

# SAMMAMISH

ISSUE 103

CITY NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2011

## Budget shrinks in 2011/2012

**THIS BIENNIAL BUDGET \$33 MILLION SMALLER**

Based on the new 2-year budget approved by the City Council late last year, expenditures are going to drop significantly in 2011/2012.

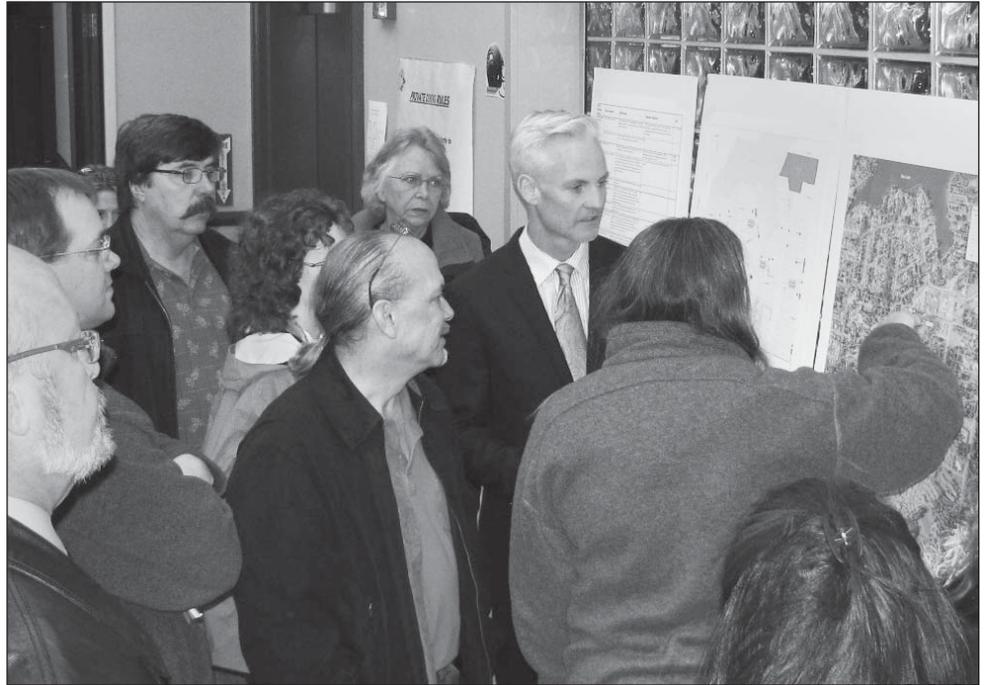
Expenditures for capital projects, the operating budget, and Surface Water Management (SWM) costs will total \$86 million over two years, a big dip from the \$119 million budgeted for 2009/2010.

"This biennial budget is \$33 million smaller than the previous 2-year budget," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "It's a reflection of the slow economy that's affecting everyone."

About two thirds of the expenditure reduction is being achieved by delaying road, park and other infrastructure capital projects. The remainder can be traced to staff reductions and the trimming back of salaries and benefits.

"The cost of living went down by half a percent, so we're reducing staff

*See BUDGET, pg. 4*



*Residents discuss the barricade at Southeast 32nd Street with City Councilmember John Curley at a public meeting on Nov. 30 at Pine Lake Middle School.*

## Council to discuss barricade at S.E. 32nd Street on Jan. 11

After a methodical process that slowly but surely gathered public input regarding a barricade on S.E. 32nd Street, the City Council will review the issue at a study session on Jan. 11.

Not too long after that, the Council is expected to decide whether the barricade should come out or remain

in place.

Opponents of removal say the traffic will change the character of their neighborhood and create safety issues. Proponents argue that removal will allow easier access for emergency vehicles, shorten car trips, and improve

*See BARRICADE, pg. 3*

**MAYOR'S MESSAGE**

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**TOYS FOR TOTS**

*Story on page 5*

**POLICE FORUM**

*Story on page 8*

## A young city is maturing

Sammamish is the youngest city in western Washington, in only its twelfth year of existence, but the transition from rural King County to a vibrant community with ever expanding opportunities has been exciting.



*Don Gerend  
Mayor*

The early focus was on improving transportation facilities, changing two-lane country roads into boulevards with pedestrian and bicycle facilities and appropriate use of roundabouts and other traffic-calming techniques. Both motorized and non-motorized improvements continue to be high priority in the city capital budgets.

