

NEW PARKING METERS

Lafayette recently replaced most of the old coin-only parking meters along Mt. Diablo Boulevard with new meters that accept both coins and credit cards.

To accommodate BART riders, we also took out those rusty old “lock box” payment stations on Happy Valley Road, Oakhill Road and First Street and replaced them with eighty-five new meters programmed for long term parking. These meters, too, will accept credit cards.

The rate for parking in the downtown area is \$1.00 per hour. While long term parking costs \$5.00 per day on Happy Valley Road and Oakhill Road, here’s a bargain tip: for those willing to walk an extra block to the BART station, long term parking on First Street near Deer Hill Road is only \$1.00 per day.

With the meters’ new credit card capabilities, the good news for parkers is that if you’re short on change you’ll no longer have to search under your car seat for that last quarter. Just whip out the plastic. But be sure to buy enough time! The current penalty for a parking citation at an expired meter is \$45.00.

The net revenues from the City’s parking program – meter and citation revenue minus the cost of maintenance and enforcement – total about \$200,000 per year for the City. Where does that money go? The City Council deposits **all** of those monies into a special fund reserved for the purchase of additional off-street parking. Most recently, Lafayette acquired the parcel at 949 Moraga Road (next to the Methodist church) and converted it into a free public parking lot.

Besides the convenience for the customer, the new meters also include automated meter collection reporting (which reduces the chance for fraud), usage information, real-time maintenance alerts, and the ability to program new rates or messages on the meters individually or in groups remotely. The meters are solar powered, stronger, and more vandal proof than the old coin meters.

Try them out!



EAST END MEDIANS BRING OUT THE BEST OF LAFAYETTE

On May 16th, after months of discussion, the City Council directed staff to move forward on a project to add landscaped median islands in the middle of Mt. Diablo Boulevard between First Street and Brown Avenue. Construction will begin in late summer and be completed by the winter holidays.

The question of whether Lafayette should install landscaped medians on the east end of Mt. Diablo Boulevard has been debated...and resolved...and debated...and resolved several times, going back at least to the 1970’s and 1980’s, and perhaps even further back than that.

Many thought the question was finally put to rest in 1988 when the City Council hired landscape architect Russ Beatty to develop a downtown landscaping design. His plan called for landscaped medians all the way up and down the boulevard, and the program was approved by the City Council. Several planted areas on the west end of town were built as a result.

The east end, though, was more auto-oriented, and its business people – fearing that medians would hinder their customers’ ability to reach the store – had less enthusiasm for the landscaped road islands. Because support was thin and money was tight, efforts to add medians on the east end languished for decades.

The plan for medians emerged from its seventeen year sleep once again in 2007 as part of the community-wide effort to create a Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) for Lafayette. The purpose of the DSP, of course, is to anticipate future changes to the City and to steer development and civic improvements to meet those changes. Because the plan anticipates that, over the next few decades, there will be more multi-family and senior housing built along the east end, the DSP calls for the City to “install intermittent medians in the East End District to enhance the aesthetics, reduce traffic speeds, and improve pedestrian safety.”

And so, when grant monies and other funds recently became available, city staff drafted a plan for landscaped islands between First Street and Brown Avenue, including a roundabout at Golden Gate Way. The City Council nixed the roundabout last fall, but with a letter of support for the medians from the Chamber of Commerce, the Council told staff to proceed with median design work, with the goal to build the project in summer 2013.

It would be an understatement to say the Council’s direction was not universally embraced. Thirty residents and merchants turned out to attend an April workshop, with most voicing opposition to the plan. While a few supported the intermittent medians, the majority reiterated their long-held opposition to the improvements, saying they liked Mt. Diablo Boulevard the way it is now and would prefer that customers retain the same unfettered vehicular access they have enjoyed for decades.

