

October 2005

Volume 1, Issue 4, Series 2

PHA Newsletter

Published by the Panoramic Hill Association

Berkeley/Oakland, California

Announcements:

**ANNUAL EMERGENCY
PREPADNESS EVENT
& GENERAL MEETING**
October 16th, 2005
10am-12pm

**RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP TODAY**
and receive a PHA
sticker for your car!

**SAVE PAPER and PHA
funds! SIGNUP for
electronic newsletter
delivery:**
PanoramicHill.org

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Annual Emergency Preparedness Event and Panoramic Hill Association General Meeting

Sunday morning 10 – noon, October 16

Opposite 350/352 Panoramic Way

Refreshments will be served

Mark the date and time

Part One: What would you do if ... ?

Small group “tabletop” emergency scenarios for discussion to challenge you and help you estimate your degree of preparedness for dealing with emergencies on the Hill. Resource people will be present, and our cache of emergency tools will be open.

Part Two: PHA General Meeting

Primary topic: A second access road on the Hill.

We may have an opportunity to obtain a grant for professional Design, cost and feasibility information for a second access road.

Tell us what you think!

RAMBLES FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Jerry Wachtel

A SECONDARY ROAD FOR PANORAMIC HILL?

As anyone who lives or owns property on Panoramic Hill knows, there is only one way in and out of our neighborhood. That road is narrow and winding, in poor condition in many locations, and can be totally blocked by a fallen tree or an inoperable vehicle. In addition, Panoramic Hill sits directly on the Hayward fault – recently judged to have a 27% likelihood of a major earthquake (magnitude 6.7 or greater) within the next 26 years. If this is not enough of a concern, Panoramic Hill is a neighborhood at extreme danger for wildfire, located, as it is adjacent to wildlands and stands of dangerous eucalyptus trees. Of course, at the bottom of all this is Cal Memorial Stadium, a venue which may hold tens of thousands of people for an event, day or night, with consequent parking and road blockage concerns. A fire or earthquake during a nighttime Stadium event must be considered a worst-case scenario.

Due to all these factors, the City of Berkeley has given Panoramic Hill its most restrictive zoning, “Environmental Safety Residential,” and the City of Oakland is also considering future zoning restrictions. Officials from

both cities have been in sporadic dialog with each other about the special concerns about our community.

The Panoramic Hill Association and our concerned neighbors have been active for many years in efforts to address both prevention of and response to such natural disasters. We hold an Annual Emergency Preparedness Event (which we hope you will attend this year on October 16th), we disseminate disaster preparedness information to our neighbors, we work with Emergency Responders from both cities to ensure that they keep our neighborhood in mind, we work to get dangerous road conditions improved, we form clusters and hold cluster meetings to keep ourselves prepared and alert, and more.

One issue that has been discussed by Panoramic Hill residents as well as both Berkeley and Oakland governments for more than 40 years, has been the pros and cons of constructing a secondary road on Panoramic Hill. That nothing has been done to develop such a road speaks to the complexity and difficulty of this issue, as well as the cost. We currently have the opportunity to seek a financial grant to help us to explore the engineering and environmental feasibility of a secondary road. However, this

money will not be made available to us unless we know and can demonstrate the sentiment of the community, including absentee owners as well as those who live here.

One key reason for the lack of progress on a secondary road has been that the concept of such a road means different things to different people. To some, a secondary road is one that will spur massive development, open the community to through traffic, and put an end to the quiet, bucolic way of life that is one of the great joys of life on Panoramic Hill. To others, a secondary road is nothing more than an unpaved trail— a facility (in concept, not unlike the Lower Jordan Trail) to serve only as a footpath unless and until it is needed for first responder access or resident escape. As you can imagine, there are many “variations on the theme” between these two alternatives.

The Panoramic Hill Association Board has developed a survey to find out what hill owners and renters think about a secondary road. We have spent many hours trying to make this survey comprehensive, unbiased, and straightforward. You will soon be receiving a copy of the survey in your mailbox or in person. I urge you to spend a few

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“One key reason for the lack of progress on a secondary road has been that the concept of such a road means different things to different people.”



Jerry Wachtel
President

PHA Board Members Meet with City Council Reps

By Jerry Wachtel

In July, the PHA Board held a special meeting to share ideas with our two elected City Council representatives, Gordon Wozniak of Berkeley and Jane Brunner of Oakland. Ms. Brunner's Chief of Staff also attended. The Board had agreed to limit the agenda to those issues that were of concern to hill residents of both cities, and those that had strong public safety and/or quality of life concerns. This article summarizes some of the highlights of the meeting.

