

## District Three First Year Report

Happy New Year to all!

Having now completed my first year as councilmember for district three, I want to provide an overview of the work that my office has engaged in. Many people have asked for this information, so here we go. I will divide the report into categories so that you can easily move to sections that might interest you. Our regular newsletters will be much shorter, I promise!

### **Parks:**

I decided to run for this office to try and address the devastating lack of funding for City Parks, among other things. One of the first situations I encountered on taking office was working out the details for the paving of a section of bike trail in Sutter's Landing Park. We were able to strike an agreement with the City Parks Department and the American River Flood Control District (ARFCD) to pave a lower alignment at the toe of the levee for the bike trail. This solves maintenance requirements for ARFCD. The trail is graded and will get paved when the weather turns warmer. We have initiated environmental work to continue the trail to the H St. Bridge, and will also work on the section to Highway 160. When completed the Two Rivers Trail will provide for recreational and commute travel on the south side of the American river.

We will soon begin construction on a bathroom at Sutter's Landing Park, and also at the South Natomas Community Center Park. We are also working on a plan to bring the old McKinley Park restroom back online, to create additional capacity in a very busy park. Additionally, we have completed resurfacing of Fort Natomas, and installed a new playground at Bannon Creek Parkway. I continue to coordinate an adopt-a-park maintenance program in my neighborhood of River Park. If you are interested in volunteering at your local park, give my office a call at 808-7003.

Attorney Corey Brown and I generated an idea to create a Lower American River Parkway state conservancy. The Conservancy would help us compete for substantial sums of State Park Bond money for restoration of the parkway and other types of projects. We are working with the County Board of Supervisors, and Assembly Member McCarty on legislation to support this effort.

We will soon begin construction on a public garden space on the Ninos Parkway to accommodate gardeners displaced by a directive from Homeland Security to clear areas around the base of transmission towers.

We are finalizing details for a rehab of McKinley pond, as well as adopting a contract to source out professional maintenance. Construction may begin in 2016.

## **Ordinance:**

In the last year, we have adopted some ordinances of significance.

I supported the plastic bag ban, now in effect, as well as the Urban Agriculture ordinance. I have been deeply involved in the formation of an Urban Forest ordinance to better protect our critical tree canopy and have helped gain community input to craft the Air BNB ordinance.

I called for a change to council rules and procedures to require that each councilmember take sexual harassment training on a biannual basis and it has been adopted. I will be introducing a resolution calling for the City to curtail the use of neonicotinoid pesticides that are extremely harmful to pollinators and constitute a threat to our food production system. I am also looking at a resolution to call for the banning of clear-cutting of Sierra forestland, as it affects the city water supply adversely.

I have worked with the Community Development Department to develop a more streamlined permit process by convening a meeting of the department and several local contractors to brainstorm ideas for change. Some are now implemented. Significant issues still exist, and I will be spending considerable time in the coming year on this matter. I also initiated a code change that addresses setback issues in residential construction. We will continue to work on ways to preserve and improve our beautiful city.

## **Minimum Wage:**

I served on the Mayor's Minimum Wage task force. This is a deeply controversial issue, and it was a difficult process to arrive at a compromise. We arrived at a conservative raise to \$12.50/hr. by 2020, with the ability of Council to adjust the increment annually. I think that this is a reasonable fall back position if the state does not take action. I believe strongly that this is an issue that must be handled at the state level to create a competitive "level playing field". There will be a state ballot initiative this fall that will give voters the chance to weigh in on a \$15.00 minimum wage by 2021. Should this pass, it will supersede the Council action.

## **Boards and commissions:**

I currently serve on the boards of the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, Regional Transit, Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, Regional Sanitation District, Sacramento Transportation Authority as well as the Council Water Adhoc committee and the Council Law and Legislation Committee. I am committed to improving our transit system. Flood control is of paramount concern to the city and especially District three, as the American River bisects the district. Flood issues consume a good deal of my time, and I will continue to work with SAFCA to assure the repairs of our levees and other projects that heighten our protection levels from significant flood risk, as well as lower flood insurance rates.

## **Homelessness:**

I believe that the homelessness issue is extremely important to overcome. We are working very hard to create permanent housing solutions to lift people out of street bound poverty. The Mayor has created a homelessness task force on which I will serve with members Shenirer and Hansen.

