

R E P O R T T O

L A F A Y E T T E
D E S I G N P R O J E C T

F R O M T H E

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT FOUNDATION
TALIESIN ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS
AARON G GREEN AIA ARCHITECT ASSOCIATED

O C T O B E R 1961

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FOREWORD

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation has been engaged by the unincorporated Community of Lafayette, California, through its citizen organization, "Lafayette Design Project", with the approval and support of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, to recommend ways and means of making the Community a more attractive area in which to live, work, and conduct business, primarily in respect to the business area, and with anticipation of future growth.

In conclusion, as a part of the activities of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, this written report is presented. During the period of twelve months preceding this report the Community has been studied through visual observation of its physical aspects, street and traffic patterns, shopping patterns, and general characteristics. Consultations have been had with State, Federal, and County officials and available statistics have been gathered and studied as relate to past, current and predicted population, traffic, highways, and public services, etc. Participation in meetings with local citizen's groups and conferences with individual citizens have been pursued in order to obtain various existing points of view related to community problems and affairs.

Successful solutions and activities of other communities have been studied and the problems of Lafayette compared.

This report is directed to the citizens of Lafayette. It is concerned with tangible aspects of prosaic problems but more interested in the intangible aesthetic of a more beautiful environment. It has been purposely kept free of a multitude of graphs and statistics often a major part of "reports".

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation's interest in pursuing this analysis stemmed from the realization that Lafayette's problems present an extreme but typical example of a small California community whose rapid population growth resulting from urban-decentralization has fostered unplanned and unfortunate development; the type of "strip" commercial area which gradually suffers economic attrition leading to stagnation, and general lowering of visual character and property values.

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation considers the Lafayette community a prime possibility for demonstration of the effectiveness of joint citizens' action, particularly due to the existence of the "Lafayette Design Project", representing 32 Improvement Associations, the Chamber of Commerce, the Lions and Kiwanis Service Clubs, Garden Clubs, and public spirited citizens at large, and actively dedicated to the project of improving the community.

Arnon J. Green

INTRODUCTION

Proper planning for communities must be based on long-range and creative thinking. Among the most difficult of all problems the planning Architect must face is that which necessitates orienting the citizenry of the community to an understanding of the advantages of such planning despite the difficulties of change-over from economic thinking based on day-to-day solution of problems, i.e., without proper planning, or worse, complete neglect of problems. Proper, long-range planning may appear costly to the interests of a few individual citizens in relation to land use, property values, and/or taxes. However this is in conformity with our established rules of society and government. Practically all progress must occur with this penalty in order to improve conditions for most people. The Business Community cannot afford to maintain its status-quo! If delayed, the solutions can only become more difficult and more expensive.

Several related conclusions are obvious:

1. The physical conditions manifest in Lafayette's problems are so severe that no small and merely expedient measures can be effective.
2. The community must arouse itself sufficiently to accomplish strong and major changes in order to establish a new and proper direction for future development.
3. The action of numbers of civic-minded citizens and forward looking merchants and commercial-property-owners must be cooperatively and tirelessly expended during a period of a few years in order to move this program towards its realistic and worthwhile objectives.

We are indicating to the Community what it can make of itself, and providing general directions. You must now develop the interest and the means to pursue the details. Numbers of other communities have demonstrated it can be done. A tremendous opportunity for public service presents itself as a very real challenge to all members of this community.

BACKGROUND ANALYSIS

POPULATION

Lafayette, California, an unincorporated residential community within the County of Contra Costa, with an approximate current population of 23,000 within postal area boundaries, has experienced rapid but unplanned growth along with other Bay Area communities. Although the majority of its residential area is composed of relatively expensive homes on spacious, well landscaped and well maintained properties,

BASIC PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

1. GENERAL

In analysis of basic planning concepts related to the Community of Lafayette, we are in near complete agreement with a report prepared by the Planning Department of Contra Costa County in May 1957. We recommend that the Community make continued use of this well-prepared and well-presented analysis. The work of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, particularly in respect to the "Central District"; is an extension into more detailed planning for visual and economic improvement of the business district, development of landscaped islands, street lighting, correction of traffic circulation, and development of off street parking.