(Note – references to persons in this article are by initials – GW for Gordon Wozniak; JB for Jane Brunner; PH for Association Board Member).

SECONDARY ROAD

1. Several current and former hill residents may have details about the history of planning for a secondary road.

2. A road might cost \$200-300K for an engineering study and \$750K - \$1million to build.

3. It won't be easy to find the money.

4. GW – is this a regular road, open to the public, or is it a restricted fire road?

5. JB – before seeking money, we should survey neighbors to know if they want the road. Oakland typically likes to see a 67% favorable vote. If 100 people say yes, that's probably enough to get a feasibility study done.

6. GW agrees that we've got to have the second road access.

7. Discussion held re whether the City of

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“...a special meeting to share ideas with our two elected City Council representatives...”

PG&E Shuts Down Access to Panoramic Hill for 8 Hours

By Jerry Wachtel

On June 28, 2005, PG&E closed the lower part of Panoramic Way in order to replace a power pole. Several days in advance of this work, the contractor placed a portable changeable message sign (PCMS) near the bottom of the road to announce the planned closure. The sign functioned for only about two days and then went blank – presumably due to dead batteries. Although the sign came on again shortly before the actual work began, most hill residents were left in the dark about the planned road closure.

Those who had observed the sign during its brief operational time likely assumed that the planned work had been postponed or cancelled.

As many residents learned to their dismay and inconvenience, the road closure did take place, and the work did occur. As a result of this flawed planning from PG&E, several hill residents were unable to leave their homes to meet appointments, others with business on the hill were unable to reach their destinations, and first responders (police, fire, rescue) would have been severely challenged in their abilities to perform

their services because PG&E simply did not inform them of its plans. Thankfully, no emergencies arose that required first responders to assist.

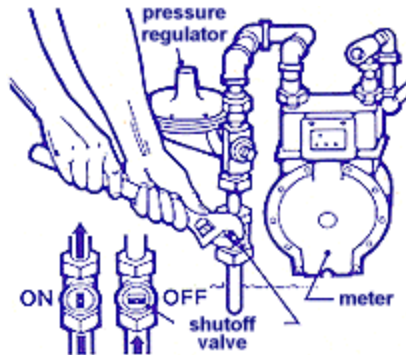
Despite numerous efforts by PHA Board Members to obtain information in advance of the road closure, and to obtain critical fire and police protection during the period of closure, we were stymied in our efforts. One Board Member was told by an on-site PG&E supervisor that: (a) the City of Berkeley had been notified in advance of the road closure, (b) the Berkeley Fire Department had given its approval for the closure, and (c) “everyone on the hill” had been notified in advance of the closure.

When this Board member asked whether Oakland hill residents had been notified, he was dumbfounded – because he had no idea that part of the hill was within the City of Oakland.

This fiasco of poor planning and notification for such a significant event points out the risk that hill residents face every day, and reinforces our need to ensure that contractors working on the hill take all necessary precautions to ensure that public health and safety is maintained.

How to Shut Off Your Gas in an Emergency

- ?? Know where your gas meter is before an emergency occurs.
- ?? Have a wrench stored in a specific location where it will be available.
- ?? If you smell or hear gas escaping after an earthquake or any emergency, turn off your gas at the meter as shown.
- ?? Use a crescent wrench and give it a quarter turn in either direction so that it runs crosswise on the pipe. The line is now closed.
- ?? Do not turn the gas back on yourself as pilot lights will have gone out.



Instructions and illustration from the [Long Beach Energy Department](#)



Left in the dark by recent power outages? Call PG&E on their toll free "status" line at: 1-800-PGE-5002 (743)

Upper Panoramic Way Road Repairs Finally Made

By Paul-André Abboud

After months of communications via letter, telephone, email, and in-person with several PHA Board members and Panoramic Hill neighbors, the City of Berkeley finally made some repairs to Panoramic Way on and around the third hairpin turn. The work, which caused only minimal road closures or detours, took place on August 30th and 31st.

The repairs included patching and leveling the roadway along the third hairpin turn and above it approaching the Berkeley-Oakland border, and leveling the uneven surface adjacent to 140 Panoramic Way.



Although the Berkeley Public Works Department did not honor the PHA Board's repeated requests for an improved abutment and guardrail, the improvements made increase the safety for

pedestrians and motorists by creating a wider usable street surface. The PHA Board views these repairs as a temporary compromise, and has so noted in a letter to Mr.

