

## A NEW HOME FOR THE LAFAYETTE POLICE DEPARTMENT

When the City learned in late 2016 that the police department was losing its lease at Desco Plaza, the situation could have quickly escalated into a logistical nightmare – and it’s true that the eviction kicked off a frantic search for space before the lease was up in June.

Catastrophe was averted, however, when after a mad scramble, we found an empty commercial building on the south side of Mt. Diablo Boulevard in the heart of downtown.

Located near freeway entrances and situated on Lafayette’s main drag, the low-slung structure between Lafayette Glass and Boswell’s Party Supplies was the perfect location and sized just right for a new police station.

With the administrative department staying put at Desco Plaza, the city could now focus on creating a new home for a police force that had done its best to work out of a cramped office park for more than two decades.

### **Abrupt Change**

The Lafayette Police Department began operating in Desco Plaza in 1991 when it moved there along with the city’s administrative staff.

Desco has served as home base for Lafayette’s 17 or so sworn officers and some civilian support staff, and it’s where police processed detainees, stored evidence and conducted general business.

It’s also where they parked their patrol cars, personal cars, motorcycles and other vehicles, including police trailers and parking enforcement vehicles. All of that equipment became too much for the landlord, who felt the police had outgrown their home.

With the department now using anywhere from 30 to 40 parking spots instead of the 10 non-reserved spaces it was entitled to under city parking standards, Desco Plaza’s operators concluded that the time had come to part ways.

### **Good Bones**

The flat-roofed rectangular building at the entrance to Lafayette’s east end once housed a pool supply business and a captive bird store before it was envisioned as the new police station.

It was vacant when the city struck up a deal at the end of 2016 to rent the space. The city agreed to pay \$375,000 for a

five-year renewable master lease agreement, and rent was set at \$9,800 per month with utilities paid by the tenant. Lafayette was also given an option to buy the building within 25 years for a sum of \$1.4 million.

Alan Cross, co-founder of San Francisco-based architecture firm PROTO inc., described the building at 3741 Mt. Diablo Boulevard as a “mid-century structure with nice volumes and structural expression.” The challenge, he said, was putting offices into the space.

Having worked on the Jennifer Russell Building at the Lafayette Community Center, Cross was no stranger to the city’s design needs. Leaving the structure’s minimalist exterior relatively unchanged, the architect designed a sleek yet durable interior that will withstand the wear and tear of daily police force use.

### **Finding a Balance**

Although Cross left the building’s facade largely intact, he made a subtle change to the bank of glass windows facing the street. Rather than remove the windows and erect a giant wall to envelop the building in privacy, Cross and his staff suggested a frosted film that would preserve the structure’s

transparent feel while providing much needed security.

Guided by the police’s department’s detailed plans, the architects created a highly functional yet subtly polished police station that perfectly suits the department’s needs.

There’s a reception area with a work space for volunteers. There are offices for police supervisors, an investigations office and an evidence room. There’s a Youth Services office, a CSI work area and a space for arrestee processing. And thanks to soon-to-be-installed parking stackers, there’s room for the department’s vehicles in the back parking lot.

Perhaps most importantly, the new police administration building will play a key role in the event of a disaster. With its state-of-the-art conference room, 40-foot communications tower and a phone server the city can use to set up a call center, the station will serve as a communications center should the need ever arise.

“The outside shell looks like it’s from the 1950s,” said Police Chief Eric Christensen, “but inside it’s a 21st century building without a doubt.”



Lafayette Police Department is now located at 3741 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