As a warning for those who may find it difficult to think properly ahead in terms of a scale of planning sufficient to prepare for future needs, we wish to point out, with all due respect to the previously mentioned County Planning Report, that it contained this paragraph: "After the Freeway Bypass is completed, an entirely different situation will be apparent. No longer will rush hour traffic hinder the prosperity of the commercial establishments."

Shortly over four years since this report was issued, we find the traffic on Mt. Diablo Boulevard nearly equal, by official traffic check, its volume at the period of the 1957 report. Historically it has been extremely difficult to envision the full impact of increasing population, with traffic and other attendant problems, in fast-growing California communities. All around us are many examples of new freeways oversaturated with traffic, schools overcrowded while still new, and buildings for public and private use inadequate in space a few years after construction. Almost all official statistical predictions of population have been underestimated. This emphasizes the absolute necessity to prepare wisely, for even greater growth than is predicted, as a safe and wise economic investment to insure the future welfare of the community. Your community now suffers the results of unplanned development. This is the time to change the downhill direction with a move into the future.

2. STREETS AND HIGHWAYS

Although development of Freeway #24 has successfully obviated the problem of direct through-traffic with East and West origins and destinations, South to North and Southeast to Northwest origins and destinations, plus local traffic, have replaced the original problem with a current traffic index nearly equal that existing when the Freeway was constructed. (Approximately 18,000 cars per day on Mt. Diablo Boulevard.) Currently Mt. Diablo Boulevard, routed directly through the main business area of the city must accommodate this heavy volume of high speed traffic with resulting congestion, safety hazard, and disruption of convenient and pleasant, thereby profitable shopping. Many surveys and economic studies including a recent one by Contra Costa County Planning Department, have indicated such traffic to be a detriment to the business community through which it directly passes. So intent is the major proportion of the traffic to arrive at its destination during the process of commuting, that it allows few stops for purchases.

The State Division of Highways maintains a planned schedule of freeway construction which it is hoped will keep abreast of steadily increasing traffic volume, therefore this report does not concern its details. The future development of the freeway system, although generally skirting the community, will provide a traffic network serving from all directions and insuring, through this increased accessibility, continued growth of the area.

Contra Costa County Department of Public Works, realizing the problems of South to West traffic now carried through the city, has plans for "Olympic Boulevard", to extend from the East to Reliez Station Road thence along the existing railroad right-of-way to a joining with Moraga Boulevard, thence to Moraga Road. We recommend that the proposed Olympic Boulevard development be continued West past its planned Moraga Road intersection to an intersection with Mt. Diablo Boulevard near its westerly juncture with the freeway. In this manner a complete bypass for the remaining heavy through-traffic will relieve Mt. Diablo Boulevard. We also recommend, in the interest of long-range planning and economy, that a sufficient right-of-way (100 feet) be included in this proposed extension of Olympic Boulevard to provide for landscaped traffic islands and for controlled access thereby to future shopping area development between Olympic Boulevard and Mt. Diablo Boulevard. Although not specifically shown on our accompanying Master-Plan drawing, we herein recommend consideration of development of separate "service roads" for areas adjoining proposed Olympic Boulevard to the south, buffer zoning to be professional and administrative and/or multiple dwelling. Such service roads, with landscaped "screening" area between, should provide slow, safe traffic access to these areas plus on-street parking.

The present pattern of subsidiary streets in Lafayette allows for no casual or slow traffic circulation for shoppers in the area of commercial development. Proposed are minor changes in existing street patterns, to provide a feeder system to off-street parking plazas located immediately south of Mt. Diablo Boulevard stores. The parking plazas will provide a network for slow moving, circulating traffic auxiliary to Mt. Diablo Boulevard which should then become, as the principal shopping street, a limited-speed street with 15 to 20 MPH traffic.

3. RAPID TRANSIT

The development of an integrated rapid transit system in the Bay Area is necessary to its healthy economic and physical growth and we recommend that the community give full support to this program. Since the entire scope of the proposed Bay Area Rapid Transit System is being thoroughly publicized and presented to the public, this report will not deal with it in detail.

