

Council to Consider Strategic Plan

The report from the strategic planning process for the Webster Street business district goes to Alameda's City Council on June 7.

Addressing short and long-term parking needs and creating an inviting gateway into the Webster Street Business District are among the recommendations in the report to be considered by Council. Economic consultants hired by the City of Alameda recommended exploring a retail and parking

project on what is now a surface parking lot at Webster Street and Taylor Avenue. Consultants said the project could create enough retail space to attract the kinds of businesses the public wants while adding 150 parking spaces. The report also recommended creating a greenway at Atlantic and

Webster linking residents from Bayport and Alameda Point to Webster Street.

The West Alameda Business Association (WABA) previously recommended parking changes in conjunction with the current streetscape construction and will be working with the city

to make the parking proposal a reality, said Sam Koka, secretary of the WABA Board and owner of SK Auto. "We are pleased that the city is working to address parking before it becomes an issue."

The full report, which includes strategies for attracting new businesses, increasing sales of existing businesses and improving conditions of buildings, is published on the City of Alameda's website at www.ci.alameda.ca.us/community/wdsp.html.

A Word From Our Sponsor

Catellus Development Corporation – developers of the new Bayport Alameda homes next to the College of Alameda and the planned Enterprise Landing shopping center in Alameda Point – has come aboard again this year to sponsor the Concerts at the Cove on the second Friday of June, July and August and the Peanut Butter Jam musical festival and street fair Sept. 9-11 on Webster Street. "Catellus Development Corporation appreciates our long and mutually-supportive relationship with the West Alameda Business Association,"

says Dan Marcus, the company's Senior Vice President. "As Catellus and other members of WABA continue to build new homes and businesses in West Alameda, working together is critical to ensure that a holistic approach is taken," he says. "WABA events like the Concerts at the Cove, Peanut Butter Jam, the monthly mixers and other activities strengthen the community. Catellus is proud to be a sponsor of these events and the West Alameda Business Association."



CATELLUS

At Garden Cleaners, Each Customer is the Boss

When asked about the secret to the success of her business, Garden Cleaners owner Anita Ng has a quick answer: "For me, each customer is my boss, and so we treat their clothes as if the clothes belonged to us." Anita has known many of her customers for more than fifteen years, so she sees them more as good friends.

Garden Cleaners has been doing dry cleaning, alterations, drapery cleaning, leather and suede care, wedding gowns, bedspreads and full-service shirt laundry since 1987.

When the naval base closed in 1997, Webster Street felt a general decline in business activity and her business was greatly affected. "The dozens of military uniforms accounted for about 30% of our business at the time," she said. "We had to gradually

overcome this loss and gain new business from the neighborhood residents." As the naval families moved out, new residents came into the West End and replaced the loss of business.

Anita says that peak hours are during the lunch hour—which is unusual, since most dry cleaners either get a morning or evening rush. Some customers from downtown Oakland have lunch in Alameda and then drop off their dry cleaning,

she says. She also gets Marina Village and Harbor Bay clients who like to show up during the lunch hour.

Not only do Anita and her ten employees know each customer by name, but they can tell you when customers experience new relationships, marriages,

divorces, deaths and other major life events.

"Alameda City Council member Marie Gilmore is a loyal customer as well as a great friend," she says. "I've known her for over 14 years, even before she got married—and I know her two children very well, too."

She's really excited about all of the positive changes in the West End, from the landscaping to the new homes.

There is also a lot of optimism about the new businesses that are coming into the neighborhood that ultimately will attract even more customers.

Anita's initial involvement in the West Alameda Business Association (WABA) grew out of a relationship with Sherri Stieg,

the executive director of WABA. Stieg's husband, Brian Sims, has been a customer of Garden Cleaners for more than 10 years.

"I'd like to say a special thank you to WABA and especially to Sherri for always being helpful to me and for addressing the needs of small

business on the West End," she says. "Sherri has always been a strong liaison between the merchants and the city of Alameda."

— Robert Bernardo,
Port of Oakland

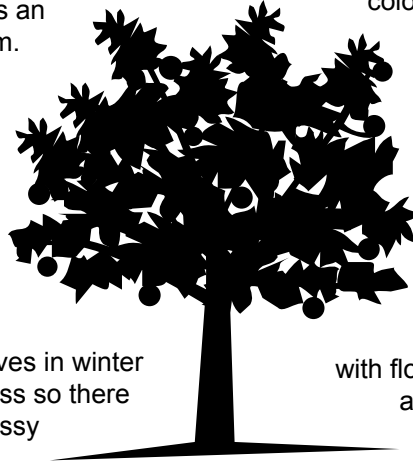
The Greening of Webster Street

When the Webster Renaissance Streetscape Project is completed late this summer, new street trees, shrubs and flowers will create a garden-like atmosphere along the five-block area from Central to Pacific.