A young city with nearly one third of its population under age eighteen translates into an emphasis on sports and family activities. Improvements to existing parks, creation of new parks, and acquisition of hundreds of acres of open space are just the beginning. The Sammamish Commons, now close to forty acres of prime public real estate on the summit of the plateau, has City Hall, the new library, a great skateboard park and a whole lot of open space for all to enjoy. The Commons Plaza, with its views of Seattle and the Olympics, hosts the Farmers Markets from May to September, an annual Teen Fest, Sammamish Days and Nights, and a fantastic Fourth of July celebration. At other times it is simply a great place to hang out or enjoy a quiet walk or picnic lunch.

The Town Center Plan, focused on a 200-acre area containing the Sammamish Commons and nearby neighborhoods, is now zoned for mixed use

retail/commercial and residential, with development regulations emphasizing low-impact development and community open space. The vision: a vibrant gathering center giving our city that third place beyond home and work for our increasingly diverse community to come together in leisure activities.

So what new and exciting happenings can we expect in 2011, here in one of America's great places to live? Last month's Mayor's Message spoke of just some of the great work that our Parks Department and Parks Commission have initiated. In addition, the first phases of development of Sammamish Landing (along the northern shoreline of Lake Sammamish) and Evans Creek Preserve (the beautiful forest and open space along our northern city border) will get underway. An additional all-weather turf sports field is also in the biennial budget.

The former library building was acquired by the city. The Boys and Girls Club will remodel the facility and open this spring a teen center / recreation center (with activities for various ages based on the time of day), and they are currently raising money for a multi-purpose addition with a basketball court.

Over the years, surveys here in Sammamish have revealed a need for more gathering centers of all sorts, but with an emphasis on athletic activities. Last year the survey results, as well as neighborhood meetings conducted by the Parks Department and Commission, called once again for placing a high priority on a quality community/aquatics center here in Sammamish.

These centers come in all forms. Mukilteo is just now completing a community center with no aquatics

and no gym, but with an emphasis on arts, from performing arts to pottery. In contrast, Lynnwood is in the middle of a \$25 million renovation/expansion of a largely aquatics-focused community center, with a huge family pool, lane pools and even a one-meter board. Federal Way built a beautiful community center about five years ago which has a large family pool, a lane pool, a gym with a jogging track on the balcony, all sorts of workout facilities, exercise rooms, and meeting rooms with a catering kitchen. Awesome! The YMCA has recently built wonderful facilities in Auburn, Shoreline, Newcastle and SeaTac.

Last year, councilmembers, Parks Department staff, and Parks Commissioners had the opportunity to tour literally dozens of community/aquatics centers throughout the state and even in the Denver vicinity. Denver happened to host the annual National League of Cities convention, so a dual purpose trip allowed us to visit some nine facilities in the Denver area.

Our community has many questions to answer: What are the key components that we desire in our Sammamish community/aquatics center, which are practical, what partnerships might we explore to develop and operate the facility, where should it be located and how should it be financed? The conversation has already started, but 2011 will find the city moving the cheese forward. Focus groups and other public presentations should narrow the options, allowing us to take advantage of low interest rate financing and a highly favorable bidding climate.

Lots of exciting city-building activities are in the works for 2011, so stay tuned, stay connected and let's make it happen.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Gerend". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "D".

## City's text and email alert system tested by storms

When he got word that trees and powerlines were down over Southeast 24th Street last month, City Communications Manager Tim Larson tapped out a few quick words on his computer and hit "send." Seconds later, the text message was making phones beep all over town.

"The city's 'alert' system came in real handy during the snow, wind and rain storms we had," Larson said. "We've had the system in place for a year now, but this was the first time we've really had the opportunity to use it for traffic and weather alerts."

Whether it was downed trees, flooded streets, or traffic problems related to snow, residents who've signed up for the city service were the first to know.



*Heavy rains filled wetland beneath new 244th Avenue bridge.*



*Puget Sound Energy crews repair poles along Southeast 24th Street.*

"Most of the time, our alert system sends out emails about city meetings, road projects, volunteer opportunities, or any other topic people have signed up for," Larson said. "But we can also add phone texts when we have traffic, weather or emergency information to get out. It's a good system."

Residents can sign up for the alerts by going to the city website ([www.ci.sammamish.wa.us](http://www.ci.sammamish.wa.us)) and clicking on the "alert" icon in the upper right-hand corner of the home page. After following a few prompts, they'll see a long menu of city-related topics to choose from.

