



PRESERVATION ALERT!

The Redevelopment Agency of San Jose's budget was approved by the City Council in July. Included in the budget were several projects within the downtown area which endanger some of San Jose's most historic buildings. The RDA plans to save only the facade and lobby of the Jose Theatre. This is a "fast-track" project, therefore PACSJ has formed a task force, with co-chairs Karita Hummer and Tom Simon, to save the Jose. We hope our members and friends will join in this effort.

The Jose was built in 1904, designed by noted architect William Binder, and is one of the oldest theaters in America built specifically for vaudeville use. Vaudeville performers traveled the country, appearing in halls, saloons or wherever they could draw an audience. When the Jose was built, San Jose became one of the prime bookings for vaudeville performers and traveling theatrical troupes. Among the famous names appearing at the Jose were Al Jolson and Harry Houdini. The Jose survived the demise of vaudeville and operated as a movie theater until 1991. Many San Joseans have fond memories of "going to the movies" at the Jose. Early in 1991 the Jose Theatre was designated a City of San Jose Historic Landmark.

PACSJ is convinced that the Jose is worth restoration. Finding a viable reuse of the historic theater should be top priority. Perhaps co-owners Barry Swenson and Jim Fox would be open to reuse ideas, such as a dinner theater, or expanding the rear of the building to accommodate a larger stage and dressing room area, making the Jose feasible as a performing arts venue. The following is a brief look at PACSJ past involvement in plans to save this theater, including a much heralded 1993 Redevelopment Agency statement that it was feasible to restore the Jose Theatre.

FOR THE RECORD ... AND TO SET THE STAGE
by Karita Hummer

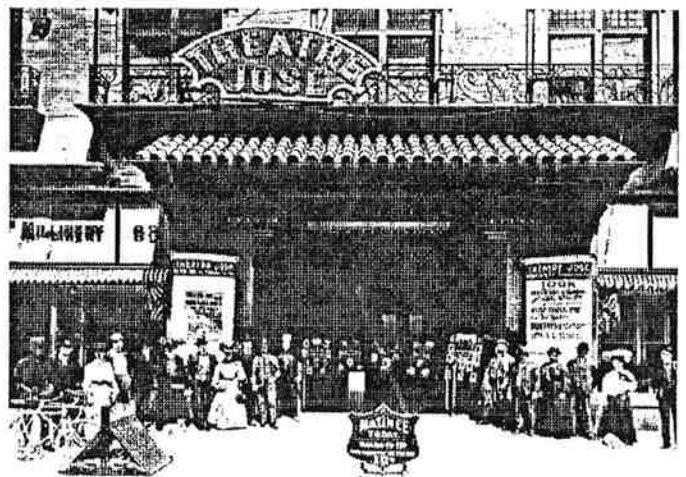
Efforts to save the Jose Theatre began shortly after Preservation Action Council of San Jose was formed in 1989. Members placed the Jose high on the agenda, and in 1991 approved then President Karita Hummer's recommendation that it be PACSJ's priority project. PACSJ members evaluated community interest

and gathered expert opinion from diverse sources. Contact was made with government officials, Performing Arts Council, Office of Cultural Affairs, California Preservation Foundation, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Historical Theater Society of America and the League of Historic American Theaters. All groups indicated enthusiasm and approval for the project.

By November of 1991 PACSJ members were hard at work — meetings were underway and strategy was being planned. The committee consulted construction, architectural and theater experts. In early 1992 the committee evolved in the Jose Theatre Task Force and joined forces with Scott Montoya, owner of an events planner and promotional firm, who had a keen interest in culture and preservation. Scott did promotional work for El Teatro Campesino, a noted Hispanic theater group, and linked our preservation efforts with bringing El Teatro Campesino to San Jose, with the Jose Theatre as its home. The excitement and enthusiasm grew with the possibility of having live theater return to the Jose!

