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Gas Station to be Demolished to Expand Safeway Parking

By Cathy Tyson



Photo Cathy Tyson

Attention Safeway shoppers: more parking are spaces coming soon.

Say goodbye to the Valero gas station at the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Oak Hill Road, as it will be demolished so Safeway can expand its parking lot to accommodate more customers and employees.

Although with 152 spaces the store's current parking lot meets the required number of parking spaces according to the city code, regular shoppers will tell you that it can be tricky to find a spot during peak hours. By removing the gas station, 40 additional parking spots will be added, along with an extension of the surrounding wall and landscaping.

If this sounds vaguely familiar, it should. Back in 2012 the proposal was originally submitted. At that time, it went through the initial parts of the review process, but Safeway put the effort on hold.

City staff support the move as the gas station does not conform to other businesses in the retail business district. Safeway has been at that location for more than 50 years; it was remodeled in 1999.

While the Planning Commission unanimously supports the parking expansion, there were some lingering concerns about the recyclable drop-off area in the far northwest corner of the lot.

Discouraging BART parkers is also a concern. Safeway's Real Estate Manager Todd Paradise did not respond to repeated queries from the Lamorinda Weekly.

Some of the questions residents have are, will the lot be patrolled, and will employees have stickers to identify their vehicles?

It is unknown when demolition will begin.

More Downtown Parking on the Way

In other parking news, city leaders are exploring two downtown locations for public lots.

In late March, the city agreed to pay half of the cost of an appraisal for the nearly half-acre Oak Bridge parking lot at the corner of First Street and Golden Gate Way. The 27 parking spaces could be used to relieve pressure on the Lafayette Library and Learning Center and the Park Theater next door should it reopen. Once the appraisal determines the cost, the city may or may not choose to enter into negotiations with the sellers.

In addition, less than six months ago the Lamorinda Weekly reported the City of Lafayette is also investigating an opportunity for more parking at the site of the Barclay Simpson Gallery-Lescure Building adjacent to Diamond Kay on Mt. Diablo Boulevard with a similar strategy to share the cost

of an appraisal.

Parking meter funds and enforcement revenue are used to purchase parcels for off-street parking. That balance is currently over \$1 million.

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