



**OAKMORE
HOMES
ASSOCIATION**

Oakmore Homes Association

SPRING 2003 NEWSLETTER

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Mission Statement

“The Oakmore Homes Association is a community of Oakmore neighbors committed to promoting and enhancing safety, beautification, community and property values in our neighborhood.”

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR BOARD

By Gayle Ransom, President

Your association board was busy last year, and plans for this coming year reflect the growing degree of activity that builds with involvement and enthusiasm. I encourage you to read this newsletter, not only to keep abreast of local happenings, but also in the hope that something here will pique your interest and inspire you to become personally involved with your association. As always, we need volunteers, both to fill positions on the board and also to participate on committees that address the ends our mission statement promises. We invite your contact.

Probably the most evident association activity last year was the September Leimert Bridge plaque dedication. The association acted to have the plaques created and installed, hosted pre- and post event refreshments, provided entertainment and commemorative souvenirs. The Oakland Heritage Alliance home tour followed on that same day, and the association provided support and a mid-tour water stop. Board prompting resulted in the rehab and repainting of the bridge's light and utility poles in time for the dedication.

In November, we had the Annual Meeting. Again, the venue was Zion Lutheran Church; they have a room ideal for our purposes, and we are lucky they to have them so close and willing to offer space. There was a catered dinner from La Mediteranee, followed by cake, this year decorated with a view of the Leimert Bridge. Choice of decoration for the cake reflected the September event and the speakers for the evening, the “big guns” from the city Public Works Agency. Be sure to read articles here about the bridge retrofit and the stairs repair/replacement.

Information presented by the PWA led to two board-arranged resident meetings where details of the retrofit of the bridge and the stairs plans were presented. The association and all residents of the area that use the bridge need to thank three men who spontaneously formed a committee under the aegis of the board to address the necessity of replacing the bridge railing at the same time the retrofit of the structure is accomplished. Dan Brand, Kurt Lavenson, and Jackson Yu have the professional expertise to advance the argument for including that work. We have included their letter and the one from the board in their support. As to the stairs, the city will present final details of the repair project at a community meeting on April 10th. Details are included in this newsletter.

We had some fun in November at the Chabot Space and Science Center. The association sponsored steep discounts on our day there. The board is working on sponsoring the same sort of fun activity at the Oakland Zoo this year. Look for details soon.

We sponsored the painting of house numbers on the curbs or driveways of member households. I, for one, am most satisfied; of all the times I've said yes to itinerant curb painters, this is the best job. The board will offer this service again in 2004. Do feel free to add your curb to the list. To preview the work, take a look at my curb and driveway at 3974 Oakmore.

Your board hopes you are satisfied that the association is doing something for you, that you can see that there is power in numbers, that there is value and sense of community in belonging to the association.

Oakmore Highland's Public Stairs – Update Community Meeting Thursday April 10th at 7 PM

On January 23, 2003, at a meeting of interested Oakmore residents, the City of Oakland presented their initial plans for the reconstruction and/or repairs of the 4 sets of public stairs in our neighborhood. The following is a summary.

1. The stairs from Arden to Bridgeview are in fair condition. There will be selective repair at the lower portion and a partial reconstruction of the upper part.
2. The stairs from Bridgeview to Leimert are in poor condition. This set will be reconstructed and replaced.
3. The stairs from Leimert to Oakview are in very poor condition and are slated to be reconstructed and replaced.
4. The stairs from Oakview to Hoover are in fair to good condition. There will be selective repairs.

\$250,000 is available from Measure B for the entire project. An ADA coordinator will be involved to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Currently, the project is in its design phase. It will be put out to bid in May, with the contract awarded in July. Construction is expected to begin September and completed in November 2003. The contractor will be required to work with the homeowners whose properties flank the stairs, in order to minimize inconvenience to them during construction.

