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## BART Solar Project Moving Forward

By Cathy Tyson



Image of canopies system provided

In a brief presentation to the Lafayette City Council, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Director Gail Murray and the manager of BART's Energy Division, Frank Schultz, gave an update on changes to the proposed solar panel installation slated for the eastern parking lot section of the Lafayette BART station.

"BART staff is now completing project development work," said Schultz. "The next step is to bring the project to the BART Board for approval to start construction. We plan to do this in the summer. With Board approval, the plan is to start installing the solar canopies in the fall and have the work completed by the end of 2012."

The last time the pair presented the work in progress concepts, back in September of 2011, they received a lukewarm reception from residents who were looking for a more attractive solar panel installation.

The revised design features steel support beams that will look more trellis-like, be painted a dark brown walnut color, with real stone footings at the base similar to the stone used on the Veteran's Memorial Hall and landscaping. Schultz noted the BART district architect listened to the original feedback and made some changes. Parked cars will get to enjoy the shade of the solar panels, free of charge.

Looking to put power generation where the load is, the solar panels will generate a considerable amount of electricity - approximately 750 kilowatts-that will be able to power the entire Lafayette station and have more to share.

Schultz reassured that there will be tree coverage around the perimeter and construction will be done in phases for minimum disruption - with roughly one-third of the parking lot cordoned off at a time while installation occurs. Once complete, during nighttime hours, energy efficient LED lighting will illuminate the parking area. "It will match the twinkle lights," joked a Council Member.

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