After study of Rapid Transit Authority proposals for routes immediately affecting the Community of Lafayette, we were opposed to a route under consideration which bisected the business area with a cross-over at Mt. Diablo Boulevard, thence to a combined routing with proposed Olympic Boulevard. Under recent consideration is a proposal which maintains the transit system north of the Freeway in the area of the Community of Lafayette and we recommend that the community support the adoption of this route.

The Rapid Transit System will bring adjoining cities and San Francisco within a few minutes of Lafayette. This will, along with freeway extensions, bring greater population and future growth to the area.

4. SCHOOLS

Existing plans of the School District apparently foresee accommodating increased school population in the next ten years primarily by additions to present schools, with development of only a few sites contemplated. While it appears that this planning may be adequate, various factors apt to influence growth such as industrial expansion in nearby communities, additional freeway construction, etc. could accelerate population increase in the Lafayette area beyond present predictions.

5. PARKS AND RECREATION

The greater proportion of residentially zoned area is low density development (over 60%). The high standard of this type of development in Lafayette, comprised of scenic rural sites, varying from large lots to estates, precludes serious need for neighborhood parks or playgrounds in such zoned areas. Many owners have swimming pools, tot play areas, tennis courts, etc. contained within their own property. However, within the areas of existing zoning for medium and high density use, there is an important need for planning recreational facilities such as playgrounds, and parks. School playgrounds are insufficient to satisfy this need and future additions to schools will further decrease recreational area.

Although the County Planning Department General Plan of 1957 proposed park and recreation areas, the areas are widely separated and in our opinion should be increased in number.

A growing understanding of the need for green areas in close proximity to or a part of individual housing developments is being sponsored nationally. Santa Clara County has recently published a booklet entitled "The Common Green" which contains informational material of importance in relation to this worthwhile idea. We recommend that zoning laws be adjusted to make inclusion of open green areas for visual and/or recreational purposes mandatory with the planning of each subdivision. We also recommend that additional open and landscaped area for visual and/or recreational purposes be made mandatory for multiple dwelling developments. (See paragraph on zoning.)

Too many potentially beautiful suburban communities are forfeiting their birthright of natural beauty and repose by allowing residential development to duplicate big city conditions; high density misuse of land quickly producing the type of environment from which the inhabitants originally wished to escape.

Further development of the Briones Park area should provide fine facilities for recreational activities such as hiking, camping, picnicing, etc. relatively close at hand. A particularly noteworthy potential park facility for the area would be the Lafayette Reservoir and watershed area when and if it becomes available for public

use. Stanford Research Institute report, "Potential Uses of Watershed Lands of the East Bay Municipal Utility District", contains the following statements concerning this watershed: "... it would be sound regional planning to preserve this area for recreational or open space purposes ... if, in the future, with the opening of the Briones Reservoir, the Lafayette Reservoir is no longer needed as a water supply, the entire area, including the reservoir, would make an ideal park area similar to Lake Temescal." We understand that further planning studies of this are currently being made.

The citizens of the Lafayette area should support acquisition of this acreage as a County park when the permitting conditions develop.

The Lafayette Community Center with 12 acres of property and preliminary construction plans is an endeavor well worthy of Community support. Although somewhat remote, this acreage might be considered for a dual future purpose; that of Community Center and Civic-Administrative Center, if and when the Community should become incorporated. Another idea proposed for this site would involve County purchase of the site plus adjoining property to total approximately 20 acres as a park-site within the Community. Portions of the park might then be token-leased to worthy community organizations for construction of buildings to serve various interests such as Senior Citizens' Center, Youth Center, Community Center, etc. Other communities are supporting this type of community-service planning.

Travel by auto makes it unnecessary to locate the town administrative center in the central business area, although our master plan drawing indicates a possible location at intersection of Moraga Road and the triangle Plaza. Several other sites may also be considered for this potential purpose, such as property adjoining the "Town Hall", or some areas north of Mt. Diablo Boulevard. However we recommend a site large enough to serve also as a park be given prime consideration.

6. ZONING

The 1957 General Planning Report of the County Planning Department contains an excellent analysis of zoning criteria for improving the current conditions in Lafayette. We agree with it in full but propose recommendations in more detail and more restrictive.