"It's really simple," Larson said. "People can sign up for as many or as few topics as they want, and they can change or eliminate the service whenever they want. Best of all, the system handles almost everything. City staffers don't have to update email lists, maintain the system, or do much of anything that takes them away from other duties."

### *BARRICADE, cont. from pg. 1*

"connectivity" and traffic flow.

The barricade, one of many scattered throughout the city, was installed at the end of a stub street back before Sammamish became a city. Now that the stub has become part of a complete street, the barricade removal option has come up.

The Jan. 11 public meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall. For more information on the issue, go to the city website ([www.ci.sammamish.wa.us](http://www.ci.sammamish.wa.us)), click on the "projects" tab on the left side of the home page and then select "connectivity." Residents may also contact Public Works Director Laura Philpot at [lphilpot@ci.sammamish.wa.us](mailto:lphilpot@ci.sammamish.wa.us).



*The barricade at Southeast 32nd Street.*

## Sewer and road improvements wrap up on S.E. 20th St. SEVENTEEN MONTHS OF WORK TEST PATIENCE, BUT RESULTS PLEASE RESIDENTS

The long haul began in July of 2009 when the Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District began putting in a new sewer main along Southeast 20th Street. The city then followed with its own improvement project on the same mile-long stretch, putting in a new sidewalk and a pair of bike lanes from 228th Avenue to 212th Avenue.

Taken together, the back-to-back projects lasted almost a year and a half, stretching the patience of residents who live and travel along the east to west arterial.

“Fortunately, we’ve been getting lots of positive feedback since we finished up in December,” Project Manager Tawni Dalziel said. “It used to be a risk to walk along the narrow shoulders, but now

we’re seeing a lot of kids, joggers, cyclists and dog walkers using the new facilities. It’s really great.”

One additional touch will be added to the project this spring when the rain lightens and the road surface dries out. It will only take about a week, but the city plans to install a colored surfacing material that will turn the bike lanes green.

“The color will differentiate the bike lanes from the car lanes, make the road look narrower, and promote safer vehicle speeds,” Dalziel said.

Design and construction costs for the city’s portion of the project came to \$2.26 million. Just over \$1 million of that was paid for with a grant from the Washington State Public Works Board.



*A young man walks two dogs on the new Southeast 20th Street sidewalk. The mile-long road improvements also include bike lanes on both sides of the road.*

### *BUDGET, cont. from pg. 1*

salaries by that same half-percent amount,” Yazici said. “We’ve also reduced our budgeted employee positions from 75 to 67.5.”

(NOTE: When the economic downturn began a couple of years ago, the city chose not to fill all of its 75 budgeted positions. The staff level last year was 71.5 filled positions. This year’s drop to 67.5 employees was achieved by eliminating four of last year’s filled positions.)

Among the largest budget items still on the capital projects list:

- \$1.7 million in 2011 for a “non-motorized” improvement project

along 244th Avenue to the north of N.E. Eighth Street.

- \$1.9 million in 2011 for improvements to an athletic field at Eastlake High School. City residents will share use of the field with students.
- \$6.3 million in 2011 for preliminary expenditures on a community center.

Although the city is still investigating exactly what features residents would like to see in a community center, the \$6.3 million has been set aside for land acquisition, feasibility studies and other preliminary steps.

Not counting SWM expenditures, the capital budget for 2011 adds up to

\$17 million. That figure will drop to just \$5 million in 2012.

“This budget shows that our City Council is continuing to live within its means,” Yazici said. “Although we are in excellent financial shape as a city, the Council clearly wants to do the responsible thing and keep Sammamish on a very solid footing.”

The city, which has a “AAA” bond rating, will finish with an ending balance of \$15.5 million at the end of 2012.

For more information on the 2011/2012 budget, go to the city website ([www.ci.sammamish.wa.us](http://www.ci.sammamish.wa.us)), click on “departments,” and then select “financial services.”

## Toys for Tots donations pack the police station

It started in 2005 when Det. Amy Jarboe decided to help the U. S. Marine Corps gather “Toys for Tots” in Sammamish. Five years later, Jarboe remains excited about the generosity of city residents and the small mountain of toys and gifts she sees in the police station each holiday season.

“Each year, I know that these toys and gifts will go a long way toward making Christmas morning special for a lot of kids who otherwise would have gone without,” Jarboe said. “It feels great to be able to help.”

The gifts come from residents, city staffers and other sources.

