



# V LAFAYETTE VISTAS

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## Five Decades of Smart Growth in Lafayette

Long before the phrase *Smart Growth* was in vogue – or even invented! – Lafayette was practicing it. Now, as the City approaches its fiftieth anniversary, Lafayette residents can look back and appreciate what a fine quality of life the City’s long commitment to smart growth practices has delivered to its residents.

### What is Smart Growth?

America in the 1950s was a place where the economy was booming, the suburbs were growing, and large numbers of people were exiting the cities in search of their own patch of land. It may have seemed innocent at the time, but the development of all those suburban neighborhoods – defined by a strict separation of land uses and heavy auto dependency – ultimately contributed to and exacerbated the traffic congestion, loss of farmland, and decline in main street retail shopping that now plagues so many of America’s central cities.



*a city extending from park to park*

Seeking a remedy, in the 1980s, urban planners began to develop smart growth principles that encourage, (1) the preservation, to the greatest extent possible, of open spaces and scenic lands that have not yet been developed, and (2) the concentration of growth in downtown centers. *Smart growth* says that development should be compact, walkable, and bicycle-friendly, with neighborhood schools, “complete streets”, and multi-family and mixed-use projects located near the transit station. The hillsides, meanwhile, should be left open as possible, or developed in a way that doesn’t impact the environment or surrounding community and leaves open space intact.

By embracing these principles, cities can reduce sprawl.

What sets *smart growth* apart from earlier environmental platforms is that it accepts and even welcomes development – recognizing that everybody, on a growing planet, needs a place to live – but it seeks to direct that growth in an intentional, comprehensive way. It changes the fraught terms of the development debate away from the binary growth/no growth question to one concerned with how and where new development should be allowed. The benefits of smart growth to residents are reduced commute times, safe walking routes to schools, cleaner air, better recreational areas, and livable communities, all of which inure to the health and benefit of the residents.

While early national conversations about *smart growth* began in the 1980s, it wasn’t until 1997 that the American Planning Association published its *Growing Smart Legislative Guidebook*.

Many consider that to be the date that the concept of *smart growth* was born.

### So When Did Lafayette Get Smart About Growth?

Lafayette, like a precocious child, was way ahead of the curve. The City incorporated in 1968, largely because residents weren’t happy with the pro-sprawl land use policies of Contra Costa County.

Shortly thereafter, in 1974, the City issued its first General Plan, and Lafayette’s founding mothers and fathers used the preamble of that document, first, to poetically describe the community as “a city extending from park to park and laced with an inner pattern of open spaces”, and then to state that Lafayette’s “semi-rural, close-to-nature feeling can be retained (only) if hilltops and other major natural features are preserved on a major scale” while simultaneously calling for the “development of the central area to capture a specific shopping market, the development of a civic and cultural focus, and the balancing of associated downtown uses. . .” Doing so, said the drafters, will “fortify and sustain the sense of a ‘community’, rather than just a place to live.”

In other words, the City’s first General Plan’s preamble might be summarized to say, “if we preserve the open spaces while intensifying downtown, Lafayette will be a healthy community.” Hmm. That sounds a lot like *smart growth*, doesn’t it? And it was written twenty-three years before the term was even invented.

The City didn’t stop with its *smarth growthiness* (to paraphrase Steven Colbert) there. In the mid-1970s, seeking to keep developers from dancing on its hillsides, Lafayette adopted what was then the strictest ridgeline ordinance in California. Likewise, in the early 1990s, the City created the Lafayette Redevelopment Agency, with the express purpose to revitalize and rebuild the downtown core area, and pledged to spend 20% of its tax revenues on housing that is affordable to people of low- and moderate incomes. The first major project the public/private partnership that the RDA delivered almost twenty years ago was the Town Center apartments – compact development located right next to the BART station.

When the City’s leaders got around to revising the General Plan – this time in 2002 – *smart growth* principles were by then deeply imbedded into the community’s understanding of itself.