Of particular importance is the desirability of coalescing principal retailing shopping into a "Core Development" to take advantage of joint off-street parking facilities and to create for customers the convenience and various advantages of a typical new shopping center. In order to accomplish this aim, this central area should be restricted to occupancy of retail shops of a category sympathetic to such overall shopping use. The easterly and westerly areas of Mt. Diablo Boulevard should be restricted by zoning to other categories of commercial use.

Development of new retail shopping facilities should be encouraged in the area south of Mt. Diablo Boulevard, taking advantage of the possibility of freedom from traffic congestion, beautiful natural atmosphere of existing trees, and relaxed informal architectural character sympathetic to the character of the residential community

and in opposition to continued "strip" development. This area must however function as a cohesive unit with Mt. Diablo Boulevard and its shopping facilities. Multiple dwelling units should not be allowed in this central area.

We recommend that the westerly portion of Mt. Diablo Boulevard development be restricted to service facilities such as Restaurants, Bowling Alleys, Mortuaries, Nurseries, Veterinarians, and professional and administrative offices and studios such as accountants, architects, engineers, real estate offices, etc. These extremities of Mt. Diablo Boulevard are the "front door" entrances to the commercial area. If upgrading is to be accomplished, zoning restrictions should include for all new use permits or building permits a landscape clause, retaining a minimum of 15% of total site area as landscaped frontage in addition to requirements for off street parking.

We agree with the County Planning Department report that the westerly extremity of Mt. Diablo Boulevard, on the north side should encourage development of light manufacturing, if such property use is contingent upon restrictions such as mandatory landscape screened frontage, off street parking, architectural control, and types of industry limited to those which would be odor free, noise free, and otherwise unobjectionable to the Community. The south side of this area of Mt. Diablo Boulevard should be limited to commercial use such as automobile garages or sales, garden supplies, heavy hardware, heavy appliances, etc. All should be subject to similar landscape, architectural, and off street parking requirements. These types of businesses can be visual assets to the Community if properly designed and landscaped, but rarely are well done.

In the central area of Mt. Diablo Boulevard, existing shops on the north side of the street have little possibility to solve their off street parking problems, due to serious topography immediately to their rear. We thereby recommend that future building be discouraged in that area of Mt. Diablo Boulevard unless with sufficient off street parking, and that existing vacant properties be retained for parking whenever possible.

Future construction of all commercial buildings should be accompanied by off street parking on a minimum basis of one square foot per each square foot of gross building area. This is particularly and immediately important.