“We should give a special thanks to Fred Meyer,” Jarboe said. “They provided bicycles at discounted prices so kids could have something new to ride on Christmas morning.”

The bikes, toys, dolls, games and stuffed animals have made the police station hallways a bit tough to navigate in December, but Jarboe has no plans to stop helping the Marines who head up the nationwide effort.

“As long as Sammamish residents are willing to share their good fortune with deserving, needy kids in King County, we’ll make space for a new mountain of holiday spirit each and every year.”



*Police Chief Nate Elledge and Det. Amy Jarboe stand with just a few of the “Toys for Tots” donated by Sammamish residents in late 2010.*

## Flooding: How to prepare by learning from the past

### COMMON SENSE STEPS TO REDUCE RISK IN THE EVENT OF HEAVY RAINS

Thanks in part to infrastructure improvements and solid maintenance programs, the city has managed to avoid catastrophic flooding problems since incorporation in 1999. But city residents have had to cope with localized flooding from time to time.

To help everyone better prepare for heavy rains in the future, here are a few common sense tips:

- **Always obey “road closed” signs.** Although it may be tempting to proceed, remember that the road has been closed to protect your life and property.
- **Plan an alternative route home.** Since your normal route home may be blocked, do some research and find

another route that will get you where you need to go.

- **Don’t splash pedestrians.** As you drive through puddles, make sure you slow down so you don’t drench passersby, especially children, with a spray of water.
- **Heed “water over roadway” signs.** Slowing down when there is water on the road can keep you from hydroplaning and losing control of your vehicle.
- **Practice patience and understanding.** Remember to keep things in perspective. We are blessed to live in the lush Pacific Northwest, but that does bring us some rain-related hassles now and then. Try to be patient and look past the small inconveniences.

## City thanks board and commission members ANNUAL “VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION” DINNER HELD ON DEC. 13

The long hours they put in are often out of sight, and the dedication they show is rarely remarked upon, but once a year the city goes out of its way to recognize the public-spirited residents who populate the city’s boards and commissions.

It happens at the annual “volunteer appreciation” dinner, an event that came to City Hall this year on Monday, Dec. 13.

“It was a very nice event this year,” Volunteer Coordinator Dawn Sanders said. “We had speakers, music, singing and a really tasty meal. I think everyone really did feel appreciated.”



*Board and commission members enjoy volunteer appreciation dinner.*

The guests included members of the Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Arts Commission, Sammamish Youth Board, Beaver Lake Management District and Eastside Fire & Rescue volunteer firefighters.

Mayor Don Gerend, City Councilmembers and members of the city staff were also present to pay their respects.

“Volunteers deserve our thanks,” Sanders said. “Whether it’s members of a commission, or people who volunteer to help clean up after the Fourth of July, we have a great volunteer ethic in Sammamish.”

## Possible changes to cell phone facility regulations

The rules governing the size, type and location of cell phone facilities will be reviewed at a City Council study session on February 8. A public hearing will follow on March 1.

Based on City Council discussions so far, it’s possible this revision of the regulations will allow poles, base stations and other wireless facilities to be located in city parks and other public spaces. Currently, the vast majority of these facilities are limited to roadside locations along main arterials in the public right-of-way.

Other potential changes to the rules:

- Allow monopoles with a plastic sleeve at the top to mask the cannister-style antenna array.
- Set a 120-foot height limit.
- Allow base station facilities to be mounted above the ground at eye level.

For more information on the proposed changes and the public input schedule, contact Emily Arteche (425-295-0522, [earteche@ci.sammamish.wa.us](mailto:earteche@ci.sammamish.wa.us)).

## Sammamish celebrates Chinese Art and Culture

### ARTS COMMISSION, KING COUNTY’S “4 CULTURE” SPONSOR SPECIAL EVENT

Sammamish City Hall will be the site of a special event celebrating Chinese Art and Culture early next month.

Residents are encouraged to join the fun by ushering in the “Year of the Rabbit” on Saturday, Feb. 5. The festivities will run from 1 to 6 p.m. at City Hall, 801 228th Ave. S.E.

The celebration will feature music, dance, martial arts, painting, calligraphy and crafts.

Sponsored by the Sammamish Arts Commission and King County’s “4 Culture,” the event will also feature tea tasting, other Chinese refreshments, an acupuncture demonstration and the modeling of traditional Chinese clothing.