(continued inside)



PROPOSED LAFAYETTE BIKE PARK ON THE ROPES

In the four years since it was conceived, the BMX Bike Park proposed for the Lafayette Community Park has been tentatively approved at every checkpoint. Until now, that is. At an April joint meeting between the Parks Trails and Recreation Commission and the City Council, the formal agenda item called for a review of the Commission's five-year draft capital improvement plan, but the discussion quickly boiled down to arguments for and against the bike park. About a hundred people attended the hearing and, as a result, the public hearing lasted for something close to three hours.

Those in favor of the park pointed out the growth of BMX as a sport; the need for more facilities for individual, rather than team, sports; and reminded the Council that the Community Park Master Plan calls for the south end of the park to be

reserved for active uses, with the north end preserved for open space and passive uses.

Those opposed to the park argued, among other things, that BMXers represent just a small slice of Lafayette's population and that despoiling that area for a bike park wouldn't be fair to the many people from the neighborhood that have enjoyed the natural area, some for many decades. Others focused on the environmental impacts the facility would have

on the hillside; others, still, expressed concern about the noise, the parking, and the types of people who would use the facility.

After the public discussion, the City Council agreed that, before it could make a final decision on whether to build the BMX park, it needed answers to several questions, including:

- What is the projected usage of the park at different times of the day, week, and season?
- What is a realistic estimate of the annual maintenance costs?
- What do similar parks typically look like three to five years after they open?
- What are the safety records of BMX parks? What are the features of a "safe" park and how do those compare with the proposal?
- What are the additional costs, if any, to insure the facility?
- Do other BMX parks charge fees? If so, how are they levied?
- What is the soil stability on the site?

To answer these questions, the City Council appointed two of its members to work with the chair and vice chair of the Parks, Trails, and Recreation Commission and Parks Trails and Recreation Director Jennifer Russell to write a report that addresses these questions.

When the report is finished, the matter will be returned to the City Council – probably sometime this summer or fall. The Council will then make the final decision regarding whether to go ahead and build the bike park in the south-end of the Lafayette Community Park or not. If you have an opinion about the proposed BMX Bike Park, you can send it to cityhall@lovelafayette.org.



East End Medians *(continued from front)*

This led the City Council to convene two special workshops, in April and May, with the purpose of collecting opinions regarding whether east end medians would be good for the City and, if so, where the medians should be built. Those meetings, while contentious, showcased local democracy— and Lafayette at its best.

Picture this: fifty or sixty property owners, business people, and local residents gather in the Community Hall at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. After a brief background presentation, everybody walks out into a gloriously warm and dry April evening and, as the sun sets over the Berkeley hills, the large group wanders down to Brown Avenue and back. Lafayette's elected councilmembers are spread out among this crowd, and as everybody moves along the boulevard, the people – one by one – raise their hand to raise a specific concern to the whole crowd, or in a quieter moment, pull a councilmember aside to make their point.

The participants also mingle and talk with each other as they walk because, as neighbors and businesspeople who have worked together for years, they are comfortable with each other.



They are friends. This is their community and they care enough about it to spend their evening working to make Lafayette as good as it can be.

Finally, after the walking tour, everybody reconvenes in the meeting room for some formal public input and discussion. Days later, at a second workshop, all of the participants gather around tables with 12' long maps and plans. Councilmembers, equipped with colored pens, listen to people's concerns and capture those thoughts on the maps.

As the community conversation winds down, the five Council members recap what was shared. Finally, after two long evenings and many, many hours of detailed conversation with their constituents, the Council votes to approve a set of intermittent medians that meet the competing views of those interested in aesthetics, pedestrian safety, and customer access.

Is it any wonder that, in poll after poll, local government rates higher in trust and effectiveness than any other level of government in America?



THE BOOK SHOP ON THE CORNER

Buy a Book and Support Your Library

When you need a book you probably go to a big box or major chain book store, right? Or you order it online.

But wait! Did you know that one of the largest booksellers in Contra Costa County, with thousands and thousands of books to choose from, is located right here in Lafayette? And that the books in this store often cost only a dollar or two? And that all of the money generated by the store goes to a good cause?

It's all true.

Welcome to the Friends' Corner Book Shop, located on the lower level of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, on the corner of Golden Gate Way and First Street. This well run shop, staffed entirely by volunteers, is open six days a week.