Many factors influence the choice of trees in downtown settings. First, they must be small enough to avoid obscuring business signage. The tree "canopy" should be light and open but the trees should be tough enough to withstand automobile exhaust and the occasional root loss during street or sidewalk repair. The tree's roots should not grow upward where they might break the sidewalks and, of course, street trees should be pretty, with an attractive form that adds to the overall street ambience.

After much discussion and evaluation, the West Alameda Business Association (WABA) Design Committee and the project's landscape architect chose two types of trees for

Webster Street. The primary street tree is a flowering pear tree *PYRUS calleryana* 'Aristocrat' like the one that's now in front of Elders Inn. It is considered one of the best street trees because its roots are not invasive, it is of relatively small scale and has an attractive form. Pear trees sport a big springtime show of white flowers and distinctive fall color before they lose their leaves in winter but are fruitless so there will be no messy



fruit on the ground.

A red Crape Myrtle, *LAGERSTROEMIA* 'Watermelon' will also appear on the street but only at transit stops and mid-block plazas. In addition to providing a shot of summer color, the trees

will also help people find the bus stops.

The curb extensions at corners, mid-block and at transit stops will be planted with flowering shrubs and seasonal

perennials to add a dash of color. As the landscaping matures, annuals may be added in the winter and summer for a little change of scene.

Like the trees, flowers in urban areas must be relatively tough to withstand the pollution, reflected heat off the concrete, foot traffic, and so on. One past problem with placing flowers on the street in Alameda is being avoided in the streetscape. Irrigation will be automatically provided through an underground watering system.

Combined with the new lighting, benches, trash receptacles and bike and news racks, the landscaping will assure that every element has been balanced and a dash of green added in for good measure.

—Sue G. Russell,
Development Services Dept.,
City of Alameda

Spring Cleaning Kudos to Volunteers and East Ocean Seafood

Webster Street is a lot cleaner these days, thanks to the efforts of a group of hard-working volunteers who swept, washed and cleaned the street to a spark on Community Clean Up Day March 14. During the course of the day, tree wells and landscaping were weeded and cleaned, graffiti was removed, bus stops cleaned and old bills and posters taken down.

Food and refreshments were provided by **Hawthorn Suites, Wienerschnitzel, The Fortune Cookie and Trans Pacific Bank** in conjunction with **Alameda Pizza**.

Special thanks go to Kacy Hayes, a senior at Alameda Community Learning Center, who organized the clean up. Kudos also go to volunteers Daniel Lau, Stephanie Prothero, Sherri Stieg, Mona Lisa

Macalino, Theresa Huang, Alex Koka, Betty Dittmer, Ariel Levi, Billie Leach, David Calci and Angel Dittmer for their enthusiasm and hard work.

As part of the clean-up event, WABA named a cleanest overall business—**East Ocean Seafood Restaurant**. The family owned and operated East Ocean Seafood Restaurant has been in business 21 years — 11 years

in Oakland's Chinatown and 10 years on Webster Street. It was recently named by Via magazine as one of the best Dim Sum restaurants in the Bay Area and previously named best Chinese restaurant/Dim Sum restaurant by the Oakland Tribune/Alameda Times Star.

By the end of this year, the restaurant will expand its dining room to accommodate larger banquets on weekends and to reduce Sunday afternoon wait for their ever-popular Dim Sum. East Ocean is open daily from 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. and can be reached at (510) 865-3381.

"It's an extreme pleasure to work with such an organized, driven and dedicated group of individuals who care about the West End," says East Ocean's Millie Low. "WABA deserves much praise from the merchants and residents in the West End area and the

City of Alameda for all the beneficial improvements that have been accomplished."



Dear Merchant:

I want to alert you of recent changes to the City of Alameda's sign ordinance and plans for increased enforcement of environmental health laws.

Included in the changes to the sign ordinance is a 30 day limit on the length of time a temporary sign may be up. The definition of temporary sign includes advertising or displays painted on windows or made of paper, poster board, canvas, fabric, plywood and other light materials. To avoid enforcement action, please remove temporary signs, including posters that have been up for longer than 30 days. In addition to complying with the law, you will help beautify our district and make your business more inviting to customers.

If this would leave you without a sign, remember that the City has a grant program for facade improvements, including signage. Please call the West Alameda Business Association office at 523-5955 for more information about the sign ordinance or the facade grant program.

Also, I understand the City is stepping up enforcement of environmental health provisions that prohibit littering, including discarding cigarette butts on sidewalk, gutter or street, and allowing anything to go into storm drains (see Chapter 18, Article III of the City's municipal code posted on the City's website at www.ci.alameda.ca.us/gov/municipal-code.html). Materials deposited, blown or otherwise allowed to discharge into storm drains flow untreated into and pollute the Oakland Estuary or San Francisco Bay. Accordingly, to protect the environment, attract customers and avoid potential fines, please have ashtrays available outside your business for smokers and deposit trash in containers owned by your business.

