



Lamorinda Spirit Van

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Parking Change – No Longer Free

By Cathy Tyson

Drivers be warned – it's going to cost a bit more to park at a couple of city-owned properties for the time being. The parking lots at the old library and 949 Moraga Road, just across the street, have offered free parking – until now. Both parcels may eventually be developed, but look for coin-operated meters to sprout at the old library in the near future and a lock box payment system at 949 Moraga Road, which will offer additional spaces after the offices are razed.

City leaders are well aware of the parking crunch. Meters appearing at La Fiesta Square will contribute to demand for employee and customer parking downtown, along with the ongoing need for adequate short-term parking for parents dropping off and picking up kids from Lafayette Elementary School.

"I think we really need to build a parking structure," said Council Member Mike Anderson, acknowledging the parking situation. "It's time for us to do something big," he explained, to find a place to put a substantial amount of parking in a reasonable location.

Signs will soon be installed at both the old library and 949 Moraga Road lots indicating that these spaces are temporarily available for public parking, but the property will eventually be developed for other purposes.

It will cost \$1 per hour, with a four hour maximum, at the old library. Employees at the adjacent Lafayette Elementary School, which has 65 teachers and staff members but only 31 onsite parking spaces, will have to rethink parking, a not-so-subtle nudge to move across the street to the lot at

949 Moraga Road that will allow all-day parking.

To maximize parking at 949 Moraga Road, the council recently approved spending \$50,000 from the parking fund – comprised of meter and ticketing revenue – to raze the building and add more spaces.

As part of a larger transformation to city-owned lots, private leases of public parking lots will be extinguished at Uncle Yu's, the gazebo and at 949 Moraga Road.

Because the former library has been vacant for five years, there was water intrusion and potential for mold, so the city removed all of the interior walls and the carpet. It's in no condition to be used without substantial work, which will take time. In the meantime, parkers should start saving quarters.

The City of Lafayette Parking Ordinance Committee is seeking public input at a series of workshops and will host the first one from 6 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 9 at the Lafayette Methodist Church. The committee is looking for feedback from the community to help the city draft its future parking policies. This first meeting is all about parking in the downtown core. There will be additional workshops focused on the east and west end districts later this year. City staff encourages those interested in this topic to sign up for e-notifications for the fall meetings; visit the city website for more information, www.lovelafayette.org.

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