Meetings were held with Barry Swenson, one of the theater owners, who was receptive and interested in our ideas. The Jose Theatre was featured on PACSJ's open house and tour of San Jose's Downtown Historic Commercial District in summer of '92. Tapestry in

Please Turn to Page 3, Column 1



*JOSE THEATRE CIRCA 1908
WITH VAUDEVILLE PERFORMERS*



From the President

by Ellen Garboske

The CPF Conference is over, and has been judged a huge success! Thank you to all our members and friends for helping to make this a "conference to remember." A special thank you to preservationists from Los Altos, Los Gatos, Gilroy, Campbell, Sunnyvale and Santa Clara for their assistance. It was a real valley effort, and I value all the new friends we made.

Whoops!! My column in the last issue referred to the return of the "Dog" from an extended adventure, but somehow between editing and printing the *Watchdog* column got left out. You should have heard the growling! Our apologies and a pat on the head (and a promise to never do it again)!

I think I'd like to experience the "summer doldrums" (or any other season doldrums) just once, but that doesn't seem to be in the cards for PACSJ! With a city as active as San Jose, there is never time between projects to let our guard down, and right now there are enough "endangered species" among our downtown historic buildings to keep this organization scrambling.

San Jose's Redevelopment Agency has announced plans for a number of developments which seriously infringe on historic properties. Yes, San Jose *does* need housing downtown, but thoughtful consideration must be given to retaining our historic heritage while meeting housing (or retail and office) requirements. Many of our fine historic buildings, such as the Montgomery Hotel, could be restored and reused for small hotel, single-occupancy housing, or a combination of retail and office space. What it takes is a little imagination and lots of money. Funding is the main stumbling block, but it has been proven all over the country that reuse of a historic building provides more return than new construction.

San Jose needs to make a commitment to preservation of our historic fabric. An investment in these buildings today would ensure a diverse community in the future, and keep our wonderful city interesting to both visitors and residents. I keep hearing that we need to provide "points of interest" to attract tourists and conventions. Preservation, restoration and re-use of historic buildings is a proven method of accomplishing this goal, and we can't provide that lure if we don't begin to protect our historic buildings now. It is important to remember that

once these buildings disappear their wonderful ornate architecture can *never* be replaced. Modern construction costs prohibit the inclusion of "artisan" details and designs of the past.

In all fairness to the Redevelopment Agency, we did meet with them recently to discuss our concerns and we hope that this will lead to better communication and cooperation in the future. However, the agency has these current projects on such a fast-track that preservationists do not have the luxury of waiting for these tentative first steps to begin taking root. We have no choice but to challenge the agency and city on lack of opportunity for public input before the agency's budget, which included these projects, was approved by the city council.

Look elsewhere in this issue for further details on the threats to the Jose Theatre, Borchert Brothers Building, the Montgomery Hotel, etc. Give us a call (408-947-8025) if you can spare a little time and effort to help save these wonderful structures. We also need and welcome donations to support the battle! You can choose your favorite project to support by designating it on your check and sending it to PACSJ, P.O.Box 2287, San Jose, CA 95109-2287.

IT IS EASY TO SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE. WHAT IS DIFFICULT IS GETTING UP AND TAKING ACTION!



MONTGOMERY HOTEL CIRCA 1930
SAN JOSE HISTORICAL MUSEUM PHOTO

The Montgomery Hotel opened in July, 1911. Four stories and a full basement, the building at 211 South First Street was damaged in the 1989 earthquake. The hotel takes its name from T.S. Montgomery, major developer of downtown San Jose. William Curtis was the architect.

Talent attendees were treated to information and history of the Jose. Task force members continued to communicate with San Jose Councilmembers. The task force studied the entire Second Street block, described its history and commercial value, and applied to the National Trust for Historic Preservation for a Main Street grant. Our fledgling organization received high praise for its efforts, but the application was not granted. In submitting that grant we got letters of support from the Downtown Association and Councilmember Judy Stabile. It was a great learning experience for our organization and focused attention on the importance of the Jose Theatre.

