

True sense of community on San Marco Street

Many of our readers may be aware that the city has initiated a new planning project for the '80-to-80 Corridor,' which includes West Texas Street, Texas Street (downtown), and North Texas Street.

As Fairfield begins to approach 'build out' over the next 20 years, there is increased interest in encouraging high quality infill development. The 80-to-80 planning effort is intended to help facilitate private investment that incrementally transforms the 'strip commercial' character of the corridor into a more urbane mix of commercial, residential, and mixed infill development.

The study will include a comprehensive public outreach process including stakeholder interviews, community meetings and public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council. Consultants Freedman, Tung & Bottomley were selected based upon their extensive experience in preparing corridor revitalization plans.

The first public workshop is next week. On June 6, 2007, you are invited to attend the kickoff workshop at 7:00 p.m. in the Northern Solano Board of Realtors offices at 3690 Hilborn Road.

The '80-to-80 Corridor' is not the only neighborhood receiving attention in Fairfield. The city continues to operate its successful Quality Neighborhood Team (QNT) program. This program involves a multi-department team approach to working with neighborhood residents and property owners to solve problems.

One neighborhood where this approach has seen some success is San Marco Street located in eastern Fairfield. The neighborhood includes a mixture of older single family houses and four-plexes dating largely from the 1960s. Over time, the small enclave of apartment buildings developed a reputation for crime, social problems and physical decay. In response, the City's QNT Program approached local property owners, managers, and residents and entered into a partnership to address these problems. Some of the key accomplishments have included:

- More cooperation between property owners, managers, and the City to address crime and other issues.

- Creation of a property managers' association with a common property management company to manage all the apartment properties.
- New streetlights and landscaping (currently under renovation)
- Construction of a small neighborhood park, owned by the property owners.
- Improved ongoing maintenance.
- Relocation of a fourplex to the vacant lot at 404 San Marco Street.
- Annual parties, including a summer barbecue and 'National Night Out.'
- Operation by the Community Services Department of the mobile 'Fun on the Run' program for neighborhood youth.

In cooperation with the Fairfield-Suisun School District, Summer Lunch Program offering free lunches to neighborhood residents under 18 years of age.

According to Robert Basile, the City's manager for the QNT Program, these programs have helped create a true sense of community in the San Marco Street neighborhood. Tenants and managers are now willing to watch over their neighborhood, calling the authorities when suspicious activities are observed.

The improvements on San Marco Street are related to the planning effort on North Texas Street/Texas Street/West Texas Street because stronger, safer residential neighborhoods will help strengthen nearby commercial areas as well. The QNT program has been successful in helping neighborhoods transform themselves, improving quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

***Economic Notes** is an update from Fairfield City Hall written by Brian Miller and Karl Dumas of the Fairfield Planning and Development Department. They can be contacted at 428-7461 or e-mail at kdu-mas@ci.fairfield.ca.us or bkmiller@ci.fairfield.ca.us.*