The staff at the Public Works Agency prefers using concrete for the reconstruction and replacement because of the durability of the material. It is, however, more expensive than using wood, plus making the concrete more attractive (e.g., using color or doing a faux grooving) would only add to the cost. Wood is the other material option under consideration. There will be a handrail present on at least one side of the stairs; the design/material is not yet decided upon. Manhole covers will be incorporated into the design so that access to sewers can be maintained. Tree roots will be trimmed back under an arborist's advice. Lighting is not planned.

There will be a half-hour meeting held at Wells & Bennett on Thursday, **April 10, 2003**, from **7:00-7:30 PM**, at which the city will present its proposed design for the reconstruction. Oakmore residents will have this opportunity to examine the proposal and to offer final comments. If you use these stairs, or care about how the stairs' design will affect the ambience of the neighborhood, you need to attend this meeting.

- Virginia Lew -

Leimert Bridge Retrofit - Update

Following our community meeting of January 9th, an Association committee was formed to work on the issues presented by the Leimert Bridge retrofit. This committee included which included neighbors Kurt Lavenson, Architect; Dan Brandt, Engineer; Jackson Yu, Engineer, Cindy Haines, conveyor. After reviewing the plans, two letters were sent to the appropriate agencies and representatives; one from committee-member Lavenson dated February 14th and one from Gayle Ransom, OHA President, dated February 28th. The letters are reproduced below:

Letter from Kurt Lavenson:

..., [w]hen Mike Neary, Wladimir Wlassowsky and you met with the Oakmore Homeowners' Association (OHA) on January 9, 2003, several concerns were raised regarding the scope and details of the proposed bridge retrofit. Specifically, it was observed that the design for the reinforcement of the bridge appeared to disregard the deteriorating structures up at the pedestrian and roadway level. There were various public comments made at the meeting by me as well as other OHA members and by our City Councilperson Jean Quan. The issues noted below remain of serious concern. Since it was unclear whether they are addressed by the Caltrans project scope, it seems imperative that you re-evaluate that scope, and any additional Leimert Bridge work anticipated by the City of Oakland. This should be done before proceeding further with the contractor bidding process. Project time, public safety and professional design liability all appear to be of the essence.

The retrofit plans do not adequately address the pedestrian walkway and solid walls that are integral with the bridge structure. Currently, a concrete slab and system of supports extend from the bridge to create a sidewalk and are attached to heavy concrete guard walls that cantilever upward and act as beams. The walls are old concrete, similar to the rest of the bridge and they are deteriorating. This is evidenced by spalling of the concrete and rust stains leaching out from the rebar. These walls need to be replaced. In addition to the life safety hazard created by their breaking off and killing pedestrians, they could tear away a significant amount of the underlying structure or fall through it and trigger a larger failure of the entire bridge. The walkway should be reinforced and the deteriorating walls replaced with new reinforced concrete guard walls of appropriate design.

Additionally, the retrofit plans are vague regarding the reinforcement and replacement of hazardous utility structures connected to and dependent upon the bridge. The drawings indicate new street lights and poles, which I believe is necessary since the current ones are corroded and pose safety hazards, should they fall across the roadway. I have observed that the plans also indicate existing 16" diameter water and natural gas mains supported by the bridge. It would seem that in addition to securing those, the retrofit project should relocate and isolate the existing overhead wires into conduits below the bridge. This would address the risk of fallen wires and electrical arcing in proximity to the gas main.

