

THE Daily News

Thursday, February 4, 2010

Facebook's status: Getting a new office Company says new Page Mill site should ease College Terrace parking woes

BY WILL OREMUS, Daily News Staff Writer

Less than a year after it moved from downtown Palo Alto to a new headquarters on California Avenue, Facebook is ready to expand again. The company expects to begin moving several hundred employees into a 250,000-square-foot space just down the street at 1050 Page Mill Road as soon as March.

The move is part of the social networking firm's plan to grow by about 50 percent in the next year, said spokesman Larry Yu. It should relieve parking problems in the adjacent College Terrace neighborhood, where some residents have been slow to warm to the big new startup on the block.

"When we moved into 1601 (California Ave.) in May, we knew we were going to outgrow that space within about a year, year-plus," Yu said. "That's pretty much what we're on track for."

The new building, formerly occupied by the biomedical equipment firm Beckman Coulter, will house a mix of new hires and a few hundred existing employees transferred from the California Avenue building, Yu said. With close to 1,000 workers, the headquarters is about at capacity right now, he added.

Though its address is on Page Mill, the new building backs up to California Avenue and is accessible from a driveway just a couple blocks from the headquarters. In fact, Facebook has been using it for months as overflow parking, shuttling workers from the 1050 Page Mill parking lot to the office.

Despite that program, Facebook didn't win many friends at first among residents across California Avenue, which is lined with corporate campuses on one side and single-family homes on the other. The influx of young new workers — who early on had a habit of parking on side streets in the College Terrace neighborhood — prompted complaints from some longtime homeowners and hastened the implementation of a residential parking permit program in the area.

The permits have helped, said Brent Barker, the neighborhood's designated liaison to Facebook and other neighbors in the Stanford Research Park.

"I live on Amherst Street, and I've definitely seen fewer cars parked on Amherst," he said. "When I drive down California Ave., one side is filled pretty much shoulder-to-shoulder, car-to-car, and the other side now has some open space."

Traffic remains a complaint for some, he said. Many residents have noticed that the shuttles running between the two campuses are often empty. "As a neighbor, I think they're doing a good job — not a perfect job but a good job," Barker said. "The neighborhood is hoping that when they open that second building, things will get even better."

"That's the goal," Yu said. "We'll be spread out a little bit more, which I think certainly will help alleviate some of the congestion," he said. "We're very cognizant of our impact in the local neighborhoods."

While Facebook's growth may seem meteoric, the company is actually erring on the conservative side with its plan to increase its head count by half in the next year, Yu said.

"We could easily double in size, and we're actually making a conscious decision not to do that. I think growth can spiral out of control very quickly."

Facebook officials are scheduled to meet with College Terrace neighbors at Escondido Elementary School on Feb. 25 to discuss the planned move and answer questions. The school is located at 890 Escondido Road.



New York Times file photo

Mark Zuckerberg, seated on the floor, is seen with staff members Dustin Moskovitz, seated, and Sean Parker in their Palo Alto office of Thefacebook.com in May 2005. That website moniker was later reduced to facebook.com and now boasts 300 million users.

URL: <http://thedailynews.ca.newsmemory.com/ee/thedailynews/default.php?pSetup=thedailynews&curDate=20100204&goTo=>