The Task Force continued efforts to gain city government support. Finally, on May 18, 1993, the Redevelopment Agency made the following recommendations to the City Council, which sits as the Redevelopment Agency Board.. In a memo directed to this body, Frank Taylor stated, "*It is the conclusion of the feasibility study that the best option would be to proceed with Option B, the renovation of the Jose Theatre with the theater expanded 20 feet to the east. This option not only meets the immediate needs of El Teatro Campesino, but also reuses a historic structure for the community. Although it will require acquisition of land owned by third parties, the construction portion will be as cost effective as the construction of a new facility. Moreover, it will continue a long standing tradition of the Jose as an entertainment facility in San Jose. Due to the creative reuse of the Jose as proposed in Option B, agency staff believe that there is an excellent possibility to pursue private grants and outside funds to help offset the anticipated renovation costs. If directions is given by the Agency Board to continue this project, staff will further investigate these funding options.*"

The Agency Board directed the Agency to continue the project, but when the bottom fell out of Redevelopment funds, the Jose Theatre took a dive in importance by city government. When the Redevelopment Agency got flush again, rather than renew the negotiation they had started on behalf of the Jose Theatre and El Teatro Campesino, our wonderful city Landmark Theater was negotiated away in a project that will demolish it, except for its lobby and facade. What a comedown after so much community interest and government promise for one of America's oldest theaters designed specifically for vaudeville! This is shabby treatment for the theater and the whole community.

Now, we are not going to take this lying down! The Preservation Action Council has formed an AdHoc Committee with the following agenda to save the Jose

Theatre. We will study all options open to us: legal, educational, fundraising, persuasion, etc. We need as much help on all levels in this effort as we can muster. We must be thoughtful and innovative, but timely — there is no time to lose. Phone Preservation Action Council, 408-947-8025, and join the efforts to garner support for this important preservation project.

SAVE THE JOSE THEATRE!

Dear Members of PACSJ Board of Directors:

Because of my major responsibilities in my new position as Executive Director of the Children's Psychological Trauma Center, I am saddened to report that I must resign from the Board of Directors of Preservation Action Council of San Jose, effective immediately.

You all know how much I dearly love Preservation Action Council of San Jose and how much I believe in its mission. I am particularly excited about the thrust PACSJ has begun to take in becoming more of an economic partner at the "preservation table" in San Jose. As one of the founders of the organization, I feel very proud to see PACSJ at this level of maturity. We all worked so very hard to bring it to this point. I am grateful to all of you for keeping the vision alive. I look back on the Weir Building as a turning point for us, strengthening our resolve for the Scheller House and River Street.

You can count on me to stay devoted to the cause of preservation in San Jose and to join future efforts ... for now, I leave the leadership of the organization in the good hands of Ellen Garboske and the Board of Directors and wish each of you and all our membership ... the very best in all our present and future preservation endeavors.

Sincerely,
Karita M. Hummer

Note: The preceding letter of resignation was accepted with regret by the Board. Karita was one of the founders of PACSJ in 1989, and was the driving force during those early years. However, Karita has accepted a position on PACSJ's Advisory Board and will continue to support preservation efforts. Actually, her resignation turned out to only be a 'paper' transfer — within a few days of her letter, threats to the Jose Theatre's existence was announced by RDA, and Karita became the co-chair of the Jose task force (see article elsewhere in this newsletter). ONCE A PRESERVATIONIST, ALWAYS A PRESERVATIONIST! Thank you, Karita!

AGNEWS HOSPITAL: ARCHITECTURAL GEM

by Jack Douglas

Agnews State Hospital, probably the most comprehensive collection of architecturally significant buildings in the county, may be in jeopardy if the state goes ahead with plans to relocate the patients and sell off the land. Unlike similar "campuses" at San Jose State and Stanford University, which have been partially razed, altered or cluttered with inferior modern structures, the Agnews facility stands as a pure example of the architect's conception — a time capsule of a gentler period.

One might almost have envied the patients who were consigned to this beautiful campus setting. It must therefore have been a shock to the patients of the 1960s who were unceremoniously dumped into private care facilities in hostile neighborhoods throughout the state.