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# MEASURE C FAILS

## Council adopts scaled back goals for 2017

Last summer, with a statistically-significant pre-election poll in hand suggesting that more than 60% of Lafayette voters would support a sales tax measure, the Lafayette City Council ambitiously placed Measure C on the November ballot, pledging that the proceeds would be used for open space purchases, parking and traffic improvements, downtown parks, enhanced policing, and a project to revitalize the Park Theater.

What councilmembers couldn't have predicted was that the pollsters, both nationally and locally, would be so wrong.

Lafayette voters could hardly have been more clear in their disapproval of the measure, with 57% rejecting the proposal. It wasn't even close.

As a result, when the Council met in January to discuss its plan for the upcoming year, the municipal workplan was decidedly scaled back. After two sessions of discussion and give-and-take with an eye toward the budget, the Council arrived at these goals:

- **Complete Long Term Plans** for: Downtown Congestion, Creeks, Downtown Parking, Pleasant Hill Road Corridor, Accessory Dwelling Units, and Hillside Ordinance Update.
- **Review and implement selected recommendations of the Stanford Alumni Consulting Team** Report on Committees and Commissions.
- **Review City tools and processes for public notification** (e.g., affordable housing opportunities, permit parking, other city services).

- **Relocate Police Services** to 3471 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
  - **Develop a program to celebrate the City's 50th anniversary** of incorporation in 2018.
  - **Appoint a City Council committee to explore practical and economically viable options for permanent city offices.**
  - **Complete the master planning for Deer Hill Park and the Dog Park.**
  - **Review and update the Conflict of Interest Resolution.**
- The Council has already begun work on some of these tasks and will evaluate progress toward the goals several times through the year. If you have feedback regarding these goals, or wish to submit others that the Council might consider next year, you can do so at [cityhall@lovelafayette.org](mailto:cityhall@lovelafayette.org).

## ANOTHER DAY IN THE LIFE OF LAFAYETTE



It's time for another **Day in the Life of Lafayette!**

This community event creates 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 Monday, March 20th, – the Spring equinox – take pictures in Lafayette **anytime between 12:01 am and 11:59 pm**. Send a photo, including the time and location it was taken, to the City of Lafayette Offices by April 17th.

The Public Art Committee will review the entries and display photos in the art gallery at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center (LLC) in June 2017. A reception will be held on June 12, 2017 to recognize the winners.

### Rules for submittals:

There are three submittal requirements:

1. Photographers must submit an **online registration form** to the City of Lafayette Public Art Committee. To

*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 built an image of what our community really looks like through the eyes of those who live and work here.*

access the form, please go the City's website:  
[www.lovelafayette.org/photocontest](http://www.lovelafayette.org/photocontest)

2. Photographers must submit an **11x14 photographic print** taken on the March 20, 2017 Spring Equinox to the City of Lafayette Public Art Committee. Prints may be color or black and white, but may not be larger than 11x14. Prints smaller than 11x14 can be accepted, but must be mounted on 11x14 black mat board. Only one photo entry per person. The back of the photo must contain identifying information, including photographer's name, title of photo, email address and phone number. Prints should be submitted to:  
City of Lafayette Public Art Committee  
3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. #210  
Lafayette, CA 94549  
Attention: Juliet Hansen
3. Photographers must submit a **digital image** via email to Juliet Hansen, PAC Staff Liaison, via [JHansen@ci.lafayette.ca.us](mailto:JHansen@ci.lafayette.ca.us). The email should contain identifying information including photographer's name, title of photo, email address and phone number.

**Now, get out there and start clicking!**



# LAFAYETTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY



Did you ever wonder how our community got its name or when and how it was established? Every third grader who has gone through the Lafayette School District can tell you who Elam Brown is, but do many adults know who he was? What about Jennie Bickerstaff? Or Peter Thomson's anvil? What is Old Betsy?

One of the hidden treasures of our community is the Lafayette Historical Society, an organization charged with collecting, preserving and disseminating historical artifacts and information about Lafayette.