# CITY CALENDAR

## JANUARY

**Monday, Jan. 3**

City Council office hours, 5:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, Jan. 4**

City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, Jan. 5**

Parks and Rec Comm. Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

**Thursday, Jan. 6**

Community Garden Steering Committee Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, Jan. 11**

City Council Study Session, 6:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, Jan. 18**

City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, Jan. 19**

Artist Lecture and walk-through, 2-3 p.m.

Sammamish Youth Board Mtg, 6 p.m.

**Thursday, Jan. 20**

Planning Comm. Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

**Monday, Jan. 24**

Arts Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

**Thursday, Jan. 27**

Public Safety Committee Meeting  
4 p.m.

## FEBRUARY

**Wednesday, Feb. 2**

Art Exhibit Reception-Cultural Celebration Chinese Style, 6-8 p.m.

Parks and Rec Comm. Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

**Thursday, Feb. 3**

Planning Comm. Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, Feb. 8**

City Council Special Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

**Monday, Feb. 14**

City Council Study Session, 6:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, Feb. 15**

City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, Feb. 16**

Sammamish Youth Board Mtg, 6 p.m.

**Thursday, Feb. 17**

Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

**Monday, Feb. 28**

Arts Commission Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

### PLEASE NOTE:

All meetings and events at City Hall, unless otherwise noted. Times, dates and locations are subject to change. Please consult the city website for the most current information.

## Winter socks donated for the Starbucks stumps

What does a city do when local artists offer – free of charge – to knit winter socks for some prominent tree stumps? Here in Sammamish, the answer might be summarized as, “Thank you very much.....we think.”

To gauge whether residents think it was good idea, the city is tracking comments coming into City Hall. So far, the response has been mixed, with some applauding a creative and fun concept, and others expressing consternation. The critics have generally softened when told the sweaters were free.

“Our Arts Commission endorsed the idea and it was funded by local donations, so the council accepted the gift in support of the artistic spirit,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “I imagine all the conversation the socks have stirred up will be viewed as a positive development by the Arts Commission.”

The 20-foot-tall stumps are located next to Starbucks at the intersection of 228th Avenue and Wolfpack Way, the entrance to Eastlake High School. The trees, which were dying, were topped off in late 2009 as a safety measure.

According to the sign at the foot of the newly stockinged stumps, the socks were “knitted and crocheted by Suzanne Tidwell, Beth Newfeld, and many helping hands,” the temporary landscaping around the stumps was “designed by Pam Pruneau,” and the effort was “supported by local do-



*Winter socks warm the stumps along 228th Avenue.*

nations.” The support pole holding up the sign has also been gifted with a small sock.

Residents are invited to contact the city’s Allison Gubata ([agubata@ci.sammamish.wa.us](mailto:agubata@ci.sammamish.wa.us)) with any comments. The city’s expenses were limited to \$108 for the descriptive sign, and the two-day cost of insurance and city supervision while the socks were being pulled on by volunteers.



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## SAMMAMISH CITY COUNCIL



*Don Gerend*  
Mayor



*Nancy Whitten*  
Deputy Mayor



*Mark Cross*  
Councilmember



*John Curley*  
Councilmember



*John James*  
Councilmember



*Tom Odell*  
Councilmember



*Michele Petitti*  
Councilmember

## Police Forum:

*“The internet and social media:  
What parents need to know”*

The Sammamish Police Department, in an effort to address topics of concern to the community, will hold its first “Police Forum” on Saturday, Jan. 22, 5:30-8:30 p.m., at City Hall. The initial program will focus on what parents should know about “The Internet and Social Media.”

Several case studies will be presented. Since some of the material is graphic in nature, this forum is most suitable for adults. Interested parents should register by going to the city website at [www.ci.sammamish.wa.us](http://www.ci.sammamish.wa.us), clicking on the calendar in the lower, left-hand corner of the home page, and selecting Jan. 22. Space is limited.

Residents who have suggestions for future “Police Forum” topics should contact Sgt. Jessica Sullivan at [Jessica.Sullivan@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Jessica.Sullivan@kingcounty.gov).

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Pete Butkus	Deputy City Manager
Kamuron Gurol	ComDevDir/AsstCityMgr
Lyman Howard	FinanceDir/AsstCityMgr
Laura Philpot	Public Works Director
Jessi Richardson	Parks & Rec Director
Mike Sauerwein	AdminServices Director
Melonie Anderson	City Clerk
Nathan Elledge	Police Chief
Lee Soptich	Fire Chief
Bruce Disend	City Attorney
Tim Larson	Communications Mgr