I am also working on initiatives to create short-term shelter as well. I called for a city report on the impacts of homelessness to our general fund, and the data are significant. You can find the report on my city website:

<http://www.Cityofsacramento.org/~media/corporate/files/CMO/HomelessCoordinator/costofhomelessnessreport.pdf>

I have called for the city to develop a portable attended bathroom facility so that we can address the urgent needs of the homeless and the neighborhoods feeling their impact. The recent formation of a region wide collaboration to tackle the issue is particularly promising. Sutter Health has stepped up in a big way to facilitate this effort.

## **Projects:**

We are working to create a PBID (property and Business Improvement District) for each of the Alhambra and Northgate corridors. These will significantly aid business owners and police to improve public safety, and create a better business atmosphere. Property owners on Alhambra will be voting in the next few weeks. The Northgate PBID effort will be our focus this year.

I am thrilled to announce that we are building two new fire stations in district 3, Stations #14 and #15. The existing stations have far exceeded their useful lives.

I am very pleased that we were able to coordinate the construction of fire station #15 and a rehab of the shopping center at West El Camino and Truxel Avenue. Working together on logistics, we hope to save on the costs to build the new fire station. I believe that these amenities will enhance safety and create financial opportunity in South Natomas.

Due to safety concerns expressed by students at Theodore Judah Elementary, we were successful in creating crosswalk, signage, and stops sign improvements adjacent the school.

We have pushed several street enhancements in East Sacramento, repaired streetlights in the River District, and we have worked with neighbors in East Sac who are interested in adding street lights to their streets.

We are working with a developer to get a project started at 65<sup>th</sup> and Folsom (adjacent RT). There is a lot of activity in the area with Sactown Union Brewery almost complete at 66<sup>th</sup> and Elvas, and a three story mixed use development at 66<sup>th</sup> and Folsom.

I am pleased to say, due to discussions with Caltrans, a closure of the E St. onramp to business 80 is off the table, and that CalTrans is looking at a major overhaul of the corridor and its bridges. This is a few years out, but could conceivably open the opportunity for an Alhambra underpass to McKinley Village, should it prove necessary. I remain interested in keeping this access route open to discussion.

The 30 million dollar HUD grant secured to rebuild the Twin Rivers housing project in the River District is a major achievement for the City. I am excited to contribute to the implementation of the project!

The Downtown Railyards project is the most exciting prospect for our city. A new Kaiser Hospital, likely Major League Soccer stadium, and residential and commercial development will transform the City of Sacramento. We are creating a collaboration with the developer to assure that decisions made moving forward are beneficial to the city, create economic opportunity and jobs, promote sophisticated design, and incorporate the arts, educational, and recreational opportunities. I am particularly excited by the creation of a City Market and a Rail Technology Museum at the historic shop buildings. This will certainly become an iconic landmark for the city!

### **Budget:**

In 2015, I argued for upgrades to our park system, and to keep spending on new staff with benefit burden to a minimum. I feel that we need to set aside at least 40 million dollars to cushion the sun-setting of Measure U, the local initiative voters passed in 2012 to prevent further cuts to the police, fire and parks departments. I asked Local 522, the Firefighters union, to negotiate a single role system of medical response as a way to address the \$6million the City subsidizes this operation each year. Unfortunately, they have refused to negotiate until 2018. I will continue to press for reforms that assure efficiency and solvency moving forward.

I will also continue to support projects and policies that bring more highly paid employment to Sacramento. We are making progress in this regard, and we need to continue the momentum.

### **Events:**

Our office produced five Pops in the Parks and two Screen on the Green events. All were a huge success in terms of entertainment value for the community. They also netted a small return that can be spent on community projects! Additionally we put on food truck events for months at McKinley and Northgate Parks. These events require a tremendous amount of effort to produce and my staff did a stellar job. Additionally we collaborated with the Public Works Department to put on a Christmas celebration for Hazel Strauch Elementary School in the Northgate area. What a great way to end our first year!!

**Other Initiatives:**

After attending an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) fair, I came to the realization that there is a need for braille menus at our fine eating establishments. We have undertaken to fill the need and are producing menus transcribed to braille to assist our non-sighted constituents. The goal is provide these menus to all District three restaurants that request them. We are well underway with this project and it is very well received!

This is a partial synopsis of our work in 2015. I am supported by an excellent staff that I am fortunate to work with-Jennifer West, David Gonsalves and Danielle Vincent. We've had a winter break and are refreshed.

For more information about these and any other City issues, please feel free to contact our office at 808-7003 or via our website at <http://www.cityofsacramento.org/Mayor-Council/Districts/District3>

We are at your service, and look forward to a busy and productive 2016!

Jeff Harris  
Councilmember- District Three