The Lafayette Historical Society is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. It began in 1967 as a committee of inter-

ested citizens and formally incorporated as a non-profit in 1972. The founders were interested in collecting and cataloguing historical materials related to Lafayette's development. This volunteer organization has continued to document the City's growth from a rural town to a modern suburb. In 1970, the first of many dedications of historic buildings and sites was made. These buildings were the former Pioneer Store, the Way Side Inn and the Geils Building adjacent to the Elam and Margaret Allen Brown Plaza Park in the center of town. As of 2009, the Historical Society has a home in the Lafayette Library and Learning Center (on the lower level on Golden Gate Way) where the history of Lafayette will continue to be preserved.

- Come in to look at historic photos of Lafayette.
- Find out how and when your neighborhood was established.

- Purchase books about early Lafayette and the Caldecott Tunnel.
- Read oral histories of long-time and/or notable residents on our web page and in transcript form at the History Room.
- Check out bound copies of the Lafayette Sun from the 1940s through the 1970s.
- Visit Old Betsy, Lafayette's 1920s Model TT fire truck.
- Visit the LHS display case on the main floor of the Library.

The History Room is open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 10-2. Visitors are always welcome. The LHS website ([www.lafayettehistory.org](http://www.lafayettehistory.org)) has information about upcoming programs as well as links to oral histories that chronicle the growth of our town. And the LHS is always looking for new members who will assist us in preserving the history of this community. Check it out!

## POLICE TO GET NEW, CENTRALLY-LOCATED DIGS

After more than 25 years of running public safety operations out of rented offices on the west end of town, the Lafayette police will soon have a new home. It came as a surprise and it wasn't by choice, but it looks like everything is going to work out OK.

It all started when the property owner of Desco Plaza, where Lafayette has rented its offices for decades, refused to renew the lease for the police operations. The landlord complained that the department's expanding fleet of police vehicles, motorcycles, emergency supply trailers, and all-terrain vehicles were using too many parking spaces.

He was right. While the many tenants in the office complex share parking, the police were using more than three times the number of spaces assigned to the department. The result was that the other tenants in the building were having difficulty finding a place to park, and so the landlord had no choice but to pull the plug.

Fortunately, a great option for a new police station just happened to be on the market and available, and the City jumped on it.

Once renovations are completed, the new police station will be located at 3471 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, just east of the Boswell's party supply store.

The city spent \$375,000 to acquire the lease agreement. Terms include a \$9,800

monthly rent for the first two years to be followed by annual increases; utilities paid by the city, and a \$50,000 credit to offset all improvements for the mostly gutted building. Importantly, the lease agreement includes a firm option for Lafayette to purchase the building at a later date for \$1.4 million.

Police Chief Eric Christensen says the new location is ideal. The spot will provide fast access to downtown and is near entrances to Highway 24. The location is also easily seen. "It's readily visible to the community so, unlike the current situation, people will know where their police station is. That's important to me," Christensen said.

The future station will include much-needed parking. Originally built to accommodate pool maintenance services, the building has a rear fenced parking lot the city may be able to expand to fit up to 30 cars. On-street parallel spaces in front of the building could also be converted into five spots that would bring the total up to 35.

The city is allocating \$1.443 million from unreserved general funds for the lease acquisition, rent and improvements, and has hired the Proto Architecture firm to draw up improvement plans. Construction is expected this spring, and a grand re-opening sometime in late summer.

## Smart Growth

*(continued from front page)*

And so it once again put those practices forward and center, with one policy saying that "the hillsides and ridgelines should appear essentially underdeveloped, to the maximum extent feasible," and another directing staff and policy makers to "continue to encourage multifamily residential uses downtown" in order to "accommodate a diversity of Lafayette citizens in terms of age and socio-economic background." Consistent with these aspirations, during the last five years Lafayette has issued building permits for six multifamily units in the downtown for each new home located in the single family neighborhoods.