Step inside the door and you will be greeted by a friendly volunteer that will guide you through the stacks in search of your next favorite book. You'll find shelves organized by genre or author, and a wide selection of current fiction and mysteries. With more than 100 categories of books, including art, travel guides, biographies, self-help, science fiction, history, business, crafts, cookbooks, children, and young adult, there really is something for everyone. Not only is the selection extensive, but it is refreshed on a regular basis from a steady stream of incoming donations.

HOURS

Mon: 10 – 6

Tues: 10 – 6

Wed: 10 – 8

Thur 10 – 6

Fri: 10 – 5

Sat: 9 – 1

Closed Sunday

And it really is all for a good cause: the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. The Friends Corner Book Shop uses its proceeds to pay for Sunday library hours; programs for children, teens, and adults; and books, magazines, and equipment. Last year, the total income from book sales was \$126,823, and the store forwarded \$102,000 – more than 80% of the total proceeds – to help operate the Library.

The volunteers do more than sell books. The Friends also organize Sweet Thursday author events and sponsor the Wonders of the World museum docent lectures. Both are free to the public.

Finally, did you know that, when it was time to build the new library, it was the Friends who made the first major donation? That's right: the Friends donated a whopping \$1 million dollars to build the new library. This tradition of harvesting and selling gently used books to support the library goes back more than fifty years in Lafayette.

And so, the next time you are looking for a book to add to your bedside table, take on a trip, or give as a gift, be sure to stop by the Friends Corner Book Shop. Your purchase will support the Lafayette Library and Learning Center!

www.friendscornerbookshop.com

A Day in the Life of Lafayette

How do you see your surroundings in Lafayette? What if you, your family, neighbors, fellow students, co-workers went out and took pictures of what they see around them in Lafayette, and from there build an image of what our community really looks like through the eyes of those who live and work here.

Introducing **A Day in the Life of Lafayette!** This community sponsored event aims to create a crowd-sourced snapshot of our city on a particular day. Whether you are 5 or 105, all are invited to participate! This is your opportunity to think outside the lens.

Here's how it works:

On **Friday, June 21** – the Summer Solstice, the longest day of year – take pictures in Lafayette **anytime between**

12:01am and 11:59pm. Choose

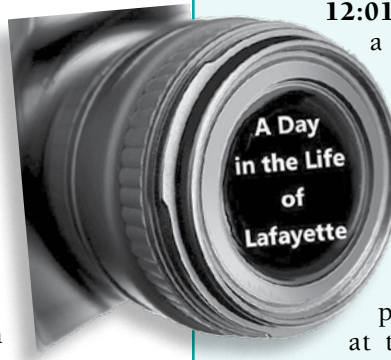
a photo, including the time and location it was taken, and submit it to the City of Lafayette Offices between July 12th and July 30th (by 5 pm). The Lafayette Public Art Committee will review the entries and select the winning photographs to be displayed at the Library Gallery at the

Community Hall and on the City's website from September through November. A reception will be held at the gallery in late September to recognize the finalists.

Rules for submittals:

- Photographers must live or work in Lafayette
- One photograph per person will be accepted
- Photograph can be any size up to 11"x14"
- Photograph must be mounted on a 11"x14" mat board (black, white, or gray) – no frames
- On the back of the mat board, provide the following:
 - Photographer's name
 - Contact information for photographer
 - If under 18 years, age and school
 - Title of photograph
 - Time and location the photograph was taken
- Photographs must be appropriate for general viewing

Now, get out there and start shooting!





City of Lafayette
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NOTES FROM CHIEF CHRISTENSEN: CAN I GET A LITTLE HELP?

Spring brings many beautiful and poetic changes to the landscape. The trees become flush with leaves; the birds sing their louder song; and the honeybees flit from flower to flower.

Police officers notice seasonal changes, too, but they're not quite as beautiful or poetic: vandalism increases, more pedestrians get hit by cars, and auto and home burglaries increase.

