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The General Plan 2040 update kicks off; city seeks community input



Photo courtesy city of Lafayette

The General Plan guides policies in many areas within the city for the next 20 years, including open space.

By Pippa Fisher

The official kickoff of Lafayette's General Plan update is underway and, at its Aug. 12 meeting, the city council voted unanimously with Council

Member Cam Burks absent, confirming the General Plan Advisory Committee selection process, designating a council liaison to the GPAC, and authorizing the city manager to hire a housing element consultant.

And if thrashing out such initial 'how-to' housekeeping details did not have residents spellbound, the relevance of the General Plan to the future of the city with its "Green Hills, Great Schools" was underscored in a short video explaining the importance of this long-range document in determining the community's vision for Lafayette over the next 20 years.

With input from various community stakeholders through public meetings, surveys and workshops, feedback gathered through GPAC's work over the next four years will guide how policies grow especially around land use, housing, circulation, conservation, open space, noise, and safety in the city.

Every city and county in California is required by State law to have a General Plan that establishes conservation and development goals, as well as the location and intensity of dif-

ferent land uses. Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and specific plans must be in conformance with the General Plan.

Council members supported staff's proposal to have the GPAC comprised of 11 members, including four representatives from commissions and committees (from Parks, Trails and Recreation, Transportation and Circulation, Senior Services, and Youth Commissions), four residential district representatives, one 'at-large' representative, one non-profit and one Chamber of Commerce representative.

A lottery system will be used to allow all nonprofits equal chance of being drawn and it will be up to the selected nonprofit to provide its representative. It was agreed that a system of targeted outreach to underrepresented communities during the recruitment period and selecting GPAC members through a weighted district-based lottery to prioritize ap-

plications from Black, Indigenous, and people of color would be the best way to increase the likelihood of equitable representation from the community.

Council Member Teresa Gerringer emphasized that in this process "everyone's voice will be heard."

The council supported executing a professional services agreement with Environmental Science Associates to serve as the lead on the required housing element CEQA document and Fehr & Peers as the traffic sub-consultant.

Lastly it was determined that Gerringer would act as the primary council liaison to the GPAC in a non-voting capacity.

City staff will allow six weeks to accommodate extensive outreach and for applicants to respond.

Residents can find out more and view the introductory video at www.planlafayette.org/

Future of Terraces apartments still undecided



The proposed location of the Terraces

Photo courtesy city of Lafayette website

By Pippa Fisher

The Lafayette City Council has

yet to make a final decision on the controversial Terraces apartment project, following an almost nine-hour meeting,

with over 50 members of the public weighing in. The matter is to be continued to an Aug. 24 meeting.

The council met to hear afresh the application on an appeal, called for by Council Member Cam Burks who said he believed the decision to be of such profound importance to the city that it should be heard by the full council. The Planning Commission reluctantly approved plans last month.

The application proposes 315 apartments, in 14 two- and three-story residential buildings on a 22-acre parcel on Deer Hill Road, adjacent to the freeway. First proposed in 2011, the application was suspended in 2014 in favor of al-

ternative plans for a scaled back development of 44 single-family homes. Local preservationist group Save Lafayette sued the city, resulting in a referendum on the future of the revised project. With the defeat of Measure L in 2018, the developer, O'Brien Homes, resumed the original application for the 315-unit apartment project under the process agreement. The project includes 20% (63 units) offered as low-income housing and as such has protection under the Housing Accountability Act.

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