

Troubling Taxi Concerns Addressed Quickly

By Cathy Tyson



Newly installed signs on Happy Valley Court to deter unwanted taxis.

Photo C. Tyson

"I'm really uncomfortable coming home from school," said an Acalanes student who returns home in the afternoon to find her Happy Valley Court full of taxis with drivers hanging out, urinating in the bushes, leering at her and leaving garbage. "I'm basically a prisoner after school."

Seventeen-year resident Roosevelt Jefferson describes the situation as "very adversarial," adding, "We have lost our privacy."

James Peterson described a lunch buffet set up in the middle of the court and cars receiving maintenance. He suggested the City set up an official taxi stand elsewhere, not in this residential cul de sac.

City Council members were sympathetic to their plight and looked for a quick solution – even if temporary, giving them a little time to put something more permanent in place.

City Manager Steven Falk suggested putting up temporary barricades with "No Parking Zone" signage. Sure enough, the very next day "No Parking" signs were placed all around the court and only two taxis were spotted in the taxi loading zone directly in front of the BART station.

The plan is to create a permit parking ordinance for these residents and their guests. In order to do this, a ten-day notice to homeowners is required. The ordinance will be finalized at the March 14 City Council meeting. BART has been contacted regarding potential designated taxi parking in its lot; usually on the weekends and evenings there appears to be space available.

Community Garden Gets Okay

By Cathy Tyson

After looking for a site for the past couple of years, the Lafayette Community Garden Group found the perfect location - a mostly flat, sunny area on Mt. Diablo Boulevard across from the Reservoir, in front of the EBMUD filter plant, for a community garden. In partnership with Sustainable Lafayette they asked the City to waive the \$5,500 in fees

for a land use permit in order to create a community garden and landscape education center for residents. Because the Community Garden project meets the goals in Lafayette's environmental strategy, the request was approved. The group plans to raise money to cover the cost of installing a deer-proof fence, raised planting beds, and a greenhouse.



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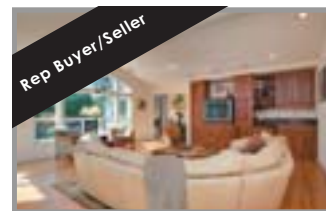
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Photo C. Tyson

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