I understand that funds are limited for this project, ... I also understand that Caltrans is paying for a large portion of this work and that they have a mandate to "retrofit the bridge" as a whole. The attached structures are indeed integral to the bridge, its seismic behavior as a whole and its serviceability after an earthquake. I think you can agree that to spend large sums while neglecting these structural safety issues, would be unwise, risky and simply a waste of money. I am confident that the structural work I have noted would be a minor addition to this substantial project. It was mentioned at our meeting that the City of Oakland might even provide some funds to do a portion of this work. Regardless of who pays, it is important that the scope be included in the design right away. The seismic analysis for the retrofit should take into account all modifications proposed for the bridge and all of its

Neighborhood Safety Concerns

Leimert Traffic – by Cindy Haines

Leimert Blvd. between Bridgeview and Oakmore Road can turn a commute into an obstacle course. Residents have notified the Association of the difficulties they are encountering trying to avoid parked cars on both sides of this narrow section of the road. Many claim they have to travel on the wrong side of the yellow line to reach the stop sign, while fearing a speeding on-coming vehicle. The problem seems most evident during the morning and evening commutes. There are solutions; no parking; permit parking during selected times; parking only on one side of the street, etc. Stop signs at Hoover might slow traffic. If this is a major concern for you, we need your input on a committee to study the problem and develop alternatives to the current situation. Contact the Association today. We need you.

Skateboarding Dangers – by Virginia Lew

Ah! To Be Young Again. Now that Spring is here again, we are taking advantage of the good weather to do some of our favorite activities. Gardening, walking, and oh yes - skateboarding. Understandably, the young amongst us find it fun, exciting, and maybe just a little dangerous to skateboard down Leimert Boulevard. To the adults amongst us, this can be unnerving, though . . . particularly if the youngster is lying flat on the skateboard. You may want to talk with your kids to see if they are using their skateboards safely. For those of us who drive Leimert, please do so carefully. Don't drive so fast you end up crossing over the double yellow line. In fact, don't drive fast at all. The sun may unexpectedly blind you, or you may encounter unexpected traffic, including the skateboarders mentioned above, or pedestrians. The definition of "accident" is something happening without intention.

Uprooted Sidewalks – by Terry Kulka

There has been concern on the part of Oakmore Road residents regarding the trip hazard that has been caused by the roots of the street trees displacing some sidewalks. The Department of Public Works has come to inspect the problem and is in the process of evaluating the situation. We have been told that where there is a clear trip hazard the City will put in a temporary "make safe" fix which is asphalt. We have been told that there is an approximately two to three year waiting list for the more permanent "fix" of taking out the displaced parts of the sidewalk, trimming the root of the tree and pouring new concrete. Your board member Terry Kulka has been working with the City of Oakland on this matter. Feel free to contact her at 530-3530 if you have any questions about the Oakmore Road sidewalks and street trees.

Garbage Blight – by Gayle Ransom

It's the little things, a broken glass pane, a fallen shutter. Pretty soon a neighborhood looks ragged. That's how blight begins. It happens even in our neighborhood. If garbage containers are visible from the street, they detract for the beauty of our neighborhood. Take in your garbage cans. Do it the same day that the refuse is picked up, and keep them out of sight. If you don't, it's blight and the City may cite you for it.

attached structures. Otherwise the structural performance will be questionable and the liability for the results of subsequent modifications will be unclear. It would protect the City of Oakland to ensure that the Caltrans construction scope includes the work described above, or at the very least, that the seismic analysis and the plans be revised to specifically include it now. ...

Letter from Gayle Ransom, OHA President:

We are writing you on behalf of the Oakmore Homes Association and its over 220 member households who live on the Oakland side of the Sausal Creek Bridge and who walk and drive across our neighborhood bridge every day. One of our members, Kurt Lavenson, an architect, along with other members, examined in detail the proposed retrofit of the bridge referenced above. A copy of his letter of February 14, 2003 is enclosed. He raises a number of concerns, especially safety concerns. By this letter we wish to state our agreement with the points he has raised and emphasize the importance of making this bridge that we all use truly safe.

Safety is our key concern. While most of us see the supporting structure and arches only from a distance, we can closely examine the street level walls, fences and utility poles every day we walk across the bridge to work, worship or simply for exercise. What we see is disturbing. The pedestrian walls along both sides of the bridge, a post construction add-on in the 1940's, show cracks and rust stains. Utility and light poles are not all straight and some are attached to concrete at points where cracking and rust stains can also be seen.