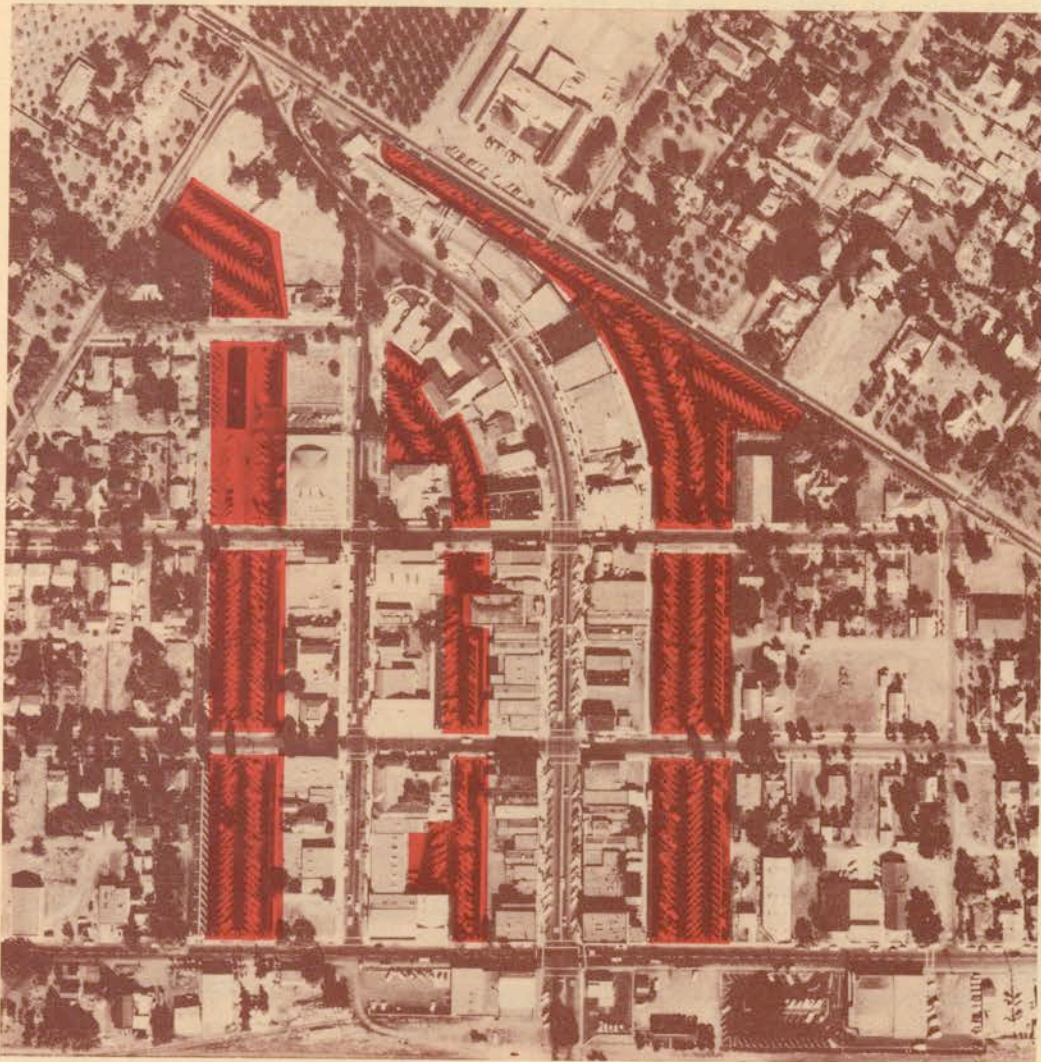
The Master Plan drawing of the proposed Central Business Area indicates Olympic Boulevard as the southern border of commercial development. We further recommend that several blocks adjoining Olympic Boulevard on the south be specifically zoned for Professional and Administrative Offices such as doctors, dentists, attorneys, etc. Other blocks adjoining Olympic Boulevard on the south should be zoned for multiple dwellings. This zoning will serve as buffer between Commercial and Residential areas. We do not believe however that a large quantity of multiple dwelling construction should be encouraged by this community if it desires to retain a high standard of informal suburban residential character. High density land use demands services whose cost is beyond added tax revenues, plus added problems, in a community of this kind.

If Olympic Boulevard may be made a limited access Boulevard, a landscape screened service road is recommended to serve the "buffer" development for access and parking. Landscape and off street parking limitations should also be placed on the Professional and Administrative development.

7. PARKING

Among the most critical problems of the Lafayette business area and of most other communities, is that of insufficient parking.

The off street parking area, "Parking Plazas", are not a new idea. Many communities in the Bay Area are finding it necessary to provide non-metered off street parking in order to survive in competition with the shopping centers. Admirably successful solutions to this problem have been found in other communities by making use of the relatively unused area behind existing shops. Use of these areas of lesser real



AERIAL VIEW SHOWING PARKING PLAZAS, LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA



PARKING PLAZAS: LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA (SUNDAY PHOTOGRAPH)

estate value to centrally serve the stores on each side of the block is most convenient for automobile access from the crossing side streets. Additional "entrances" to stores are gained on the parking access side and stores themselves are used as access by shoppers from parking areas to main shopping street. Many purposes are thereby served. In Lafayette another extremely important use can be made of such parking areas. The plazas if properly planned, may serve as the network of cross streets which Lafayette so seriously lacks in this area. This will permit autos to make a short trip around one block in lieu of dangerous and eventually illegal U turns on Mt. Diablo Boulevard. Additional advantages are provided such as: good access for delivery trucking and collection of refuse, and access to widespread areas by fire-fighting equipment. These are not to be considered rear or "back yard" areas, but should be treated importantly as entrances.