Thank you for helping to make our district better!

Sherri Steeg

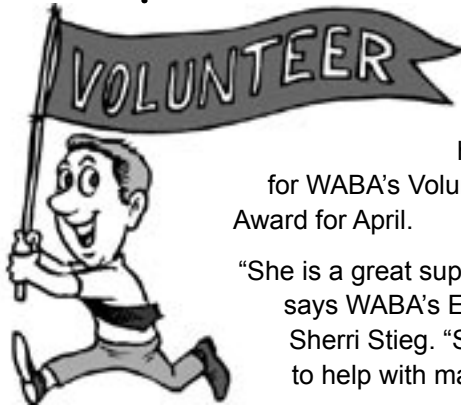
Executive Director
West Alameda Business Association

Thank You

Thank you to the **City of Alameda** for funding for a maintenance van to haul our new green machine and keep the district clean.

Thank you **Alameda Art Center** for hosting the April mixer. We loved the art work.

Thank you **East Ocean Seafood Restaurant** for the delectable appetizers enjoyed during the April mixer.



WABA volunteers are the Best

Chris Buckley was named the Volunteer of the Month for March for his untiring efforts to create a beautiful downtown. Chris has been a long-time member of the West Alameda Business Association Design/Streetscape committee and has chaired the committee since January of this year. As part of the committee, Chris helped draft updates to the Webster District Design Guidelines and to the City's sign ordinance, which were adopted by Council in February and March.

One of the prime movers behind the new Wine & Dine Night is **Millie Low**, owner of the East Ocean Seafood Restaurant at 1713 Webster Street. In addition to being a key member of the committee designing the event, Millie regularly provides food for WABA mixers and

for volunteers at WABA events and is a returning sponsor of the Peanut Butter Jam. That made her an ideal recipient

for WABA's Volunteer of the Month Award for April.

"She is a great supporter of WABA," says WABA's Executive Director Sherri Stieg. "She's always available to help with mailings and other

projects, and she did a tremendous amount of the work involved in creating the coupon booklets we created for last year's Concerts at the Cove."

At just 17, the May volunteer of the month, **Kacy Hayes**, is a veteran WABA volunteer. The senior at Alameda Community Learning Center has been a volunteer for two years for various WABA projects, including the annual Peanut Butter Jam music festival and street fair. This fall, she heads to San Francisco State University to start preparing for a career in veterinary medicine.

In April and May Kacy completed two big projects for WABA—recruiting volunteers from Alameda high schools and organizing the May 14 clean-up of Webster Street.

Katsu will convert anyone to a sushi-lover

Webster Street has a new sushi restaurant that is so good it could make a sushi-lover out of someone who likes his food charred. To ensure the freshest of foods, **Katsu Sushi** owners, Regina and Youngho Ji replaced the boat used by the former business at the 1465 Webster location with a sleek metal and stone sushi bar. The Jis also improved the menu and hired two top San Francisco chefs—a sushi chef who starts next week and Chef Sang Kim, who makes everything from scratch, including an airy, delicious tofu cheesecake, drizzled with raspberry sauce.

Since Katsu Sushi opened its doors on May 6, you may not recognize the former Sizzler/Sapporo site at the corner of Webster and Santa Clara. Restaurant Designer Duk Lee is transforming the location into a bamboo forest, completing the new oriental look using traditional Japanese colors--the gray of Japanese roof tiles, a

red earth color for luck and a dark blue for

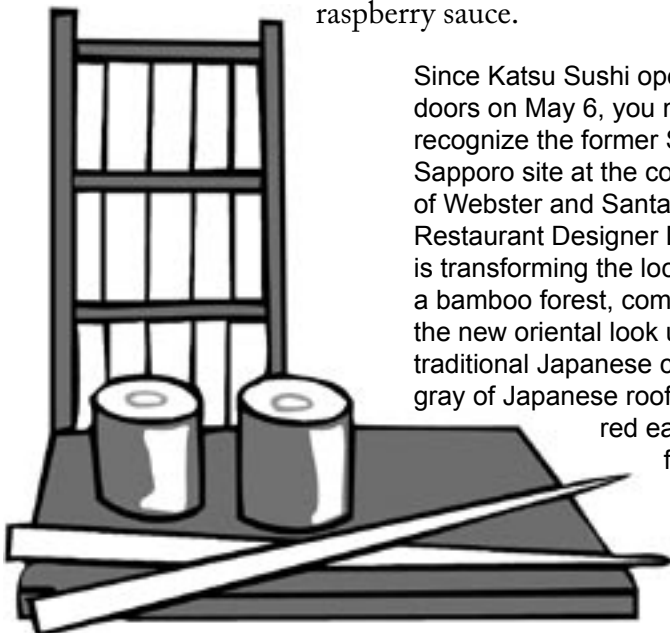
the sky. New landscaping, including live bamboo, is being put in as this article goes to press. Inside, the restaurant is now a chic combination of dried bamboo, subtle lighting, stone and metal with a mural depicting a scene beyond the bamboo forest.