The Agnews hospital complex was designed in 1907 by Leonard Willeke, a journeyman architect who had been appointed chief designer in the newly established State Division of Architecture. This new office had been created as the result of the effects of the 1906 earthquake which destroyed many state buildings, including Agnews and San Jose State Normal School. Just arrived from the east, Willeke was working in the San Francisco office of Sellon and Hemmings when George Sellon was appointed State Architect in the newly established State Architect of Architecture. He took Willeke to Sacramento with him. Willeke, working closely with Agnews Superintendent Stocking, created a friendly community of low rise cottage-style building in a mission/craftsman style motif which was unique for its time and a reversal of the prison-like mental hospitals of the 19th century.

The major features of the complex are the centrally located treatment building with its impressive tower and the nearby auditorium. Today, most of the buildings seem well maintained with little evidence of remodeling. The grounds are nicely landscaped giving the whole campus an air of serenity which must have been what the planners had in mind.

The hospital now deals mainly with the developmentally disabled, and it is also the training location for the local branch of the California Conservation Corps. Should the medical treatment program leave the facility altogether, other compatible users such as the CCC should be found which can take advantage of this unique setting.

Preservation Action Council should begin to set the wheels in motion by alerting the public and our legislators to the fact that this wonderful resource must be saved for future generations of Californians.

RIVER STREET PROJECT A REALITY!

FULL PARTNERSHIP REQUIRES INVESTMENT BY PACSJ

The River Street Historic District is no longer just a dream. After years of effort by PACSJ, the little Italian neighborhood, a part of the Guadalupe River Park, is beginning to pull together. Soon the city will move nine houses into an area near fourteen other structures for a total of twenty-three historic houses and businesses which would qualify for Historic District status. The River Street Development Group has been formed, plans drawn, cost estimates made, and prospective tenants contacted. The plans focus on shops, restaurants, surrounded by gardens. Being in the park and on the "path" between downtown and the arena makes River Street a desirable business location.



The big question now is, Why should PACSJ continue to invest financially in River Street? Our River Street Task Force lists the following reasons:

- PACSJ is currently a founding partner of the River Street Development Group, with a \$1,000 investment.
- PACSJ brought most of the partners together.
- PACSJ needs to maintain our presence, both physically and financially, as an equal partner, to ensure that we continue to have a say in the direction of the development.
- We have been working with the partners for over a year, with meetings every two weeks.
- PACSJ wants to prove that historic preservation is financially viable, and that an innovative public/private partnership can be a model for future preservation projects.

Funds raised by PACSJ will be invested in the River Street Development Group to proceed with design and preparation of plans, permit fees, printing, publicity, marketing and other expenses necessary for the progression of the restoration project. We hope our members and friends agree that it is important for PACSJ to participate in this important historic project. You can show your support by making a tax-deductible donation to PACSJ, of any size, with a notation that it is for the River Street project.



Watchdog Report

It's summer and that means flea season in the Santa Clara valley ... those pesky *pulgas* make a puppy so cranky. Summer means construction season ... when its combined with the new fiscal year starting July 1 it means all those government agencies are itching to spend, spend, spend. That means tear down those empty old buildings and get contracts underway for the new ones. Suddenly the old dog just goes nuts from all those fleas hatching.

The folks at the Redevelopment Agency have announced more demolition projects than ever ... planning on erasing the landmark **Montgomery Hotel**, the **Pestana Building** and renovating the old **Borchers Building** out of all recognition. Also planned for extensive modification ... the **Jose Theatre**, the lodge hall and several structures along *Santa Clara Street*.

The strategy seems to be to try and get the old watchdog so busy scratching the old fleapatch on his back that he won't notice the new bugs under his nose. This old dog is nearly frantic trying to keep up with all the projects. San Jose Unified School District has still not completely resolved the **Hoover School** or **Naglee Park** demolition issues. The **Guadalupe River Park** project wants an additional historic house or two. And the RDA is busy "landbanking" this and that. Landbanking means buying old buildings one and two at a time to demolish at a future date ... like as soon as the City Council hands them the Permit Review process on a platter.