Unfortunately, these latter property crimes are very much on the rise, and things will probably get worse before they get better. That's because of prison reform.

In an effort to reduce prison overcrowding, many convicts are being sentenced to local facilities or just simply released back into the community. In the old days, a person on parole who was re-arrested would be returned to State prison for at least a year. Now, due to State budget cuts, that same parolee will likely spend less than 60 days in County Jail and then be released back onto the streets. The penal system that once made crooks wish they had never visited Contra Costa County has been seriously degraded.

What does it mean for you? It means that you need to change your behavior. I understand this is Lafayette – a town that feels, and generally is, pretty safe – but let's face it: the bad guys are out there and they are looking for easy pickings. Lafayette, with its easy freeway access to some very nice neighborhoods, looks like delicious low hanging fruit to these guys. I therefore need you, at a minimum, **to lock your doors and windows when you leave your home.** Every time. That one simple act will deter a lot of would-be crooks.

Second: I also need you to **remove or hide your valuables when you park your car at night.** If you leave your car unlocked and then discover, in the morning, that all your stuff is gone, that is a VERY hard case for us to solve. Even Columbo wouldn't stand a chance.

Third, **if you see someone in your neighborhood driving a vehicle that looks out of place, call 911.** We love to meet and greet people like that. Nothing gives us more pleasure.

Finally, I encourage you to **consider installing a video camera surveillance system.** We've recently had a couple of burglaries where exterior surveillance cameras have provided excellent images to use when investigating the crime. In one burglary, a camera captured the image of the vehicle as it entered and exited their neighborhood, and it was enough detail to allow us to find the specific car – and the criminals – that drove up the driveway that day.

The presence of a camera also sends the message to the crooks that you are serious about protecting your home. An exterior video camera is an excellent investment, particularly if it can capture the license plates of vehicles that pass by. Indeed, it would give the Lafayette police a huge head start if every neighborhood installed just one camera that films the entrance to the block or neighborhood. Most of these cameras are inexpensive and require little effort to install. One of our officers even installed cameras on his own home after he saw the value from the cases in Lafayette – and it cost him less than \$400.

If you have any questions about these tips, or want advice regarding placement of a surveillance camera, please feel free to call me directly at 299-3220.

And, if you are not receiving our monthly crime report and would like to, please send me an email at christensen@lovelafayette.org.



CITY DIRECTORY

For Council Members call: 284-1968

Council Members

Michael Anderson	Mayor
Don Tatzin	Vice Mayor
Brandt Andersson	Council Member
Mark Mitchell	Council Member
Traci Reilly	Council Member

Messages to all Council Members:
cityhall@lovelafayette.org

Administration

General Reception and	284-1968
Steven Falk, City Manager	Fax: 284-3169
Tracy Robinson, Admin. Srv. Dir.	299-3227
Gonzalo Silva, Financial Srv. Mgr.	299-3213
Joanne Robbins, City Clerk	299-3210

Community Development

Tony Coe, Engineering Srv. Mgr.	284-1951
Niroop Srivatsa, Planning Srv. Mgr.	284-1976
Ron Lefler, Public Works Srv. Mgr.	299-3214
P.W. Hotline (to report problems)	299-3259

If you observe illegal dumping in creeks & storm drains or accidental spills on roads, call Contra Costa Hazardous Materials Division 646-2286.

Lamorinda School Bus Program

Juliet Hansen, Program Mgr.	299-3216
	Or 299-3215

Parks, Trails and Recreation 284-2232

Jennifer Russell, Director	
Senior Services	284-5050

Police Services

Emergency: 24 Hours	911
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours	284-5010
Police Business Office:	283-3680

Anonymous Tipline, Traffic Enforcement, Suggestions & LEARN (Laf. Emergency Action Response Network), 299-3230

Fax 284-3169

**Address 3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. #210
Lafayette, CA 94549**

Website www.ci.lafayette.ca.us

E-MAIL: Council/staff members can be reached via e-mail using this address format:

First Initial + Last Name @lovelafayette.org

Example: SFalk@lovelafayette.org

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