



# V LAFAYETTE VISTAS

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## COUNCIL CONCLUDES COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

The people have spoken! The people have spoken! And what they want, apparently, is more open space, more police patrols, and a revitalized Park Theater.

Since we last published the *Vistas*, the City has collected hundreds of on-line and hard-copy opinion poll responses, and the Council has convened three community conversations at locations throughout the City. The Oakwood Athletic Club graciously hosted the May event and, as was the case at both of the previous two, a good group of about fifty people showed up, eager to share their ideas and comments. What started out a few months ago as an experiment – a blank slate, a listening tour without an agenda – settled nicely into what felt like a set of living room conversations with new and long time residents who care deeply about Lafayette sitting around a circle, talking about how we can all work together to make the City a better place to live, work, play, and learn.

Concurrent with that final conversation, we closed the on-line poll that we introduced in the last issue of the *Vistas* and tallied the results of the surveys we received. In total, 724 people ultimately participated. If each participant represents one home, then about 7% of the households in Lafayette participated – not bad!

### Here's what you told us:

- **Open Space is the top priority** and the item for which people are most willing to pay.
- **Crime Surveillance Cameras and More Police Patrols poll second** and are particularly popular with older residents.
- **Revitalizing the Park Theater gathered momentum** through the poll and by the end was the third highest priority.

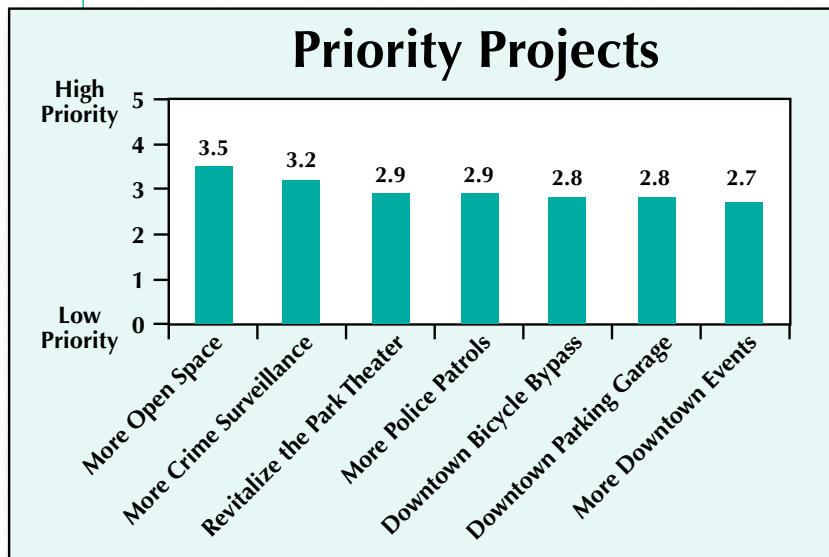
The other items that participants said should be higher, rather than lower, priorities are:

- Build a Parking Garage;
- Add a Bicycle Bypass for Downtown;
- Add More Fun Downtown Events.

Parsing by demographics, we learned that older people generally want more police, a parking garage, and a traffic bypass. Younger people asked for more open space, a revitalized Park Theater, the bicycle path, and more downtown events.

Now, some might say that it's all well and good to have a wish list of expensive things you'd like to accomplish, but

these things cost money! How will the City pay for it? The poll anticipated that issue, and asked people about their willingness



to pay for the items they wanted. The items that scored high on the willingness to pay scale are open space, police and surveillance cameras, a downtown bicycle bypass, and a revitalized Park Theater.

Those who completed the poll may recall that, at the end, it left space for open-ended free responses from participants. People, of course, submitted all varieties of suggestions here

but, notably, about 25% of the free responses said that the City should do something to improve traffic flow, improve parking, or control development.

Finally, at the end of the poll we asked whether people would prefer that the City "Do nothing! Lafayette is fantastic as it is. Leave it alone already!" One in six who completed the poll strongly agreed with that sentiment but, perhaps surprisingly, those respondents were almost equally matched by people who want the City to do the exact opposite of that. The rest of the people – about 70% – are somewhere in



Grace Dixon, Nina Ruebner, Susan Houghton, Suzanne Sommer, and Jennifer Sutherland discuss Lafayette's priorities.

the middle.

