion pricing — tolls for drivers who use the road at peak traffic times — on University Avenue.

"This community has got a little bit of fatigue about people asking them questions and never getting solutions," she said. "So let's get some solutions."

While East Palo Alto isn't as threatened by toxic industrial chemical spills as it was during the days when Romic Environmental Technologies was operating there, it and the communities of Belle Haven and North Fair Oaks, which are made up of predominantly minority residents, are now being subjected to a different, chronic and devastating form of industrial pollution: a jobs-housing balance so skewed that it squeezes even middle-class renters out of their homes, makes children wheeze from the tailpipe exhaust of vehicles driven by people who can't afford to live near their jobs, and leaves huge swaths of Bay Area residents — especially people of color — only two choices: a grueling commute or substandard housing.

A short history

So how did the jobs-housing balance get so bad in San Mateo County?

Alex Schafran, who wrote "The Road to Resegregation: Northern California and the Failure of Politics" and recently spoke at the Menlo Park Library, argues that it has to do with the fragmentation of the Bay Area's political powers.

While Bay Area politicians lean blue and united on social issues, when it comes to questions around housing policy and infrastructure, there hasn't been a regional, committed consensus that has aligned over the fundamental need for sufficient housing and functional transportation for decades, he asserts.

He chronicles how the initial post-war housing and transportation boom dramatically changed the Bay Area, cordoning communities of color into undesirable areas and

See **UNEVEN GROUND,** *page 8*

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continued from page 5

promoting environmentally unsustainable suburban sprawl. White families took advantage of the federally-funded highways and single-family homes, which helped many achieve middle-class status and accumulate wealth they were able to pass on to later generations.

As Bay Area-wide growth accelerated, though, a growing environmentalist movement —one that was not particularly racially inclusive — pushed back against it, particularly in wealthier communities.

The pushback, however, was one-sided, especially in Silicon Valley, Schafran argues. Communities didn't oppose the growth of their cities into job centers, since more commercial activity meant more taxes to support public services. But they did oppose the addition of housing, especially affordable housing, and joined philanthropic efforts to preserve open space, especially near their homes, making housing growth in these areas increasingly difficult.

At one point during the 1990s, San Mateo County was adding 12 jobs for every new housing unit, he reports.

Developers took their housing construction across the Bay, such as to unincorporated areas in Contra Costa County and beyond. Ultimately, he argues, in the decades after formal segregation ended and communities of color got their shot at the suburban American dream, they were largely priced out of the exclusive Peninsula and, more broadly, the entire West Bay.

When many people of color in the Bay Area got access to the American ideal of suburban homeownership, they got it on worse terms than their white counterparts. The homes that were available were often in the far reaches of the East Bay, and came with destabilizing forces like bad commutes and subprime mortgages.

During the foreclosure crisis, in communities like Antioch, Schafran reports, the foreclosure rate was about 13 times that Redwood City and hundreds of times greater than many other parts of Silicon Valley.

Today, communities of color in southern San Mateo County like Belle Haven, East Palo Alto and North Fair Oaks not only bear exclusionary and environmental trauma from their past and barriers to accessing healthy lifestyles in the present, as explored in parts one and two of this series. They also face greater vulnerability to the threats created by increased climate change in the future.

Heightened threats

Research shows that communities defined as being "socially vulnerable" stand a greater risk of being more impacted by the adverse effects of climate change.

According to a 2012 report by the Pacific Institute, some of the factors that make people more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change are being low-income, a person of color, a woman, elderly, a child, someone with disabilities, a renter, geographically or linguistically isolated, and isolated from public agencies because one fears them. People are also more vulnerable if they lack a vehicle, health insurance or a high school diploma, or if they are or have been incarcerated.

The report found that about 22%, or 153,000 people in the county, faced high levels of social vulnerability to climate change.

Some of the greatest threats in the county stemming from a changing environment are air quality and flooding.

Air quality

In southern San Mateo County, the nearest Bay Area Air Quality Management District air quality monitor is located in Redwood City, which precludes more precise readings on traffic-related air quality in other areas, such as Belle Haven and East Palo Alto.