Kenneth Emeziem, a Supervising Engineer with the Berkeley Department of Public Works. Without an engineered abutment to support the downslope side of the road, future settling is likely to cause the repeated development of an uneven road surface.

If there are other stretches of neighborhood streets that need repair, please do not hesitate to contact your PHA representatives. Their emails are listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

Meeting with City Council people (continued from pg 3)

Oakland still owns two lots on Dwight Way above the third hairpin – the answer is yes.

8. JB – if the emergency road is near a creek, it's a big problem due to new creek ordinance. The ordinance does not care what kind of road it is.

9. PH – would the City of Oakland condemn lots per eminent domain due to fire danger? JB says – even if they would, the City can't afford to pay for them. PH - what if the community paid for them? JB - eminent domain can be used for parkland. PH - showed maps that designate several areas around Derby Creek on the hill to be public parks.

STADIUM

1. GW - presumably there will have to be an EIR for the stadium; at that time we can seek specific mitigations.

2. PH – Other communities will be affected by the Stadium. For example, there are likely to be traffic impacts in neighborhoods around the Route 13/24 corridor.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE, MAPPING, MIRRORS

1. JB – will get us the “actual times” for Oakland responses to emergencies.

2. JB - Mapping is a problem in all hills neighborhoods. Lieut.

Green is our police lieutenant from Oakland. Per JB he is a great guy – very honest. Admits they do not patrol up here.

3. Re signs – get to JB and GW a list of the signs that we need, those that need trees trimmed; those that need to be replaced.

4. Do the same for needed locations for mirrors (but keep the request down to a small number of locations)

OAKLAND REZONING.

1. PH - there needs to be a “package” of strategies, including: down zoning, lot merger ordinance, land trust.

2. JB is confused about the status of rezoning; to prepare for this meeting they called staff together.

3. JB will go to Heather Klein, our Planner, and ask status. If it goes back to the Planning Commission she'll make sure all are notified. If it goes to Council, she'll touch base with us to take the neighborhood's pulse.

4. PH – why can't PHA be allowed into the process of the discussions between the two cities re zoning issue?

SEWER.

1. JB - the reason there has been no development up here is sewer; if you build a sewer, you will get development.

2. GW - Berkeley DPW told him that to do a sewer would need open trenching that would require them to shut down the road for several days.

3. GW - if Berkeley fixed its sewer, it would raise the cost of access to it.

DEVELOPMENT.

1. PH -how can we reasonably accept development on this hill?

2. GW - you need to get agreement within the community on what you want and what you can accept.

3. JB - you can do a merger ordinance and down zoning and still get monster housing; the size of a house is not easy to address.

4. The issue is raised about parking on the road. JB says that Residential Permit Parking (RPP) is easy to do. The City won't require special design controls in this area (note – no discussion re possibility of a mid-century historic district that might help control design), but controlling street parking is easy.

5. PH - why not allow existing houses in Oakland to connect to the sewer. GW says the city of Berkeley could look into the feasibility of connecting.

SUMMARY.

1. Board needs to clarify and seek consensus within the community and provide a map of where secondary roads might go

2. The Cities will work together

3. The cities will give us the maps used for fire and police; we should fix them and get them back to them.

4. JB Staff will talk with Heather Klein to check the status of Oakland zoning/merger issues and provide us the results.

5. Get info to JB and GW re needed fixes/changes to street names, signs, and mirrors

6. Keep in touch with GW re mitigation money for secondary road feasibility study.

The Moruza's Sangria

By Dick White

With thanks to the Moruzas, here is the recipe for the delicious sangria that they served at the PHA Annual Meeting in May 2005 (serves 15):



- 1 gal. red wine, such as cabernet sauvignon (needn't be highest quality)
- 2 liters Sprite Remix or ginger ale (provides some sweetness)
- 1 (or 2) cups brandy, including that used to pre-soak overnight the following:
 - Chunks from ½ fresh pineapple
 - 1 cup dried cranberries
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon and ¼ tsp ground cloves (pre-mix with 1 tbs. brandy to prevent clumping and floating).
- Juice of 4 lemons
- Add cut fresh strawberries, thinly sliced apples, and other fresh fruits to taste
- Add sugar to taste if needed.

Pre-cool liquids before mixing. Put mix in bowl set on ice in a larger bowl (avoids dilution as ice melts). Float circles of lemon rind for color.