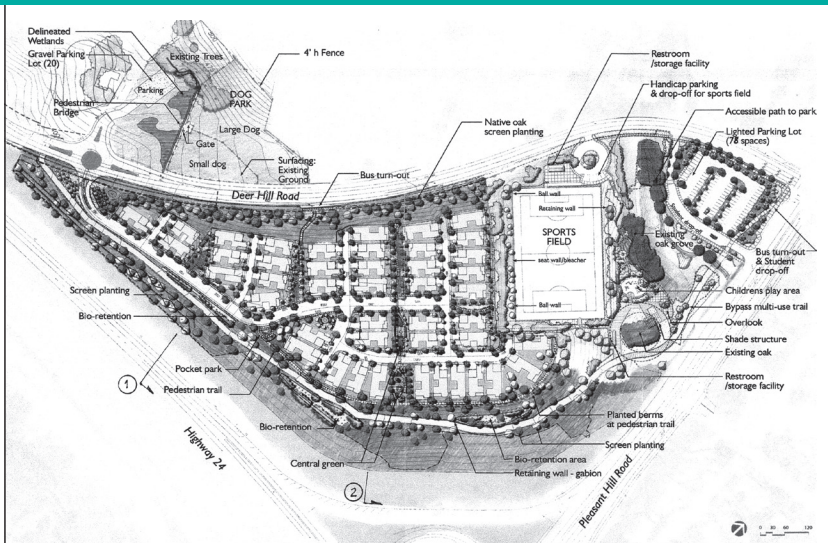
# CITY LOSES DEER HILL LAWSUIT, REFERENDUM ON JUNE BALLOT

On February 21st, the State Appeals Court issued an opinion which overturned an earlier trial court decision and ruled in favor of *Save Lafayette*. The group had sued Lafayette, stating that the City should have placed a referendum on the ballot that gives residents the option to vote on Ordinance #641 which, in part, amends the zoning for the *Homes at Deer Hill Project*, a 44-home subdivision and parkland development near Acalanes High School.

On March 7th, so as to comply with the court opinion, the City Council passed a resolution calling a special election on June 5, 2018. The yes-or-no question before voters will be:

*Shall the legislative actions in Ordinance #641 approving the Homes at Deer Hill Project, which include a rezone from Administrative/Professional Office (35 units/acre) to Single Family Residential District-20 (2 units/acre) and to Planned Unit Development to provide 44 single-family homes, and a Development Agreement to provide 11 acres, which include parklands, a sports field, a dog park, a tot-lot, and a multi-use trail, be adopted?*

Readers will recall that this is the same parcel and development plan for which Lafayette was also recently sued (unsuccessfully) by the SF Bay Area Renters Federation.



## LAFAYETE BRIEFS



### New Sculpture by Ben Trautman

It's been years in the making, but Lafayette's newest piece of public art is now in place behind KB Home's Town Center condominium project near the south BART station entrance. "Shadow," by Oakland artist Ben Trautman, is a massive 22-foot tall Corten steel sculpture inspired by a nearby oak tree. The imposing work represents the main stem and mass of the living oak. Lighting is also being

installed to illuminate Trautman's abstracted tree from within and it should give the piece a haunting presence at night. Trained as an architect, Trautman is no stranger to public art. His kinetic sculptures and other pieces can be viewed at the Bay Area Discovery Museum in Sausalito, the Randall Museum in San Francisco and the The Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, among other venues.

### Veteran's Monument

A granite memorial honoring the sacrifice of local service members is closer to becoming a reality. The Veteran's Monument proposed for the front of the Veterans Memorial Center Building will be installed in April, according to Lafayette War Veterans member Michael Gilson. Spurred by the passing of former Lafayette resident and Air Force Senior Airman Jonathan Vega Yelner, who lost his life in Afghanistan in 2008, the monument will "memorialize the sacrifice of service

members who have lost their lives since 9/11," Gilson said. The group has received \$32,000 towards its \$50,000 funding goal. The memorial is being financed entirely through donations and the efforts of the Memorial Center board. If you'd like to donate, please call 925-283-1153 for information on how to do so. A dedication ceremony is planned for 2 p.m. April 29 and is open to all.

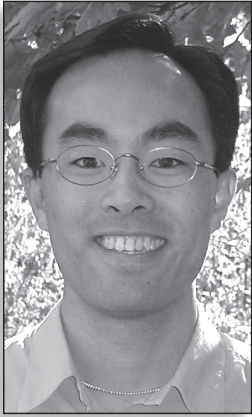
### How Broke is Lafayette?

