

Civic News

Lafayette

Public Meetings

NEW Meeting Locations
Lafayette Library and Learning Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd
City Council: Community Hall
Planning Commission: Community Hall
Design Review: Arts & Science Discovery Center

City Council Monday, February 22, 7:00 pm
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

Planning Commission Monday, March 1, 7:00 pm
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

Design Review Monday, February 22, 7:00 pm
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center in the Arts & Science Discovery Center at 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Circulation Commission Monday, March 1, 7:00 pm
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center in the Arts & Science Discovery Center at 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
 City of Lafayette: www.ci.lafayette.ca.us
 Chamber of Commerce: www.lafayettechamber.org

Police Report



Bicycle Thief, 1/28/10 An unknown suspect entered the bicycle room at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center and cut the lock on a bicycle. Video surveillance showed the bicycle thief cut the lock and rode off in an unknown direction. The theft was cross-referenced with the theft of another bicycle from the same location three days earlier. The bicycle was valued at \$1,500.

It Probably Wasn't McGruff, 2/1/10 An unknown suspect broke the front window of a Pleasant Hill Circle residence and entered the home in broad daylight. The suspect ransacked dressers and closets of each of the bedrooms and left with jewelry and electronics. A possible witness reported she'd seen a white male in his mid-40's,

about 5'10" and 200 pounds walking away from the front porch toward a truck. The citizen described the truck as a 1980s maroon Toyota pickup truck and said she saw another white male sitting in the truck with a dog. The dog is described as a medium-sized white dog with brown spots.

Smash & Grab, 2/3/10 An unknown suspect smashed the left rear window of a Carol Lane resident's car and made off with her laptop and briefcase. Police canvassed the area and were unable to locate any possible witnesses. We urge citizens to deter would-be thieves by removing all valuables when exiting the vehicle.

Recall Victim? 2/5/10 A Mt. Diablo resident called police to report her 2003 Toyota Corolla had been stolen during the night by an unknown suspect. She had not given anyone permission to drive the vehicle.



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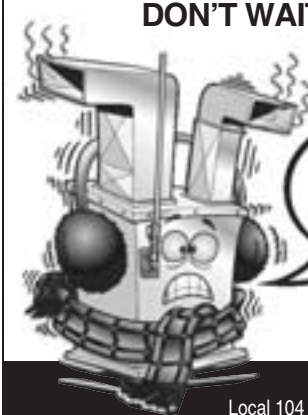
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J. Rockcliff

Charter City and Transfer Tax Survey Results Promising

... continued from page 1

The California Constitution allows a city to use either statewide general law to govern or to adopt their own municipal constitution as a charter city. A charter city has the power to legislate and regulate in response to the needs of the community. The impetus for the survey was a recommendation of the Finance Review Task Force for revenue enhancement options to primarily deal with a huge, over \$15 million, road repair backlog.

"This has a moderately good chance of being successful," said Bryan Godbe, President of Godbe Research. The current real estate transfer tax is \$1.10 per \$1,000 of assessed value of a home that is

sold - half of this amount, \$.55/\$1,000 goes to Contra Costa County, with the remaining half going to the City of Lafayette.

Godbe also said that the survey recorded an all time high: A total of 97% respondents said they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with Quality of Life in Lafayette. He said he'd never seen anything like it. Lafayette beat out former winner Marin County - they scored of 92% on "Quality of Life."

One of the main arguments in favor of moving Lafayette from a general law city to a charter city is that funds raised must stay in Lafayette - neither the County nor the State can grab these tax rev-

enue dollars. Funds raised would go toward repairing the 17% of Lafayette streets that have received a failing grade. Other benefits could include increasing funding to preserve open space, additional police services, increasing parking - all high priority concerns of those polled.

Various levels of taxation were surveyed - \$9 per \$1,000 of assessed home value, \$7, \$5 and \$3. At the \$5 level 59% of respondents answered probably yes or definitely yes that they would support this increased transfer tax rate.

"In a 'normal' year, one not fraught with the housing bubble collapse, we collect about \$284,000

in property transfer taxes. Since this rate (at \$5/\$1,000) is nine times higher than the current rate - that translates to about \$2.5M annually," said Tracy Robinson, Administrative Services Director.

By comparison, other Bay Area charter cities have substantially higher property transfer tax rates: Berkeley \$15/\$1,000, Alameda \$12/\$1,000 and Piedmont at \$13/\$1,000.

"This is a gigantic leap for us - it allows us to solve the police services problem and road problem in one swoop," said City Manager Steven Falk. "There's a big upside - we should pursue this further."