Deer Abby



Q: Is it ok to park blocking the Jordon fire trail entrance in the 400 block of Panoramic Way?

Signed,
Trapped

A: This is for those few people that feel they have the right to endanger hundreds of other people's lives by consistently blocking the Jordon fire trail overnight.

Don't think this behavior has gone unnoticed. Parking your car illegally by blocking a fire trail or protruding into the road anywhere is not just an inconvenience to other residents but a matter of life and death, including your own. DON'T DO IT!

Q: What can I do when neighbors impose their trash and blight on our otherwise quaint and beautiful neighborhood?

Signed,
Sore Eyes

A: Oakland residents can call Oakland Code Enforcement Department at 238-3381. Berkeley residents can call the Berkeley Code Enforcement Unit at 981-CITY.

Send your Deer Abby questions to abby@PanoramicHill.org.

Berkeley Renews Telephoned Emergency Alert

By Dick White

Deputy Berkeley Fire Chief David Orth has announced that the City has renewed for one year its contract with FirstCall, Inc. to provide multiple telephone warnings and instructions to areas of

the City where a threatening emergency has arisen. The annual cost of maintaining this service works out to only 17 cents per resident. The Berkeley Disaster Council is urging the City Council to negotiate a multi-year service contract.

Does the system work?
Yes! PHA Board member Marcos Gandara recently experienced first hand this type of warning system in action while visiting a home in Orinda that was phoned by such a service when a brush fire started nearby.

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June 14, 2005

Mr. Jerry Wachtel, President
Panoramic Hill Association
P.O. Box 5428
Berkeley, CA 94705

Dear Mr. Wachtel:

In response to your letter of June 6, 2005, I would like to reaffirm the policies regarding use of Memorial Stadium which were set out by Chancellor Bowker in 1974 and have guided campus policy in subsequent years.

I have also reviewed the letter from the Panoramic Hill Association which you provided on January 26, 2005, setting out the concerns of the neighborhood regarding its architectural heritage, public safety, and quality of life. I assure you that these issues will be considered as plans for the stadium renovation move forward.

With warm regards.

Yours sincerely,

Robert J. BirgenEAU

"...I would like to reaffirm the policies regarding use of Memorial Stadium..."

President (continued from pg 2)

minutes to complete the survey and return it to us as quickly as possible. If, and only if, there is considerable community support for the *concept* of a secondary road will we be able to go forward to apply for the grant money

to study its feasibility. And, I must restate in the clearest possible terms – the conduct of a feasibility study, should we get that far, is a long, long way from the reality of actually building a secondary road.

Fire season is upon us. Be careful, be cautious, attend the Association's Annual Emergency Preparedness Event, and come prepared to discuss the pros and cons of a secondary road for Panoramic Hill.

Panoramic Hill Association

P.O. Box 5428
Berkeley, CA 94705

E-MAIL:
info@PanoramicHill.org

About Our Organization...

The Panoramic Hill Association is a non-profit mutual benefit association dedicated to serving its members and community. The association strives to ensure the safety and preserve the character of the neighborhood by working with local officials throughout the year.

General meetings are held three times a year, with board members elected at the annual meeting in April.

Membership is a modest \$15 per household per year. Membership is not required to attend meetings.

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.PanoramicHill.org

Boardmembers

Jerry Wachtel	President	JerryWachtel@PanoramicHill.org
Paul Abboud	Vice President (Oakland)	PaulAbboud@PanoramicHill.org
Jeanne Allen	Vice President (Berkeley)	JeanneAllen@PanoramicHill.org
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Paul Salz	Co-Treasurer	PaulSalz@PanoramicHill.org
Maarten Kalway	CNA Liaison	MaartenKalway@PanoramicHill.org
Dick White	Parliamentarian	DickWhite@PanoramicHill.org

PHA Membership Enrollment/Renewal Form Year 2005/2006

Mail to: _____ or drop off at 650 Panoramic Way
 PHA Treasurer
 PO Box 5428
 Berkeley, CA 94704

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

New Member _____ Renewing Member _____

Dues for the PHA are a modest \$15 per household per year. Membership base representing the majority of the Hill allows us to be effective in dealing with the various jurisdictions in matters concerning Hill residents.

Calendar

Event	Date/Time	Location
Annual Emergency Preparedness Event & General Meeting	Sunday October 16 th , 2005 10:00am – 12:00pm	Opposite 350/352 Panoramic Way
Agenda:		
Introductions		
Emergency Preparedness “tabletop” Exercises		
Secondary Access road discussion		