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Friday Jun 13

## Papan: City's finances in good order

Though more work is still needed, she says

By **Christine Morente / Bay Area News Group**

Floating on a cloud of good news, Millbrae Mayor Gina Papan touted the city as well positioned for the future Thursday morning in her State of the City address.

Over the last year, city officials have been able to sock away more than \$4 million in reserves. That is a far cry from three years ago, when the city was plagued with a \$2 million to \$3 million shortfall.

Papan attributed the fiscal turnaround to sharing services with neighboring cities, saving Millbrae \$900,000 a year, while receiving almost \$2 million from various grants that would go toward transit-oriented developments, safe routes to schools, repaving of Skyline Boulevard and the Grand Boulevard project.

"Our infrastructure is better than it's ever been," she said to roomful of city officials and business owners. "We are looking forward to a very positive future for Millbrae."

But so much more needs to be done, Papan said.

Still unsure of Measure P's outcome - the \$78 parcel tax to support Millbrae schools - Papan said the city is committed to supporting its schools and students both during and after school.

Her priority list includes renovating the old Lions Scout House below Taylor Middle School. The scout house was built in 1954, and was used by the Millbrae Lions Club until eight years ago.

The city wants the house to become the permanent spot for the teen center. About 40 teens currently hang out at the Millbrae Community Center.

Meanwhile, the city has instituted a zero tolerance program on graffiti. Papan promised that youths will be "arrested, prosecuted and seek restitution from parents."

According to the mayor, a "very prolific tagger" was arrested over the weekend. The youth was responsible for graffiti done in Millbrae and Burlingame. The cost to the parents will be thousands of dollars. The case is pending, Papan said.

This year, anticipated projects include the addition of red-light cameras, installing solar panel crosswalk lights, implementing green building standards for all new construction, and switching the fleet of city-owned vehicles to electric cars.

As for new development, Papan said a developer proposes to build a 175-room hotel and more than 300,000 square feet of retail and office space on the old Clarion Hotel site.

Also, directbuy.com, a members-only showroom and home design center, selected Millbrae as its newest location.

Papan boasted Thursday that the Safeway on El Camino Real would also expand by 50 percent.

"We really have a lot to be proud of in Millbrae," she said.

Doug Callahan, lead adviser of Leos Club, credits the city's staff with bringing the city on the right track.

"We are the trendsetter for the rest of the Peninsula," he said.

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