Economic Feasibility Survey Results In

By Cathy Tyson

Comparison of Annual Sales Tax Revenue at Build-out

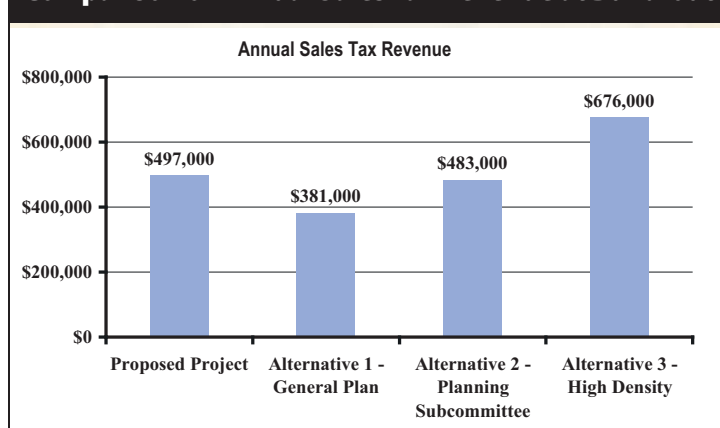


Chart of: Downtown Lafayette Specific Plan Draft Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis by Seifel Consulting

In order to get a better handle on potential monetary impacts of the proposed Downtown Specific Plan (DSP), Seifel Consulting was contracted to provide an analysis to compare key economic and fiscal impacts of the alternatives listed in the DSP Environmental Impact Report. These alternatives represent a range of options to guide future development over the next

twenty years. Currently Lafayette's General Plan, adopted in 2002, dictates the community's vision of the future by spelling out physical development via land use, circulation and environmental goals and policies.

The four scenarios are: the proposed Downtown Specific Plan project, Alternative 1 - keeping the existing General Plan, Alternative

2 - the Planning Commission version with slightly less residential and commercial development, and Alternative 3 - a high density version. In almost all instances the proposed Downtown Strategic Plan and the Planning Commission version had very similar results.

"We looked at employment generation, revenue generation and cost of capital improvements and maintenance," said Libby Seifel, President of Seifel Consulting, Inc.

Unlike Goldilocks sampling porridge, it's hard to know which one will be "just right" and therefore adopted by the City Council but the Feasibility Survey at least clarifies in dollars and cents the differences between the proposed plans.

The survey found, not surprisingly, that more growth and development equals greater tax revenue and employment for the city. However it should be noted that this is just one measure that the Council will be looking at in eval-

uating the various plans - quality of life, traffic impacts and resident input will all play a role in the final decision.

"This Council has not fiscalized land use. This is a tool for financial planning. We look at a lot of other things - quality of life and environmental concerns," said Council Member Don Tatzin.

The Draft EIR is available online at www.lovelafayette.com; public comments are welcome through 5:00 p.m. on March 16, 2010 - the end of the review period. The very thorough 38-page "Downtown Lafayette Specific Plan Draft Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis" report is also available at www.lovelafayette.org by clicking on Agendas, Staff Reports & Minutes, then click on 2010 City Council Agendas, then click on the agenda for the February 8 meeting, and finally click on agenda item 2.1 "Seifel Powerpoint."

Investigating Other Options for Deer Hill Road Zoning

By Cathy Tyson

Due to the outpouring of impassioned residents' pleas over the course of two meetings, the City Council decided that lowering

the density of the controversial Christmas tree lot parcel at the corner of Deer Hill Road and Pleasant Hill Road from the current maximum 35 dwelling units/acre to 17 dwelling units/acre was not the best solution to the zoning conundrum that the City itself started.

Concerned residents strongly preferred that although the city was proposing down-zoning, reducing potential development size on the property, the proposed re-classification was still not acceptable.

There was some confusion among residents at the February 8th City Council meeting about what exactly was being proposed. Many argued initially against a change in zoning - not knowing that the proposed change would mean less dense development at the site.

City attorney Mala Subramanian clarified right at the very beginning of the proceedings that



Corner of Pleasant Hill Road and Deer Hill Road Photo Cathy Tyson

there is no proposal for development at that site, and the city is proposing to reduce the zoning that has been in place since 1974 - Administrative/Professional/Office/Multi-family Residential, which allows for up to 35 dwelling units per acre to the classification Low Density Multi-Family Residential which allows up to 17 dwelling units per acre.

Eliot Hudson summed up the crowd's desire to preserve the semi-rural nature of Lafayette, "We want no development - if there has to be development - the smallest amount possible - Does everyone agree with that?" Attendees replied with a vibrant round of applause and shouts of "Yes!"

Even an attorney for Anna Maria Dettmer, the owner of the parcel, came to clarify the current situation and put to rest some ru-

mors that have sprouted up. He said there will be no low income housing on the site, that Ms. Dettmer has no plans for a project, that the grading that was done many years ago was approved and that the Las Trampas earthquake fault that runs through the property also runs through most of eastern Lafayette. His main point was that the City of Lafayette initiated this process and recommended that the City Council take no action at the moment.

In a four to one vote, City Council members decided to direct staff to look at single family zoning options and report back in April. Most agreed that it's a rather isolated spot, not walkable, and not really in-fill development. "Multi-family is the wrong use for that parcel. I favor going back and starting over," said Council Member Carl Anduri.

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