Now, of course, the challenge for the City Council is to figure out what to do with these results. Watch future issues of the *Vistas* to learn what comes next.

# DEALING WITH DROUGHT

With California facing one of the most severe droughts on record, Governor Brown declared a drought State of Emergency in January and directed officials to take all necessary actions to prepare for water shortages.

Following the Governor's direction, the East Bay Municipal Utility District declared a Stage 4 critical drought and set a community-wide goal to reduce water use 20% compared to 2013. To achieve these reductions, EBMUD has new water use rules that affect all customers, including residents, businesses, and governments.

## New Rules for You

These are the rules that apply to you:

- Water no more than two non-consecutive days per week with no runoff.
  - Water only before 9am or after 6pm.
  - No watering allowed within 48 hours of measurable rainfall.
  - No washing of driveways and sidewalks except as needed for health and safety.
  - Turn off fountains or decorative water features unless the water is recirculated.
- Meanwhile, restaurants can only serve water to customers upon request and hotels must provide guests with the option of not having their towels and linens washed daily.

To deliver further conservation, EBMUD is considering new rates to fund ongoing services and investments in the District's aging infrastructure. Likely to take effect July 1, a temporary Stage 4 drought surcharge of up to 25% will pay for extra water supplies, additional conservation services, and enforcement of water use restrictions. The average household using 246 gallons per day will see its bill increase by \$11.65 per month.

EBMUD is also adopting two new water guzzler ordinances. The excessive water use ordinance will penalize households that use more than 1,000 gallons per day, which is four times the amount of water used by the average residential customer. And the water theft ordinance will allow EBMUD to fine persons for stealing water from a public fire hydrant.

## What's the City Doing to Conserve?

The City of Lafayette uses water at the Community Center, the Public Works Corporation Yard, the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, on parks and ball fields, and on the city's numerous street medians and landscape strips.

**How much?** Lafayette irrigates approximately five acres of street landscaping and about six acres of turf in the parks. Recently, in response to the drought order, we dug through our old water bills and determined that, in 2013, the City of Lafayette used 26.7 million gallons of water and paid \$109,000 to EBMUD.

*That's just too much, especially in a drought year.*

As a result, the City Council recently considered the matter and directed staff to reduce the City's water use by 20% or more compared to 2013. Here's how we'll do it:

◆ **Reduced Ballfield Watering.** We'll be reducing the watering of our ballfields at the Community Park and Buckeye Fields to two times per week. This may result in some yellowing and browning of the ballfields but this act, by itself, will save more than three million gallons of water this summer. We'll also be checking the water meters every week and hand-watering the most stressed areas of turf to keep it alive until the fall rains arrive.



Don Pedro Reservoir, September 2014

◆ **Careful Median Management.** Medians account for about 60% of the City's water use, and so we'll not only be reducing our watering schedule to two times per week but also converting nearly all of our irrigation spray heads to low-flow bubblers or drip systems. The crews are also taking advantage of "smart" irrigation controllers which use evapotranspiration technology that automatically adjusts the watering times to account for the weather.

◆ **Recycled Water.** The City has several areas in the downtown – such as sidewalk street trees – that do not have water lines and must be hand-watered. For these areas the City will use recycled water that is available, for a small fee, from the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District. It will require some driving to retrieve the H2O but we think it's worth doing, at least for this summer.

◆ **Stop Watering Altogether.** While it's important to maintain certain high-activity parks, watering the center medians in Pleasant Hill Road between Old Tunnel Road and Olympic Boulevard doesn't seem to make sense at all. This is a water-intensive median that has long been prone to irrigation leaks and overspray. Since the hypericum ground cover isn't all that attractive anyway, we've decided to just let it go brown but we'll still hand-water certain trees if they appear to be stressed. We'll also stop watering the grassy amphitheater steps at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center and let that area go brown, too. The plan is to install signs declaring this as a water conservation area.



By taking these actions – some of which will be highly visible – we are confident that the City of Lafayette will meet its 20% reduction target, and we may even be able to achieve more savings than that. We hope you'll join us in spirit and action as we work together to meet California's drought challenge.

