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Meet the Lafayette Council Candidates: Yolanda "Jolie" Vega

By Cathy Tyson



Yolanda "Jolie" Vega

Yolanda "Jolie" Vega wanted to be involved in politics since she was a little girl in Puerto Rico. She earned a B.A. from City College of New York, and a Masters from the Executive MBA program at St. Mary's College. This Gold Star Mom will be busy this coming weekend volunteering at the annual East Bay Stand Down event that brings together a range of service providers including medical and dental care for veterans and their families at the Alameda County Fairgrounds. She's currently employed as a BART Transit System Development Partnering Facilitator in Oakland and has served in leadership roles for various local organizations for the last 20 years including former Chair, Youth Council; Two-time President, Graduate School of Business Alumni Board, St. Mary's; Co-Chair; City of Lafayette Communications Committee; Chair, Circulation (Transportation) Commission Citizen Advisory Committee. She's raised two boys, both Eagle Scouts who later served in the Air Force; one was killed in Afghanistan in 2008.

"Our community enjoys a wonderful reputation because we care about our schools, our quality of life, and our environment. We are committed to protecting all of it. Because of this, our community continues to attract families that also want to enjoy this environment.

Growth will bring vibrancy to the community. This is exciting; and, it needs to be managed carefully with input from the various stakeholders. It is a balance between

growth and absolutely maintaining our sense of place. Several Lafayette businesses have come forward with plans to maintain and expand their property. To match what governs development in the area, we review the Downtown Specific Plan and identify what impact it will have in the overall feel of the city. We must weigh what benefit a construction project has for the overall good of Lafayette. Working with property owners and surrounding areas provides a venue for collaboration. The community has voice. Therefore, different perspectives are heard and rather than one and only way of addressing growth, multiple views and concerns are aired. With any approved growth, the issue of traffic and parking is front and center. What alternative type of transportation can be offered to those who work, shop, and live in the area? Free Shuttle bus service from the Lafayette BART Station similar to what is offered in Walnut Creek? City Parking? Metered Parking? Timed Parking? Encourage people to walk or bike our beautiful city with open areas and park areas in and around town that offers seclusion. Connect downtown through our Parks and Trails.

It doesn't make sense to construct additional businesses or housing if people can't park or walk or bike. And, if the traffic is choking we lose the customer to another area. It doesn't make sense to construct them if our schools can't handle the additional enrollment. It doesn't make sense to construct if we don't have the police to ensure our safety on the roads and for our property.

So, slowly, very slowly, review the requests and take into account how growth affects the entire picture of our community. There is a reason why people move here - the schools, the openness, the family community, and our sense of safety. This cannot be ignored as we move forward. I commit myself to not ignoring any of it."

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