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Council considers possible rezoning of BART parking lot property

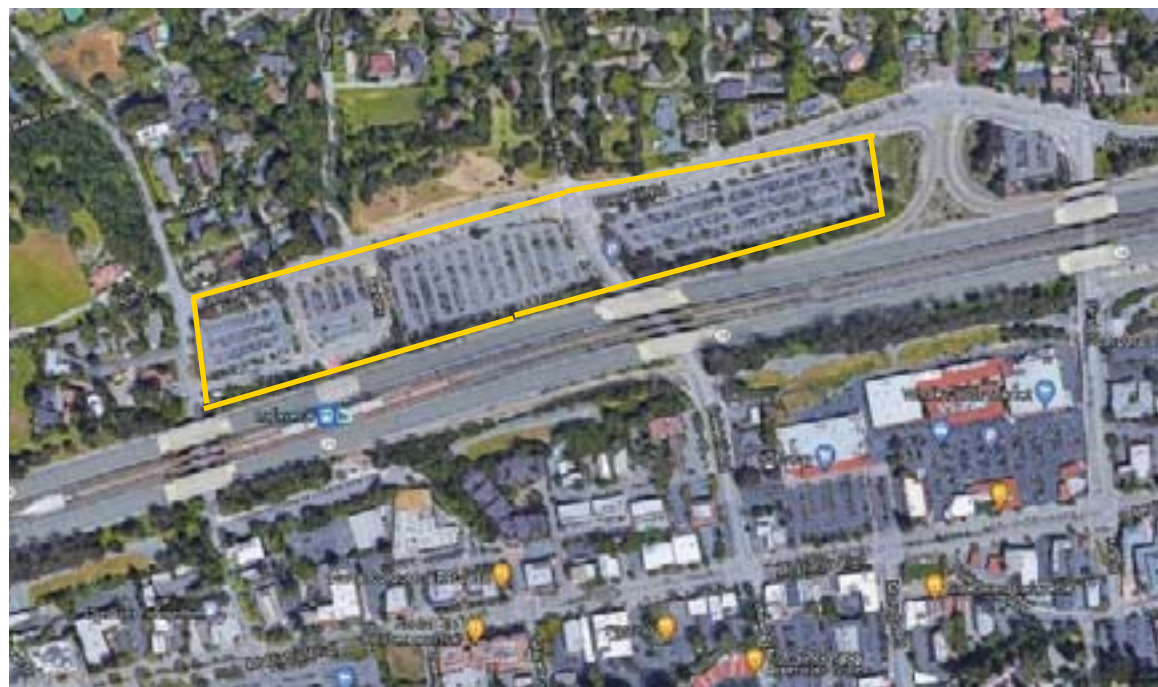


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By Lou Fancher

Alternative approaches and

decisions related to Assembly Bill 2923, a 2018 State of California law that requires the

upzoning of BART-owned properties and the development of transit-oriented, multi-

family housing had the Lafayette City Council grappling Feb. 28 with a difficult decision: to proactively direct staff to immediately begin to prepare draft zoning regulations and objective standards for the planning commission and city council to consider at a future date, or to take no immediate action and simply allow AB 2923 to automatically be enacted on July 1.

The city of Lafayette is charged with finding 2,114 units as part of Association of Bay Area Governments' Regional Housing Needs Allocation and provide the required "buffer units" to account for development projects that fail to meet the allocation numbers, which would total approximately 3,400 residential units. Development of the BART-owned parking lots would add 825 new dwelling units in the downtown core.

After a brief introduction by Planning and Building Director Greg Wolff, Consulting Planner Jean Eisberg led the council through an explanation of AB 2923, which, as it applies to Lafayette, involves upzoning the city's BART-owned parking lots to allow development housing projects with a minimum residential density of 75 units/acre and height of up to five stories. At 11 acres, the property has been given the lowest density under BART's "Neighborhood/Town Center" classification that includes in addition to its density and height standards, one parking space per unit.

There are two maximum-case growth scenarios being reviewed as part of the Housing Element Environmental Impact Report: a Distributed Scenario and a Downtown Only Scenario.

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Draft EIR for Housing Element discussed at special joint meeting

By Lou Fancher

The Lafayette City Council was

joined Feb. 28 by city staff and members of the Planning Commission and the General Plan Advisory Committee to

review the draft Environmental Impact Report for the city's sixth cycle Housing Element Update.

To meet the RHNA allocation of 2,114 units and provide the required "buffer units" to account for development projects that fail to meet the allocation numbers, Lafayette must plan for a total of approximately 3,400 residential units. Scenarios were exam-

ined at more than one location with the Draft EIR addressing distributed sites beyond the downtown core and a second scenario with downtown-only housing. By analyzing and sharing the preliminary environmental impacts, along with mitigating actions that can be made, Luke Evans, Lafayette's CEQA consultant and project manager hired to develop the housing element draft, said

decision-makers and the public can better understand and provide comments while the final draft is being completed.

Evans presented an overview of the project and project alternatives, and identified four potentially significant issues likely to experience significant, adverse effects. The short list began with aesthetics.

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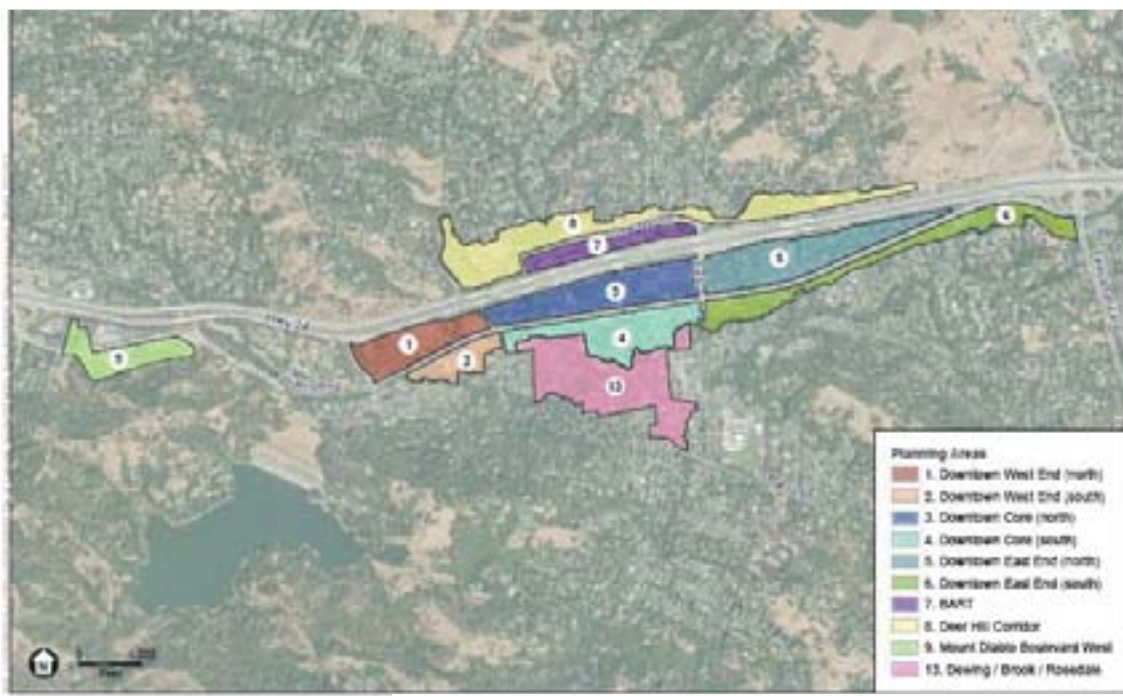


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