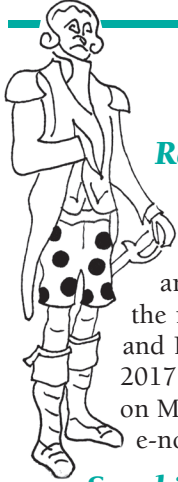
All of which is to say that, well, Lafayette's been at this smart growth thing for a long time now, almost fifty years in fact. This long term, constant, and consistent focus on core *smart growth* principles is, to some large extent, responsible for the Lafayette we experience today, with its green and untrammeled hills surrounding a bustling and vibrant downtown.



City of Lafayette  
3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. #210  
Lafayette, CA 94549

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## LAFAYETTE BRIEFS

### Roundabout Art

In January, the Public Art Committee considered potential artists for a public art piece in the new roundabout on Pleasant Hill Rd. at Olympic Blvd. The committee narrowed down its list to four artists, and each was asked to submit a conceptual proposal for art work in the roundabout. The four finalists are John Toki, Gale Wagner, hybycozo, and David Mudgett. The Committee will review the proposals on March 1, 2017, and make a final recommendation to the City Council at its meeting on March 27, 2017. Interested in following the process? You can sign up for e-notifications on the City's website [www.lovelafayette.org](http://www.lovelafayette.org).

### Speaking of Roundabouts

After receiving several studies and more than a year of consideration, the City Council decided that the best option for controlling traffic along Deer Hill Road between Brown Avenue and Pleasant Hill Road is to install two new roundabouts – one at the intersection of Brown and Deer Hill, and another up the hill at the entrance to the new housing development. Both will be the responsibility of the developer and be installed when it builds the project, which could occur as soon as 2018 or beyond.

### Peruvian Restaurant Headed for the Old Baja Fresh Space

If you were jonesing for a Taco Chilito at Baja Fresh, you'll have to head out of town because that space is being converted into a Peruvian restaurant to be called Barranco. It'll be an entirely new look for the building because the project will change the exterior finish from pink stucco to 5" strips of reclaimed redwood siding that are stained indigo blue. Orange awnings will add a nice contrast and string lights will cover the outdoor dining patio. Opening later this year.



### Lafayette Residents Offered Prime Parking Near BART!

In response to feedback that it is difficult to find parking near BART during the week, the city now reserves thirty five parking spaces under the freeway on Happy Valley Road for Lafayette residents. Enroll in the program today by applying for a free permit online. Note that residents must still pay the daily \$5 parking fee for their meter. This pilot project is scheduled to run for six months and consideration will be given to making it permanent if the spaces are fully occupied. Contact project planners Adam Foster at [afoster@lovelafayette.org](mailto:afoster@lovelafayette.org) or 925-299-3207 or Sarah Allen at [sallen@lovelafayette.org](mailto:sallen@lovelafayette.org) or 925-299-3208 if you have questions.

### Installation of Carport Solar Panels at the Lafayette BART Station

Starting Monday, January 23, BART began its project to install solar carports in its parking lots at the Lafayette BART station. The carports will have LED lighting on the underside for safety and will provide protection from the sun during the summer months. The solar power generated by the panels will help BART meet its sustainability goals as well as generating cost-savings.

## CITY DIRECTORY

For Council Members call: 284-1968

### Council Members

Mike Anderson	<b>Mayor</b>
Don Tatzin	<b>Vice Mayor</b>
Cameron Burks	<b>Council Member</b>
Mark Mitchell	<b>Council Member</b>
Ivor Samson	<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. Sr. Dir.	<b>299-3227</b>
Jennifer Wakeman,	
Financial Sr. Mgr.	<b>299-3213</b>
Joanne Robbins, City Clerk	<b>299-3210</b>
Tony Coe, City Engineer	<b>299-3203</b>
Niroop Srivatsa,	
Planning & Building Dir.	<b>299-3206</b>
Mike Moran, Public Works Dir.	<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. **299-3216**  
or **299-3215**

### Parks, Trails and Recreation 284-2232

Jonathan Katayanagi, 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:

**First Initial + Last Name @lovelafayette.org**

**Example: SFalk@lovelafayette.org**

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