Photo courtesy of Yahari Mendoza

Protected bike lanes in East Palo Alto are one way to encourage locals to ride, not drive, through traffic not of their making and get where they need to go.



Photo courtesy of Nathalia Arias

In interviews, student photographers from East Palo Alto said they dislike how much trash they see on the streets, but overall feel their community is getting healthier.

According to Kate Hoag, assistant manager at BAAQMD, the air quality being monitored at the district's Redwood City station is clean by federal and state standards. However, she added, "We do acknowledge that other localized, elevated air pollution can remain in some communities."

While the BAAQMD's jurisdiction doesn't include vehicle-related air pollution, which is overseen by the California Air Resources Board, the district still supports efforts to reduce such pollution with grantmaking and incentives, district spokesperson Ralph Borrman noted.

The air quality district is also investing in strategies to take more detailed street-level air quality measurements. Its board in March approved a nearly $6 million contract with the hyperlocal air quality-monitoring company Aclima.

Under the contract terms, the company is expected to drive low-emissions vehicles repeatedly along every street in the district's territory over the next two years. The vehicles are equipped with air-monitoring sensors that will measure baseline concentrations of various air pollutants throughout the Bay Area, and the results will be made public through a community online data portal.

On a more grassroots level, Sustainable Silicon Valley, a nonprofit that is pursuing community work in East Palo Alto to decrease the poor air quality from cut-through traffic, recently installed three air-quality monitors in East Palo Alto along University Drive.

The nonprofit is working on an initiative called "Smart TA" — that's short for traffic analytics — to collect its own data to see how traffic is impacting air quality in East Palo Alto.

Ultimately, explained the organization's board chair, Drew Clark, the goal is to bring together traffic and air quality data and look for correlations.

Having hyperlocal data about air quality will likely be of use to communities in the future, when air quality is expected to get even worse. According to the Pacific Institute report, an estimated 14 million residents live in census tracts that, by 2050, are projected to have levels of fine particulate matter in the air above the state standard. That's about 39% of California's population, compared with the 15% of residents now affected by high particulate matter levels.

So far, Sustainable Silicon Valley has installed three monitors atop of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District's East Palo Alto station and St. Francis of Assisi Church, which are roughly across the street from each other, and at the East Palo Alto YMCA to track both particulate matter and pollutant gases like carbon monoxide, nitrogen and sulfur oxides, and ozone. The two locations across from each other are intended to help Sustainable Silicon Valley get both upwind and downwind readings, Clark explained.

The organization has found that there's a learning curve to understanding the data to get accurate and meaningful measurements. "You really have to understand the data and the placement of the sensors," Executive Director Jennifer Thompson said in an interview. It's working with the BAAQMD to learn how to use the air quality monitor readings, and is still in the process of collecting and interpreting data, Clark said.

Menlo Park's City Council representative for Belle Haven, Mayor Pro Tem Cecilia Taylor, has expressed interest in getting air quality monitors in Belle Haven as well.

People interested in learning more about the Sustainable Silicon Valley initiative are invited to attend a community event about the program from 5 to 8 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 4, at the East Palo Alto YMCA at 550 Bell St.

Flooding

San Mateo County has been identified as the California county with the highest number of residents likely to be vulnerable to impacts during a flood.

During rainy seasons, communities have already been victims to dramatic flood impacts, particularly in a set of mobile home parks on Redwood City's Bay side. As a 2017 Peninsula Press article pointed out, the area is in a FEMA-designated special flood zone, which is partly why land is more affordable. There are only two small areas along East Bayshore Road where mobile housing is permitted in the city's zoning.

These households are particularly vulnerable because mobile homes and their residents are often not eligible for post-disaster assistance funds.

On a positive note, on Sept. 12, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed AB825, brought forward by state Assemblyman Kevin Mullin, which will permit San Mateo County to expand its flood protection district to incorporate a broader mission of sea level rise resiliency.

This is expected to help make projects more competitive for state and federal grants and change the governing and funding structure of the existing district to become a separate agency to make it easier to tackle sea level rise-related projects aimed at stemming local flooding risks.

Taking steps for a different future

As the threat of climate change impacts becomes a more imminent peril, several groups in the county are taking innovative steps to engage and develop

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leadership in these more threatened communities.