An excellent prototype for study of well planned development of off street parking facilities is the community of Los Altos, California. Shortly after the incorporation



REMODELING OF SHOP ENTRANCE ON PARKING PLAZA, LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA

of the city in 1953, the Los Altos Business and Property Owner's Association was formed which quickly turned its attention to off street parking. This resulted in the development of 1,008 parking stalls in a "parking plaza" which included within its design the planting of 247 new trees plus the incorporation of existing trees.

The typical business lot of 130 foot depth was developed to 100 feet generally. The remaining 30 feet of rear space was augmented by the existing 25 foot alley and the acquisition of two 50 foot lots adjoining, some of which contained older residential buildings and others vacant. This created "typical" blocks of parking approximately 155 x 300 feet per the existing grid system of the street pattern. The acquisition of 150 parcels of land was accomplished in slightly over one year with only one eminent domain suit.

The Los Altos Parking Plaza was financed through the 1913 Act direct lien assessments. The assessment district thereby was formed by merchants and property owners to whose economic benefit it was directed.



RETAIL SHOP ON PARKING PLAZA PLANNED AROUND EXISTING TREES, LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA

8. TREES

Probably the most important and at the same time easiest single method of contributing to the improved standard of Lafayette's business district has to do with a wholesale tree planting program. Every community considered notably beautiful and with a relaxed suburban atmosphere, develops such character with the help of many beautiful trees. Most of the residents of Lafayette have moved there seeking in the residential areas such relaxed suburban character. The business district should avail itself of the relatively easy opportunity afforded by trees to develop character in sympathy with the rest of the community. We do not propose merely occasional trees spotted in a line along the sidewalks of Mt. Diablo Boulevard. True, this should be done, and it will help considerably, however, we recommend that trees or large shrubs be planted in every available spot related to buildings, in setbacks in front of buildings, or in spaces behind buildings. This should originally be overdone, even if, after five or ten years, some trees may have to be removed. A serious effort of this kind will obtain remarkably successful results in a relatively short time.

Trees will provide pleasant color contrasts, pleasant shade, air purification, reduced temperatures, and some coverup and relief from unsightliness created by a confused jumble of telephone poles, wires, and signs, and general lack of architectural character. One big step towards a unified, pleasant appearance may thus be obtained. As previously stated, new construction should have mandatory landscaping requirements, including trees, wherever possible. In addition, new construction on sites containing existing trees should require permits to remove trees, and wherever possible buildings should be planned in such a manner as to leave existing trees.

The areas south of Mt. Diablo Boulevard, proposed as extended shopping area, and now containing residential and miscellaneous uses, have an asset which if utilized properly can make an important contribution to the beauty and character of the business community. Existing gardens, and, particularly, existing large trees, can help to provide a relaxed type of shopping facility such as other communities have obtained and such as this community needs. We cannot stress the importance of this direction too strongly.

EXAMPLE OF RETENTION OF EXISTING TREES IN PARKING AREA, LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA



EXAMPLE OF STREET LANDSCAPING IN RELATION TO SHOPS. BUILDINGS ON LEFT ARE A SUPER MARKET AND A LIQUOR STORE, LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA

MASTER PLAN FOR BUSINESS DISTRICT

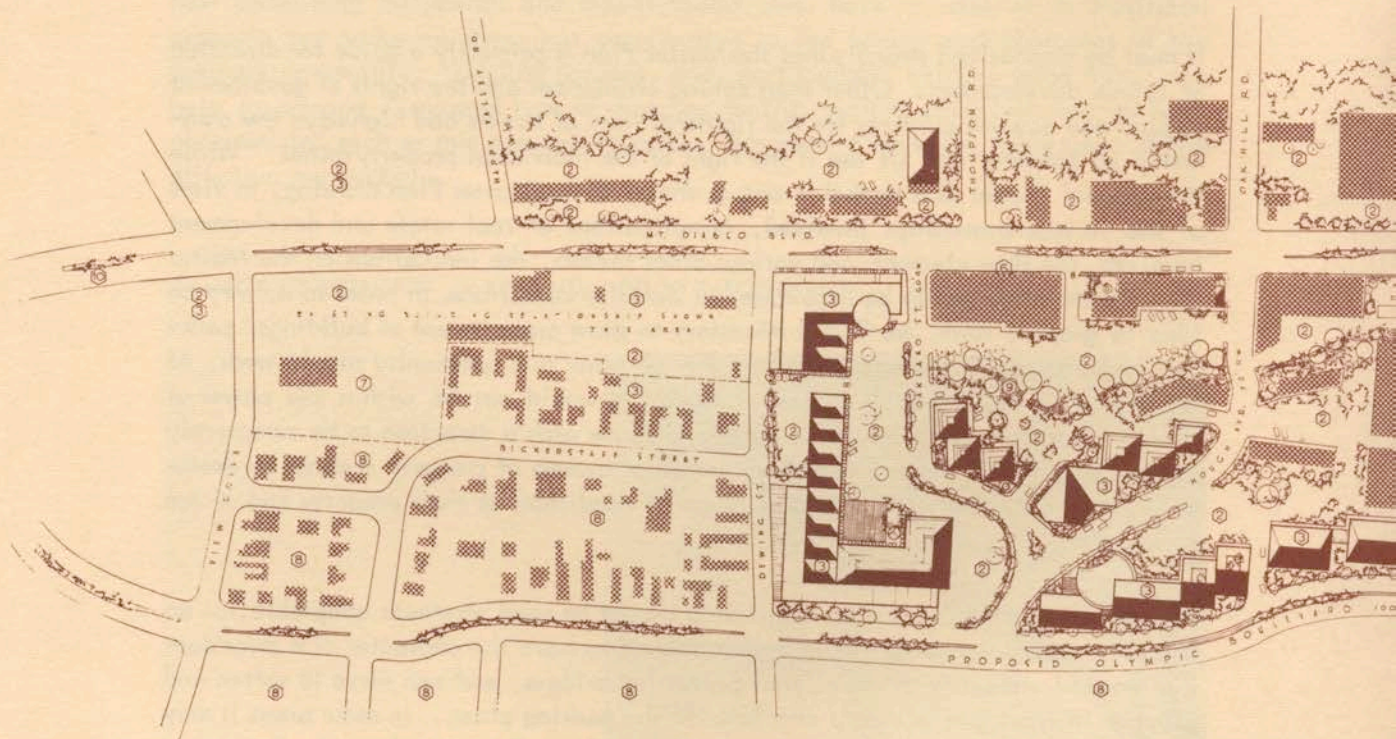
The master plan for the business area should be considered only one part of the overall plan for revitalization and improvement of this area of Lafayette. It concerns itself primarily with the central section of the business district which most needs a changed direction of development. Its primary importance is to indicate a desirable relationship of streets, traffic circulation, off street parking, and planned architectural relationships; to serve the potential buying public in a manner most convenient, and otherwise conducive to shopping.

It must be emphasized strongly that the Master Plan is primarily a guide for direction of future development. Other than zoning ordinances and the rights of government to plan and acquire property for the rights-of-way of streets and highways, the ownership of property and its use is the right of the individual property owner. While the general layout is a workable one as shown in the Master Plan drawing, in view of the various ownerships involved, complications of real estate and development involved, the time element, and various other factors, the indications on the Master Plan are certainly not to be considered as definite conditions. In order to convey an idea in graphic form, we find it necessary to show arrangement of buildings, parking areas, etc.; a character towards which we think this community should work. At the present time, unless laws are changed, it would not be within the power of County Government or any local group to cause such a direction to be completely carried out, except through voluntary action of owners of property created by desire to improve both the economic and physical conditions of their property and of the community.