We understand that the goal of the retrofit is to make the bridge safe in the event of an earthquake. But safety is about more than just whether the bridge will fall down. It is also about whether people on or near the bridge will be injured or killed because the structure above road level is unsafe. Walls that collapse or fall over can endanger those on the bridge. They might even damage the arch supports below road level compromising the structural safety of the bridge, precisely what this retrofit is designed to prevent. Electrical wires and poles could also fall creating hazards and increasing the potential for injury.

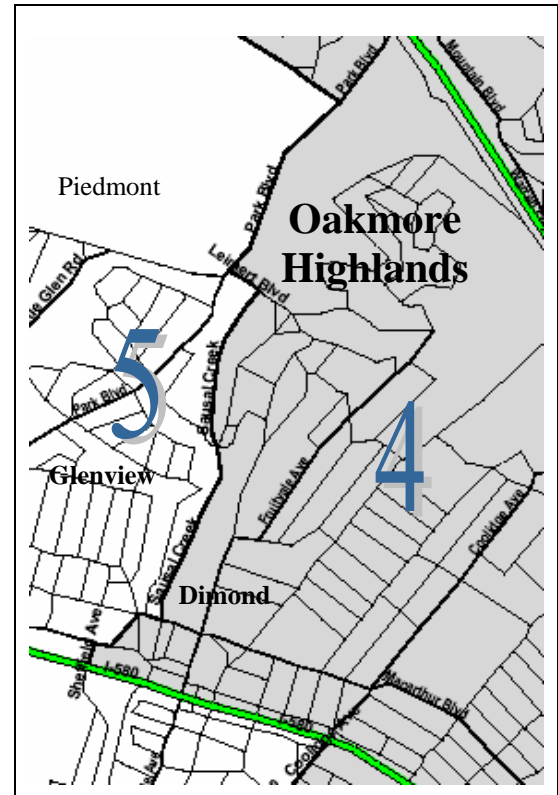
These risks can be reduced. If repair or replacement of the deteriorating structures at pedestrian and roadway level is done now, as a part of the larger retrofit project, costs can be greatly reduced and the bridge truly made safe. The small marginal costs necessary to make the entire bridge safe would pay dividends in lives saved and injuries avoided. It may also be cheaper in the long run for if injuries and deaths did occur the potential liability of governmental agencies for declining to address a known risk could be substantial.

We residents of the Oakmore/Leimert neighborhood know how important this bridge is to our community. We want the bridge made safe and willingly accept the disruptions that the project will bring this summer and fall. But we don't want to see safety issues that we notice every day to remain unaddressed, especially when addressing them would add little to the cost of the larger project. We urge you to consider the points raised in Mr. Lavenson's letter and work to make the bridge truly safe. ...

COUNCIL AND SCHOOL BOARD DISTRICTS REDRAWN

Every 10 years Oakland redraws the borderlines for the 7 city council and school board districts. The process of defining those districts for the next decade is nearing completion. At its March 18th meeting the council directed staff to prepare an ordinance based on one of the proposed plans, a portion of which is displayed to the right. The plan keeps all of Oakmore Highlands in a single district, the 4th currently represented by Jean Quan. In the 20+ years city council members have been elected by district, Oakmore Highlands has been entirely in the 4th District.

Initially a number of the proposals divided Oakmore Highlands between District 4 (Quan) and District 5 (De La Fuente). Your Association lobbied aggressively and successfully to keep our neighborhood united, and we will continue to follow the process to its conclusion. The council-favored plan includes a number of changes that may impact our area. The Glenview neighborhood is likely to be removed from District 4 and District 2 (Wan) and placed entirely in District 5. The Dimond neighborhood would be divided between District 4 and District 5. – Bob Thyken



**OAKMORE
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Mark Your Calendar!

**Community Meeting
Stairs Repair**

**Thursday April 10
at 7pm**

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Regular Mail:
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