In North Fair Oaks and East Palo Alto, the county Health Department is working on an initiative called the Community Collaboration for Children's Success. It works with youth and families to figure out how best to support youth using a "trauma-informed community building" model that promotes community empowerment and reflection.

When it comes to local governance in North Fair Oaks, the county's track record on listening to local residents is mixed, says Community Council Chair Ever Rodriguez.

"It is ironic that you have three of the richest cities in the U.S. right next to an area that is disenfranchised and lacking services," he said.

Unlike the 20 cities of San Mateo County, with their well-structured government bodies and councils, he said, "we can only advise the county."

The problem is compounded by low political participation among residents, he added. The community is made up of predominantly working families in the Latino community.

"Our community particularly lacks resident participation because a lot of people have two or three jobs, because, you know, to make the rent they have to have more than one job. Often they have kids. These are really busy people."

In addition, he added, some don't have sufficient English skills or understanding of the political process to fully participate in council meetings.

As he sees it, recent rezoning efforts in North Fair Oaks, which in many ways were led by the county, have yielded mixed results.

On the positive side, there are now community standards in effect to push back against billboards that have constantly been advertising beer or tobacco in the neighborhood. On the negative side, he said, the county hasn't heeded concerns voiced by community members that gentrification pressures will mount if the neighborhood is beautified too much. The county supports moving forward to underground power lines, an expensive step that would improve the appearance of the neighborhood, even though the community council favors using the funding in other ways to improve safety in the community, Rodriguez said.

North Fair Oaks has also been underrepresented in regional conversations about a revitalized Dumbarton rail line, he asserted. Residents could benefit from greater transit access, and from the added business its downtown area might get if a rail stop were to be added in the community.

In East Palo Alto, Nuestra Casa, a nonprofit that has been working in that city since 2002, uses a grassroots network of "promotoras," people who are trained to be community leaders and disseminate information in the Latino community, which now represents a demographic majority in the communities of East Palo Alto, Belle Haven and North Fair Oaks.

To help bolster community capacity in East Palo Alto to adapt to climate change, Nuestra Casa has partnered with the county on a new initiative to develop leadership focused on that problem, funded by grant money from SB 1, a $54 billion 2017 transportation measure.

Violet Saena, resilient communities program manager at the nonprofit Acterra, explained that the initiative is aimed at supporting community leaders to work with community members to document how and why the community is vulnerable to climate change, and what can be done to make it less vulnerable.

Another significant community concern in East Palo Alto is water quality. Roxano Franco, family advocate at Nuestra Casa, said that the nonprofit is also working with YUCA, Youth United for Community Action, to start a water rights campaign. They worked with the promotoras and canvassers representing the African American and Pacific Islander communities to conduct about 730 surveys throughout the community asking people what they think about water in the city, whether they use tap water for food and drinking, and about their concerns about climate change and sea level rise.

While they're still in the process of analyzing data, she said, "One big issue that came up is that our community wants education on flooding, climate change and sea level rise."

Younger people in particular, she said, are passionate about environmental justice and climate change.

"They're starting to be activists," she said.

The sense that the youth in these communities are observing the environment closely and developing skills for resiliency was borne out through The Almanac's own partnership for this project with students from Girls to Women, a summer program for middle school-aged girls in East Palo Alto. We provided six students with disposable cameras and asked them to take pictures of what was healthy or unhealthy in their community.

We interviewed four of them, and all commented that they noticed a lot of trash on the streets, but added that they felt their community was fairly healthy and had improved even in the duration of their childhoods.

Nathalia, 12, said the assignment made her realize that "there's a lot of trash everywhere."

"There are dead animals in the street sometimes," said Sitara, 13.

Selijah, 11, said that while seeing missing person posters made her and others uncomfortable, there's a lot about the community she likes — for example, that a new fire station was built nearby to fight the growing number of fires.

And when she was asked to take pictures of healthy things in the community, she captured rich images of the local animal shelter, a mural, flowers growing in the park, and the Ecumenical Hunger Program.

"Those things stood out because they made me feel like our city is getting better," she said.

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