



**LAFAYETTE**  
INCORPORATED 1857

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 Phone: (925) 284-1968  
**Chamber of Commerce:**  
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**1245 Panorama Drive, Lafayette**

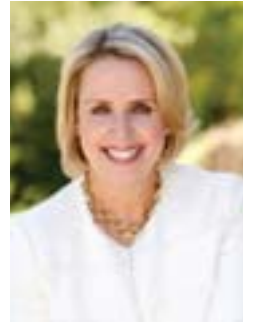
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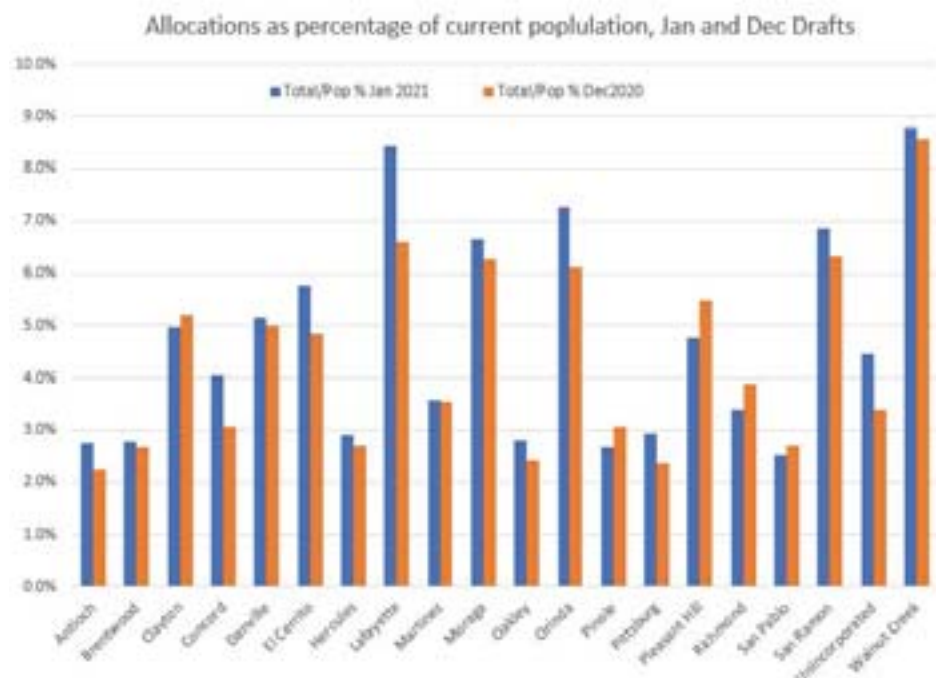
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## Council approves Planning Department FY 2021-22 Work Plan; discusses RHNA appeal



**By Jennifer Wake**

The COVID-19 pandemic created challenges and hurdles for many businesses as residents learned to live in a new normal under strict health guidelines. The city of Lafayette's Planning Department was no exception. Of the 32 prioritized items on the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Work Plan Task List staff completed or made progress on 17 tasks.

The FY 2020-21 budget required the city to reduce spending and instituted a

hiring freeze in case of dire financial consequences stemming from the pandemic, according to Planning and Building Director Greg Wolff in his June 14 staff report presented to the city council. While short-staffed and responding to the demands of the pandemic response, customer service and daily planning activities took precedence over long-range tasks.

The Planning Department experienced a significant increase in both planning and building permit applica-

tions throughout 2020, and planning staff also took on a number of additional tasks beyond the traditional responsibilities of the department during the COVID-19 pandemic, Wolff noted in the report. "Planners worked with the Engineering Department and Chamber of Commerce to manage adjustments to City code to aid local businesses. For example, the department worked with City Manager [Niroop] Srivatsa to establish a business assistance program and using public parking spaces for outdoor dining in the downtown to support local business operations and comply with public health orders."

The city council was asked to approve state mandated tasks and offer direction and prioritize non-mandated tasks for the 2021-22 Work Plan.

Ten of the 12 priority tasks in the proposed 2021-22 Work Plan are mandated by the state. The other two – updating the tree ordinance and implementing a call-before-you-dig-program – related directly to public health and safety, Wolff said. The 10 state-mandated tasks include the Housing Element Update; Housing Element Annual Progress Report; AB 2923 – BART Transit-Oriented Development Implementation; AB 939 – Waste management, recycling, composting, programs and annual report to state; SB 35 – Develop checklists, applications, and comply with streamlining for affordable housing; SB 743 – Implement transition from

Level of Service to Vehicle Miles Traveled; AB 2911 Compliance – work with Cal Fire to identify all areas of 30+ homes with only one ingress/egress and develop mitigations; Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance – adopt an ordinance and submit annual reporting on all projects to the State; General Plan Update; and Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) – participate in and comment on RHNA allocations.

The Housing Element is one of seven required elements of the General Plan. Lafayette last updated its Housing Element in 2015 and is required by state law to do so every eight years. The Housing Element Annual Report and the comprehensive Housing Element Update are required by law to be completed by January 2023.

Of the non-mandated list presented, Council Member Carl Anduri made a motion to add as secondary priorities to the list of 12 mandated items that Planning bring a recommendation on how to handle the Density Bonus applications to the council (review of hearing body for concessions and waivers); and explore an electrification ordinance and land value recapture. Council Member Gina Dawson said the jobs housing balance, which would analyze loss of office and commercial to multiple-family residential development, is important for economic recovery and commercial planning and asked that it be added as a priority item ... continued on Page A9

## Principal movements in AUHSD

**By John T. Miller**

Three of the four high school principals in the Acalanes Union High School District will be leaving their posts, with only John Walker at Campolindo High School remaining in place.

Travis Bell will vacate Acalanes to pursue a mid-career choice; Dr. Julie Parks, principal of Miramonte, has accepted the job of superintendent of the Moraga School District (see article, Page A9), and Tiffany Benson, Las Lomas, has

been offered a position with the Travis Unified School District.

Bell will be retiring from public service for the opportunity to work in the family-run business, the Lapham Company based in Oakland, a part of the Residential Real Estate Brokerage and Management Industry.

After nine years at Acalanes – four years as associate principal and five years as principal – Bell summed up his experience: "It's been a joy. I've loved working with the community, watching the community rally around our stu-

dents. I've had the privilege of working with a dedicated staff with high caliber teachers. I'm proud of the way our school adjusted and shifted, which includes adding the Academy period to help students, the implementation of our wellness center and adjustment of curriculum to be more inclusive of all students and multiple perspectives."

Bell described the mid-career change as an excellent opportunity that presented itself. "I wanted to see if it would work for me while also being more accommodating for my family."

Bell has three children in the lower grades.

A statement from AUHSD Superintendent John Nickerson said, "Bell offered extraordinary leadership to usher through so many school initiatives to improve academic achievement and the school experience of all students."

Dr. Parks will be leaving Miramonte after eight years, and will transition to working with the K-eighth grade programs.

... continued on Page A10

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