Much attention has been given recently to California's pension crisis. A recent headline in the East Bay Times even posed the brazen question "How Broke Is Your California City?" In case you're wondering how Lafayette stacks up: we're not broke! Far from it, in fact. The city ended the 2016-17 fiscal year with a \$9.97 million general fund reserve, and is on target to once again meet its reserve goal of 60% of general fund annual revenues – meaning that, even if every cent of revenue dried up (very unlikely), the City could still operate, uninterrupted, for more than six months. In addition to putting away cash, the city keeps its costs low. Lafayette contracts for most services and does not offer pensions to the employees it does have. That's right: Lafayette is one of just a few California cities that does not participate in Cal PERS. As a result, the City has no unfunded pension obligation and no unfunded post-employment benefits. Instead, Lafayette offers its employees a healthy "defined contribution" retirement plan and pays the full amount each year to fund future medical benefits for retirees. So where does Lafayette spend the most? The police department, of course, which costs the city \$6 million, or 35 percent of its \$17 million annual budget.

**"We're not broke!"**



## Farewell to Tony Coe



A quarter century after joining the engineering department, City Engineer Tony Coe has bid farewell to Lafayette.

Hired in 1994 as an assistant engineer and rapidly promoted to the department's top job in just three years, Coe oversaw a multitude of projects including the Veterans Memorial Building, the Lafayette Library & Learning Center and the new Police Administration Building.

Calling it the "golden age of public works construction" in Lafayette,

Coe said the development of public buildings during the past 25 years was made possible by a City Council willing to make tough decisions and embrace change. "I was very fortunate to come to Lafayette at just the right time," he said.

Having "the best engineering staff in the county," also helped, Coe said.

While the UC Berkeley alum reveled in the high-profile marquee projects he managed during his time in Lafayette, it was the less-glamorous but challenging tasks such as the emergency repair of a failed storm drain on Mt. View Drive that he savored.

Recalling the giant 25-foot deep hole that formed in 2013 after a particularly big rain storm washed away the road and caused a culvert to collapse, Coe said his team raced to get the job done. Crews working around the clock completed the repair in just 13 days — right before Christmas.

"It was fast, the sort of thing CalTrans would do for some freeway repairs," he said.

Before coming to Lafayette, Coe was a traffic consultant at DKS Consultants. It was his first job after completing an engineering degree at Cal. His plans for retirement include traveling and spending more time with his parents.

## PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT REORGANIZES

When City Engineer Tony Coe announced he was retiring in February, conversations naturally began on how to fill the vacancy. Would the city recruit someone for the position or could there be a reorganization that might be more efficient for Lafayette?

After some discussion, the city decided to shake things up, toss the old playbook and join the mainstream of public works management. The city engineer position has been eliminated and the engineering and public works departments have merged, with Public Works Director **Mike Moran** assuming the role of manager.



It's a real change for Lafayette, which has been served by both a Public Works Department and an Engineering Department since the city's incorporation. But the shift makes sense. In addition to streamlining the departments, the move will save Lafayette about \$100,000 annually. And the city will be able to more effectively incorporate long-term maintenance concerns into project design — something that should also save some cash over the long run.

In addition to Moran's new role, senior engineer **Matt Luttrop** will now oversee design and construction along with supervising the city's engineering staffers. **Donna Feehan**, former Public Works management analyst, will now manage public works maintenance.

## Going GREEN in Lafayette

Lafayette is a city known for doing its part to go green. From installing electric vehicle charging stations to making it easier for residents to access renewable energy, Lafayette is committed to sustainability.

So it's no surprise that when the City Council adopted the Environmental Action Plan last fall, the Mayor asked if there was more residents could do to help reduce their environmental footprint.

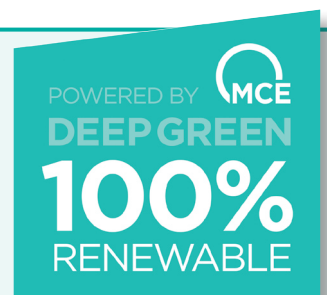
Always ready to find ways to be green, the Environmental Task Force came up with a list of five things we can do to lessen our impact on the environment.