Regina Ji said that her husband liked Alameda beaches when he worked at the former naval base at Alameda Point and they both saw a lot of potential when a broker showed them the

site. The Jis like Alameda so much they moved with their daughter, Rosie, to a new home in West Alameda after they opened Katsu.

Already great, Katsu promises to be much more in the near future. The facade upgrade is still underway and the Jis spend weekends checking out the best in sushi restaurant innovations.

Katsu has an extensive menu, including tempura, teriyaki, sushi and sashimi dishes. It is open 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 5 to 9:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Friday and Saturday, Katsu is open from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 5 to 10 p.m. Sunday hours are from 5 – 9:30 p.m. One can also try food from Katsu during the Webster Wine and Dine Night on June 17 (see related article on page 1) and at the Concerts at the Cove.



Go for a Wok on Webster

by Casey Dresser, 2005

Good news for those who have been peering in the windows at 1821 Webster Street wondering what had happened to the Cambodian restaurant—the new Chef's Wok is open for business.

Before opening the new restaurant, owner Ken Zhao made some improvements. He repainted the building and redid the interior, including live tanks for the fish that is a main ingredient of many dishes at Chef's Wok. But, of course, it is the food that people really care about. "Personally, I found

the impressive new variety of food to be the biggest improvement", said Johnny Edenfield, a new patron, after enjoying a plate of spicy mongolian beef over a large serving of rice.



While I was doing my gastronomical research for this article, Mr. Zhao pointed out that none of the restaurant's gourmet Chinese cuisine was prepared with M.S.G. (which as a staple of some Chinese restaurants, leaves that "heavy" and "greasy" feeling in your stomach). So I had plenty of room to enjoy

my walnut prawns and not loosen my belt.

But make no mistake; the portions are very satisfying. I like it and I think you will too.

If you have not already checked it out, stop by the Chef's Wok. There is ample parking, a friendly atmosphere and a great selection of food at moderate prices. The prominent live wells are pretty cool; especially for those of us who like to get to know our meal. If not, you can admire the Coy pond and rich, traditional Chinese wall paintings with a glass of wine or a cold beer, while the chefs prepare your meals.

So, next time you are on the 1800 block of Webster Street, treat yourself to some affordable and genuine Chinese cuisine at the Chef's Wok, 1821 Webster Street, 510-337-9388. Chef's Wok is open from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily, with delivery within Alameda available from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Kelly-Moore Brings a Rainbow of Paint to West Alameda

Kelly-Moore will be opening up a 6500 square foot paint store this month in a newly remodeled location at 649-651 Pacific, with plans for expansion on the site in early 2006.

Kelly-Moore has been looking for a space in Alameda for several years because they have so many Alameda customers, says Arnie Knipp, District Sales Manager for the Kelly-Moore Paint Company. "We've been part of the Alameda community for years without a physical presence."

The West End of Alameda is a great fit for Kelly-Moore, Knipp says. "We were attracted to the West End because of the revitalization occurring and because it is geographically

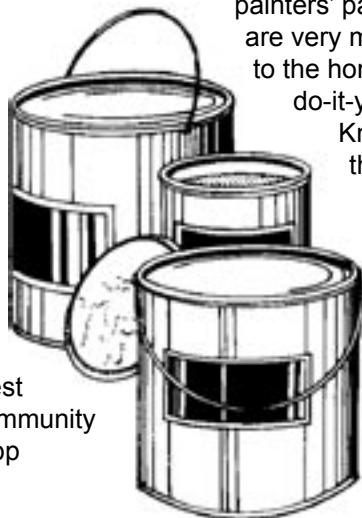
well-situated," he said. Giving special mention to the Bayport housing project and opportunities at Alameda Point, Knipp said, "if you look to the future growth of Alameda—it is here."

Having Kelly-Moore will be a big plus for West Alameda, the community and the city. Knipp

expects half of Alameda's 10,000 homeowners to visit the store in the first year. "When we bring customers in, area businesses get more exposure," says Knipp

West Alameda looks forward to a long and fruitful relationship with Kelly-Moore, which Knipp says has a commitment to the community. "Even though our focus is as a professional painters' paint store, we are very much committed to the homeowner and do-it-yourselfer."

Knipp points out that many Kelly-Moore stores have been in the same locations for 25-30 years. "We are into this for the long-term," he says.



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