And San Jose State University seems to be practicing that technique of "demolition by neglect" on the **Scheller House**. If you've ever raised a teen you recognize this one ... it goes "I'll do it, I'll do it, I'll get around to it, I'm on my way, I'm thinking about it, I'm WORKING on it, why are you always yelling at me, get off my back, I'll do it, I'LL DO IT." Having heard this one before, the Court specifically mentioned "demolition by neglect." Now stripped of its signature doorknob, leaded glass and architectural detail by "klepto-preservationist," it looks tired and sad.

Speaking of klepto-preservation, the "Roundhouse" sign on the San Jose railroad roundhouse still has not surfaced ... none of the usual sources have a whisper of the midnight marauder that muscled this off the wall. And the famous strained glass window in the San Jose State University chapel seems to have completely disappeared. The official answer is that it was removed for cleaning...the unofficial reaction is ... whoops ... we didn't even know it was gone.

PACCSJ MEMBERSHIP SURGES UPWARD

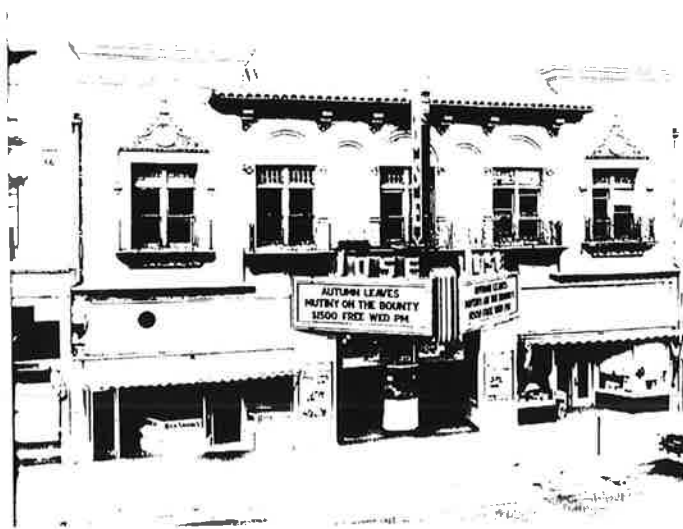
by Betsy Mathieson

PACCSJ now has an updated membership database. The membership committee thanks all those who responded to our renewal drive and welcomes many new members. Your support is needed and appreciated. It is obvious from our growing membership that the community is concerned about threats to San Jose's historic structures.

Members have begun to take advantage of their employers' matching contribution programs to bolster our treasury. We welcome *Bay Networks* and *IBM Corporation* to our roster of corporations which have a matching gift program. *We urge all PACCSJ members to ask their employer how your gift can qualify.* In addition, many members included additional tax-deductible contributions with their membership renewals. We heartily appreciate that additional support. Your gifts make it possible for us to continue our efforts.

We have now completed the conversion to a calendar year for all memberships. New members who join during the second half of the year will pay half the membership fee initially, then join the annual cycle at the end of the year. Each member will receive a renewal reminder in November or December. Our committee's next task is to send a membership recruitment letter to potential new members. If you have questions about your membership status, please call Betsy Mathieson at 408-293-5952, and thanks for keeping up your membership!

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS ESSENTIAL!

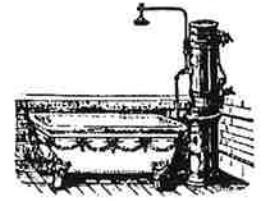


THE JOSE THEATRE CIRCA 1955
SAN JOSE HISTORICAL MUSEUM PHOTO

FIFTH ANNUAL YARD AND SALVAGE AUCTION



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5TH



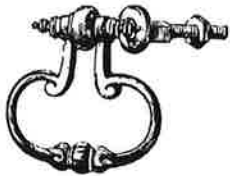
240 SOUTH 13TH STREET, SAN JOSE

**NOW'S THE TIME TO CLEAN CLOSETS, BASEMENTS, GARAGES, ATTICS AND YARDS,
AND MAKE A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO PACSJ.**

FOR INFORMATION CALL 408-947-8025, LEAVE YOUR NAME AND NUMBER



PACSJ's annual yard sale features the usual household treasures, as well as salvaged and restoration items. Display space is limited, so we ask that clothing donations be limited to vintage or unique items only.