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Visit [ebmud.com](http://ebmud.com)  
for water saving tips, tools and more.  
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# LAMORINDA VILLAGE GETS OFF THE GROUND

A big crowd of over 250 “mature” adults were on hand in April to celebrate the official launch of Lamorinda Village. Three years in the making, Lamorinda Village is not a place; it’s a non-profit membership program which supports older residents of the Lamorinda communities to enable them to continue to live in their own homes and neighborhoods. Modeled on Boston’s Beacon Hill Village, Lamorinda Village is a local grassroots endeavor providing programs and services for its members. Anne Ornelas, the new Executive Director, is there to organize it all under the guidance of the Lamorinda Village Board of Directors, comprised of local residents of Lamorinda.



neighborhood support for  
aging in our community...

## LAMORINDA Village

Membership in Lamorinda Village provides a wide array of services that include:

- Home-based volunteer services as far-ranging as transportation, light housekeeping, grocery shopping, minor household repairs and friendly visitors.
- One-call concierge referrals to screened service providers that can include gardeners, painters, attorneys, plumbers, accountants, and personal care attendants.
- Cultural, social, and educational events and gatherings.
- Health and fitness activities.

At last count, 102 members had already joined the Village, supported by 55 volunteers, 50 Preferred Service Providers, and 68 donors. Although the minimum age for membership is 55, Ornelas stresses that “age doesn’t matter” when it comes to volunteering. “We want high school students, college students, Rotarians, and stay at home parents,” she said. And while Ornelas is pleased that the current roster includes a good many volunteers, she hopes to enlist two or three times that number and grow its membership in the next year. “This is a great way to help people out and have them stay connected with their community,” she says.

To get started, Lamorinda Village was grateful to receive a grant of \$43,215 from the Joseph and Vera Long Foundation. Annual fees range from \$300 for a single person annual social membership to \$1,200 for a two-person household full membership. The social membership entitles members to access a list of pre-screened professional service providers, many at a discount, and join in all cultural, social, educational, and fitness activities. In addition full members also have access to volunteer help with local transportation, household maintenance, technical support for computers and other home equipment, assistance during medical appointments and many other support services.

To learn more about membership or to volunteer, call **925-253-2300** or visit **[www.lamorindavillage.org](http://www.lamorindavillage.org)**.

# RENT CONTROL IN LAFAYETTE? Moooooo!

Given the way things are, you just don’t expect to find certain things in some communities. That’s what made the old Berkeley Farms milk carton slogan – “Cows in Berkeley? Moooo!” – so memorable. Likewise with rent control in Lafayette: you just don’t expect to find an “urban” policy like rent control in the sleepy semi-rural suburbs, and, in fact, the City Council hadn’t heretofore agendized the matter or even had a single public conversation about it.

That changed in May. At two recent City Council meetings, the chambers were packed by fifty or sixty residents of apartment buildings located on Second Street complaining that their rents were going up. By a lot. Stanley Middle School teacher Jennifer Sutherland said she was asked to pay an extra \$500 per month for the three-bedroom apartment she shares with her 8-year-old twins, and Damilia Loupy said she received a notice raising her monthly rent by 90 percent.

The problem, it seems, is that rents in the buildings were under-market for a long time, and the new owner – Sack Properties – was making up for lost time. Also, the building had a lot of deferred maintenance and the new owner needed the extra capital to make necessary improvements.

After hearing from all sides, the City Council acknowledged that high rents are a problem all over the Bay Area and ultimately expressed sympathy for the renters, with Council members saying that increases of 90% were “crazy” and “beyond the pale.” Furthermore, it directed the City Manager to meet with the new property owner to learn if Sack is willing to develop a modulated program for rent increases and also directed the City Attorney to draft a resolution that would place a temporary moratorium on rent increases.

That moratorium resolution was considered by the City Council at its meeting on May 26th. Just before the Council was scheduled to vote, however, a representative from Sack Properties indicated that the company had been doing a lot of work to understand, internally, its own financial requirements for the property and, externally, the needs and capabilities of its tenants. As a result of that work, Sack committed to give all residents an option to sign a long-term (one-year) lease with a “maximum 10%” rent increase; residents that want shorter leases or month-to-month leases would see higher increases.

