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Lafayette Downtown Strategy

By Cathy Tyson

... update

Developing a vision and strategy for the long-term future growth of Lafayette is the objective of Lafayette's ambitious Downtown Strategy that was initiated in May of 2007. Although limits on development are spelled out in the city's General Plan, the purpose of the Strategy is to guide development that will likely unfold over the next 20 years to enhance Lafayette's functionality and prioritize improvements like parks, circulation and parking – making the downtown area more inviting and livable.

So far Wallace, Roberts & Todd, (WRT), a city and regional planning firm, with a substantial amount of community input, has defined the issues and vision - while noting opportunities and constraints, explored alternatives, and outlined a preferred concept

of development, but stopped short of preparing the strategy and specific plan while the Advisory Committee clarifies draft goals.

Kicking off the Strategy process was a city-wide mailing explaining the process, next came a survey sent to 11,000 homes and businesses. Representatives from WRT walked and mapped the downtown, examined parcel sizes, density and traffic. Three community workshops, scores of interviews with key stakeholders and public meetings followed.

Experts from WRT analyzed all of the data gleaned from their research and surveys and came up with a Preferred Plan in April of this year. The revised draft goals established at that time are now being revisited by the Advisory Committee.

All of this is easier said than done, when you have to take into account BART, higher density housing, walkability, parking, open spaces, height limits, mixed use projects, creek protection and more.

Having a substantial amount of money available from the Redevelopment Agency to invest in the city that can only be used toward public projects and toward stimulating affordable housing is what makes this strategy and its future execution possible.

A plan is critical to allocate funds of up to \$20 million over the next 20 years, with an additional \$30 million earmarked to stimulate affordable housing projects. Spending \$50 million in Lafayette over a number of years will certainly have an impact on the city.

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These three women know what they're doing.

Town Hall Theater
Names Its Artistic Director - A new job for a familiar face.

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Basketball Heroes

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Art and Wine Winner

By Cathy Tyson



Devin Abbott, a 17-year old entering senior at Acalanes High School, is the winner of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce's poster art contest for the Art and Wine Festival. Promotional materials for this September's Festival will bear Abbott's eye-catching design.

Abbott's inspiration was capturing the surrounding hills while featuring the focus of the festival - art and wine. His poster will be plastered all over town as the event draws near.

Abbott has taken art classes for two years at Acalanes, and enjoys drawing by hand and via the computer. Although he's currently attending summer camp at Stanford, taking a creative writing course, he wants to start a graphic arts club when school starts in the fall.

Making a Splash in Beijing

By Emily Schultheis

Kim Vandenberg and Peter Varellas were teammates on the swim team at Moraga Tennis and Swim Club when they were in elementary school. Now, years later, they're teammates again--on the United States Olympic team.

Representing their country in the Olympics is the dream of many young athletes. For Vandenberg and Varellas, both 2002 Campolindo grads, it will soon be a reality.

Both will be part of the United States Olympic team – Vandenberg for swimming, and Varellas for water polo – in Beijing this month.

Vandenberg started swimming at MTSC when she was eight years old. She swam recreationally for four years, and according to her dad, Rick Vandenberg, won trophies both through the Orinda-Moraga Pool Association and the county swim meet.

At age twelve, Vandenberg began swimming year-round with Orinda Aquatics, and continued to swim – and win awards – throughout her time at Campolindo. She graduated in 2002, and went on to swim at UCLA.

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