Architectural items are very popular, demand is greater than supply, so if you have any salvage items please make a contribution!

Large items may be photographed for display at the sale, or you can arrange pickup services by calling John Frolli at 408-258-6675



**THIS SALE IS A MAJOR FUNDRAISER TO SUPPORT PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES,
SO SAVE YOUR "STUFF" AND BROWSE THE SALE FOR NEW-FOUND TREASURES!**

CHURCH RESTORATION GETS ADDED BOOST

The Second Century Project, the preservation and restoration of the First Unitarian Church of San Jose, will be the object of an organized media public service effort beginning at the end of July. In this cooperative approach, representatives of the major media outlets in the south bay, and Carter Waxman Advertising/Public Relations have teamed up to create an advertising campaign that will increase the project's visibility and heighten the importance of saving this community treasure. This effort, in addition to a fundraising campaign focused on the business and private

sectors, is another example of the strategies that Second Century Project members are using to raise the funds needed to fully restore the building after the devastating fire.

A specially designed donor wall is being planned at newly restored First Unitarian Church. For \$350 per individual or \$1,000 per company your name will be added to the list of those community members who have supported the restoration and preservation of one of San Jose's oldest and finest treasures. To make a contribution to the Second Century Project and add your name to the donor wall, please call Sarah Janigian at (408) 292-3858 Ext. 26.



The Preservation Action Council of San Jose is a non-profit membership organization providing information to property owners and education to the public, and promoting programs and policies for historic preservation and compatible new architectural design.

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OFFICER AND BOARD ELECTIONS APPROACHING
Betsy Mathieson

PACSJ's nominating committee is soliciting nominations for selected officer and board positions. Elections will be held in November, with ballots distributed to current members with their November issues of **CONTINUITY**. Board members up for re-election will receive phone calls to confirm they wish to continue on the board and to determine whether they would like to serve as officers. Prospective new officers and new board members, or people with suggestions for nominations, should call PACSJ at 408-947-8025. Leave your name and number and your call will be returned.

BECOME INVOLVED!

PRESERVATION ACTION COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone #: _____

Work Phone #: _____

Fax #: _____

E-mail address: _____

Membership Status: NEW RENEWAL

Membership Type:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> School/Non-Profit \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (over 65) \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Business \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporation \$250 |

My interests include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Arts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grant Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations | <input type="checkbox"/> Desktop Publishing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____ | |

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM,
 ENCLOSE IT WITH YOUR CHECK, AND MAIL TO:
 PRESERVATION ACTION COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE
 P.O. BOX 2287, SAN JOSE, CA 95109

CALENDAR

AUGUST

VACATION, NO PACSJ BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

10 (SAT) PRESERVATION AND PLANNING COMMISSIONER
SHORT COURSE, BERKELEY PHONE CPF AT
(510) 763-0972 FOR INFORMATION
(QUALIFIES FOR CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND AICP CREDITS)

16 (CONT) TRITON MUSEUM OF ART: CHARLES STRONG
EXHIBIT. BAY AREA MASTERS SERIES. PHONE
(408) 247-3754 FOR INFORMATION.

SEPTEMBER

16 (MON) PACSJ OPEN BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MOTHER OLSON'S INN, 72 N. FIFTH ST., 7PM
28 (SAT) ECCO OCTOBERFEST! 11AM TO 6PM
EAST SAN CARLOS AT 10TH & 11TH STREETS

OCTOBER

5 (SAT) PAC'S ANNUAL YARD & SALVAGE SALE!
240 S. 13TH STREET, SAN JOSE
21 (MON) PACSJ OPEN BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING,
MOTHER OLSON'S INN, 72 N. FIFTH ST., 7PM

CONTINUITY

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Editor:

Joan Shomler

Please submit your comments
and suggestions to
Preservation Action Council
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