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Work in Progress in Lafayette



Photos Cathy Tyson

While there's plenty of activity at the adjacent former Handlebar Toys location, across from Plaza Park, it's all quiet at the former coffee shop. Residents will surely have to wait a while for the grand re-opening. A message to the developer, Main Street Properties, was not immediately returned. C. Tyson



Empty shell of the former Squirrels Coffee Shop.

Although Mt. Diablo Boulevard is still populated with orange cones and traffic diversions, headway is being made on the east end Pedestrian Bike and Streetscape Improvements project between First Street and Brown Avenue. New brick paver crosswalks are being installed along with landscaped medians, decorative street lights and more. The slow and go progression up and down the boulevard gives drivers an up close and personal look. Enjoy the fun while it lasts, since the project is slated to be complete at the end of February.

Just beyond the streetscape workers, is the also under-construction Merrill Gardens building. The crane is gone, but the yellow cladding around the building is hard to miss. When complete, the structure will have a modern prairie design with neutral paint and lots of stonework. Crews are diligently working to have the 89 senior living apartments offering market rate independent living, assisted living and a memory care facility open in May. The frontage along Mt. Diablo will feature retail shops and a gathering place separated from the street by a long curving pool that includes an art installation.

Squirrels is just an empty shell of its former self.

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