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## City continues fight to keep local control on housing development

By Jennifer Wake

In an effort to retain local control over housing development in the city of Lafayette, council members and staff have entrusted the help of Townsend Public Affairs State Capitol Director Casey Elliott to lobby for local control and to engage with Sacramento legislators as they push bills forward at the state capitol.

According to a staff report presented by City Manager Niroop Srivatsa at the May 10 city council meeting, since 2019, Townsend has assisted Lafayette in developing positions on over two dozen bills and participating in lobbying efforts to amend others. "This work, conducted in partnership with other cities," she noted in the report, "has resulted in amendments to several bills and the defeat of others like SB 50 which failed to garner the required votes on the Senate floor."

Also in 2019, in reaction to the CASA Compact - the Committee to House the Bay Area, convened in mid-2017 by MTC and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to tackle the region's housing crisis - and the resulting housing bills, the 19 cities in Contra Costa County came together in an unprecedented move to draft and adopt a countywide Housing and Policy Framework, Srivatsa stated.

"The Framework promotes a balanced and nuanced approach to addressing the housing shortage by considering existing resources and constraints, location of jobs, and availability of transportation and transit. It emphasizes the importance of a balanced approach to regional planning and the need to consider housing in the context of jobs, the transportation infrastructure and the environment," she said.

The city maintains a strong partnership with its legislative representatives Sen. Steve Glazer and Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan. The council also created a legislation committee composed of two council members to work with Townsend and the city manager on legislative matters, Srivatsa said.

Bills the city opposes include Senate Bill 6 (the Neighborhood Homes Act involving housing in commercial zones), SB 9 (which would change the approval process of accessory dwelling units), SB 10 (which involves rezoning in transit-rich or jobs-rich areas) and Assembly Bill 989 (which would create a Housing Accountability Committee to review appeals of affordable housing projects denied by local government). On June 1 Elliott gave the legislation committee an overview of many of these bills and addressed the timelines involved in the proposed legislation. "We will lose a little bit of time as the legislature takes up the budget," said Elliott, who has been limited predominantly to phone calls and Zoom meetings with legislators due to COVID restrictions. "The majority of the bills will be after June 14, so council can take action."

Mayor Susan Candell, who sits on the legislation committee with Council Member Cam Burks, noted that Glazer, who abstained, and five other senators "had our backs" when voting against SB 9, which was recently approved by the Senate 28-6. "That was not an easy vote," she said.

Elliott plans to report on the proposed housing legislation at the June 14 city council meeting.

To view a summary of proposed bills, visit: [https://lafayette.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=&clip\\_id=5523&meta\\_id=132053](https://lafayette.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=&clip_id=5523&meta_id=132053)

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[back](#)

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