1. **Opt-up to Marin Clean Energy's 100 percent renewable "Deep Green" option.** Since Lafayette joined MCE in 2016, more than 9,420 customers have enrolled in "Light Green" accounts, which provide 50-percent renewable power. By choosing 100 percent renewable power through the "Deep Green" option, you'd be doing even more to help the environment.

2. **Purchase or lease an electric vehicle.**
3. **Avoid idling** and reduce the amount of pollution your car is spewing into the environment.
4. **Reduce meat and dairy consumption and eat local foods** when possible.
5. **Consider replacing your air conditioner** with a more efficient model for our warm summer months. Turning your heater down a few degrees in the winter can also make a big difference.

For more information and tips, visit:

- [www.sustainablelafayette.org](http://www.sustainablelafayette.org)
- [www.mcecleanenergy.org](http://www.mcecleanenergy.org)
- go to the Environmental Task Force's page on the City's web site at [www.lovelafayette.org](http://www.lovelafayette.org).





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At the end of last year, the city launched a new online tool that lets residents participate in government from the comforts of their own home or smart phone. Lafayette Listens! is a digital forum that allows you to leave feedback on important topics and questions through polls, surveys and other interactive media.

Since Lafayette Listen's debut, there have been 559 site visitors, 225 subscribers and 91 participants who've given their valuable input. Through the forum, we have asked folks to let us know their thoughts about safety improvements on Reliez Valley Road. We asked for suggestions about what the city's goals should be in 2018, and we wanted to hear your views about whether the East Bay Municipal Utilities District should save the iconic water tower at the Lafayette Reservoir.

There's currently a plethora of topics awaiting your input. How should the city manage future housing development? Should Lafayette rent or own its city hall? What are your thoughts on public parking? What stores and restaurants would you like to see? Additionally, you can tell us what you think about the city's recreation program offerings, give us your thoughts on the new roundabout at Pleasant Hill Road and Olympic Boulevard and take a police department satisfaction survey. You can even tell us what other topic, questions or issues we should address in our Lafayette Listens! forum.

Go to [LafayetteListens.org](http://LafayetteListens.org) or click the Lafayette Listens! tab under Quick Links on the city's home page at [lovelafayette.org](http://lovelafayette.org)

### Sign Up for Nixle Alerts

A few years ago, Lafayette partnered with Nixle, a San Francisco-based tech company that runs a communications system used by police departments and other government agencies to relay alerts and messages. Here's how it works: Say police are looking for a suspect or an accident has forced the closure of a major intersection downtown. Using Nixle, police can activate your cell phone with a text or send an e-mail with emergency information. It also can play a vital role in relaying information during a major emergency. When out-of-control wildfires tore through Santa Rosa and Sonoma last fall, Nixle alerts were the most effective tool for warning people of approaching flames. About 9,000 individuals in Lafayette have currently signed up for Nixle. If you haven't done so yet, you should. You won't regret it when the emergency arrives. For more information, visit [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com).



### Update: Save Lafayette Trees Lawsuit

A group of residents seeking to stop the removal of 272 trees in Lafayette as part of PG&E's Community Pipeline Safety Initiative program are requesting a new trial after their lawsuit was recently struck down by a Contra Costa Superior Court judge. Save Lafayette Trees will ask a judge on March 22 to reconsider his dismissal of the legal challenge the group filed last year in a bid to halt the tree removals. PG&E wants to remove trees on public and private property it says pose safety hazards to gas pipelines running through Lafayette. In an agreement approved by the city council last spring, PG&E will replace 216 protected trees with 15-gallon specimens and pay the city a mitigation fee for each tree. No trees have been removed to date, according to a PG&E spokesman.

## CITY DIRECTORY

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

### Council Members

Don Tatzin	<b>Mayor</b>
Cameron Burks	<b>Vice Mayor</b>
Mike Anderson	<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. Srv. Dir.	<b>299-3227</b>
Jennifer Wakeman,	
Financial Srv. Mgr.	<b>299-3213</b>
Joanne Robbins, City Clerk	<b>299-3210</b>
Mike Moran, City Engineer	<b>299-3203</b>
Niroop Srivatsa,	
Planning & Building Dir.	<b>299-3206</b>
Donna Feehan, Public Works Mgr.	<b>299-3214</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**

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

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