According to CEO Kirby Sack, the “Max 10%” long term lease option is something that other local landlords are also offering in reaction to the current market boom and is widely becoming an industry best practice. Since utility costs are billed separately from rent, some tenants will still experience net increases exceeding 10%, but the overall increases would still be far below those previously reported to the City Council.

The Council viewed Sack Properties’ so-called “voluntary rent control” as a positive development and, in the end, chose not to adopt the moratorium on rent increases at this time. Instead, it directed staff to conduct a survey of local landlords of larger apartment complexes. The Council will use the information gathered to better understand and monitor the local market, and thus be prepared to act quickly if rents throughout the town begin to rapidly rise.

And so it is that Lafayette continues to eschew rent control. For now, at least.



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## NEW GARBAGE CARTS! Woo Hoo!

It's not exactly cause for a celebration, but our old garbage carts have been around for the better part of twenty years. The good news? Those empty pizza boxes will soon have a new place to go, thanks to a new contract with Republic Services (formerly Allied Waste).

Republic Services will be replacing all of the old carts, including recycling, organics, and garbage, in June. The new carts will have a different color scheme: blue for recycling, green for organics and black for "landfill." The carts will also have clearer signage explaining what to put in each, with the goal of reducing what goes into the landfill.



Food and food-soiled paper such as napkins, paper plates and pizza boxes can now go into the green organics cart, along with yard trimmings. These items will end up in a compost facility.

More types of materials will now be recycled curbside: including household batteries, compact fluorescent lights, plastic bags, and rigid plastics. For specific information visit the RecycleSmart website: [www.recyclesmart.org](http://www.recyclesmart.org).

For most residents, the new recycle, organics and landfill carts will be delivered the day before their regular service day and the old carts removed the following day after they are emptied. Look for details in the mail, or call Republic Services at 925-685-4711.

As for those old carts? If they are in good shape, they will be reused in cities that still use the 'old' color scheme. And if they are not in good shape, they will be recycled, of course!

## Lafayette Town Center Finally Gets Building Permit



It "only" took twenty-one years of fits, starts, design charrettes, lawsuits, settlement agreements, story poles, visual simulations, color changes, new owners, new architects, and public hearings, but the housing project for the vacant lot behind Pizza Antica finally has a building permit. Planning and Building Director Niroop Srivatsa signed off on the permit last month, and KB Home now has everything it needs to build its four-story 72-unit condominium project over two levels of parking on the one-acre parcel. Construction should start this summer, and could take up to two years to complete.

## CITY DIRECTORY

For Council Members call: **284-1968**

### Council Members

Brandt Andersson	<b>Mayor</b>
Traci Reilly	<b>Vice Mayor</b>
Michael Anderson	<b>Council Member</b>
Mark Mitchell	<b>Council Member</b>
Don Tatzin	<b>Council Member</b>

Messages to **all** Council Members:  
[cityhall@lovelafayette.org](mailto:cityhall@lovelafayette.org)

### Administration

<b>General Reception and</b>	<b>284-1968</b>
<b>Steven Falk, City Manager</b>	<b>Fax: 284-3169</b>
Tracy Robinson, Admin. Srv. Dir.	<b>299-3227</b>
Jennifer Wakeman,	
Financial Srv. Mgr.	<b>299-3213</b>
Joanne Robbins, City Clerk	<b>299-3210</b>
Tony Coe, Engineering Srv. Mgr.	<b>284-1951</b>
Niroop Srivatsa, Planning Srv. Mgr.	<b>284-1976</b>
Mike Moran, Public Works Srv. Mgr.	<b>299-3214</b>
P.W. Hotline (to report problems)	<b>299-3259</b>

**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.	<b>299-3216</b>
	<b>Or 299-3215</b>

### Parks, Trails and Recreation 284-2232

Jennifer Russell, Director

### Senior Services 284-5050

### Police Services

Emergency: 24 Hours	<b>911</b>
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours	<b>284-5010</b>
Police Business Office:	<b>283-3680</b>

**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](http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us)**

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

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