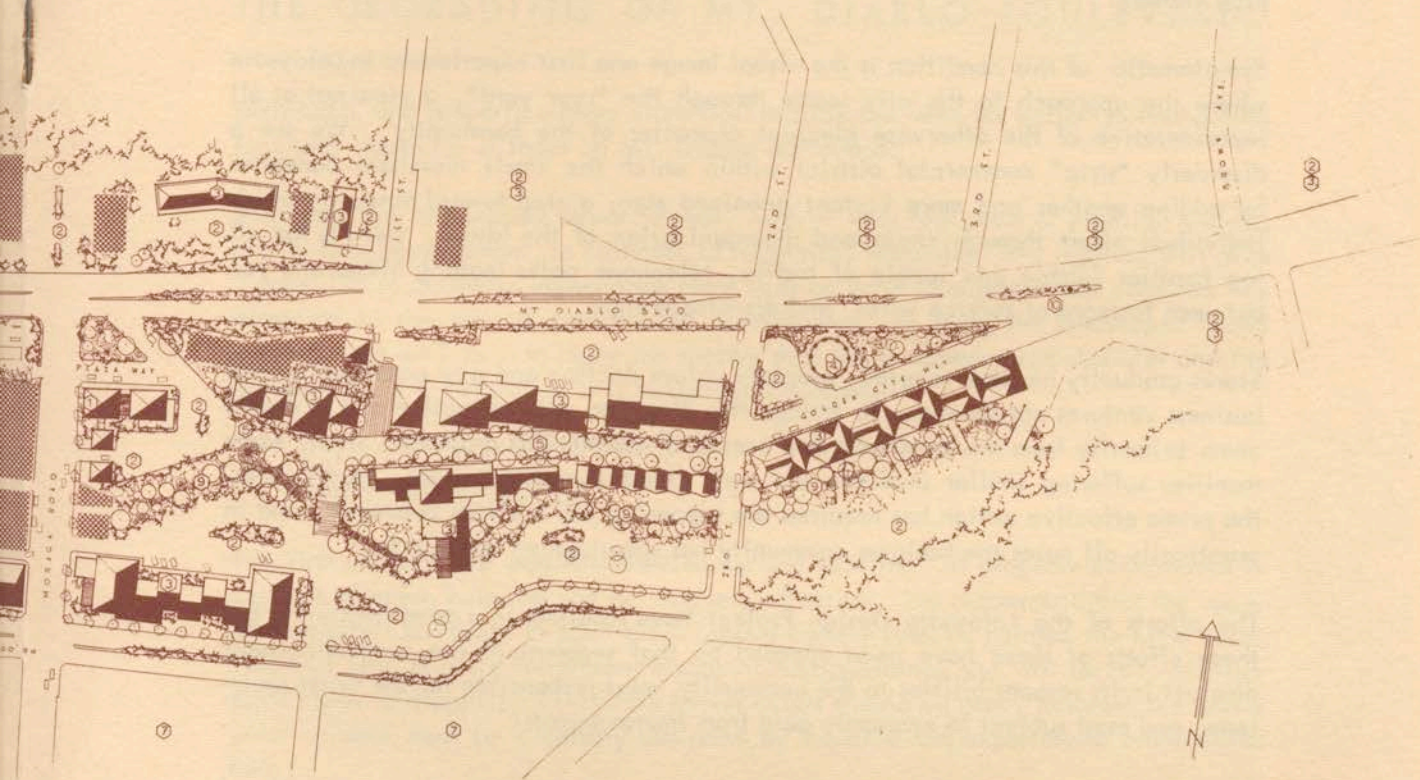
The natural drainage facility in this area should be used wherever adaptable, as an important visual asset. It should be landscaped to have the character of a meandering wooded stream with occasional pedestrian bridges, and can serve to soften and provide interest and pleasant character to the parking plaza. In some areas it may be necessary to consider closing over sections of this drainage channel. Engineering and other aspects of this proposed use of the drainage facility would have to be carefully worked out and coordinated with the Flood Control District. The plan as shown has not considered in detail the engineering aspects from the standpoint of flood control. This is however a general idea which can be made to work with proper consideration given to its various aspects.

The automobile is both a convenience and a deterrent to pleasant shopping. Proper planning will provide broad and free areas for shoppers to walk to and fro between shops in a relaxed fashion without concern for traffic hazards. This principle is recognized and demonstrated by well planned shopping centers in various suburban communities.

The proposed closing of a portion of Golden Gateway to automobile traffic offers an opportunity to develop a fine type of shopping arrangement. Traffic might be allowed during some hours for truck access, or a section of the drainage facility may be culverted to allow truck access from the south to shops on that side.



MASTER PLAN: CENTRAL BUSINESS AREA
LAFAYETTE DESIGN PROJECT
TALIESIN ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS, THE FRANK LL
AARON G. GREEN, A.I.A., ARCHITECT ASSOCIATED



LEGEND:

- CIVIC ADMINISTRATIVE (ALTERNATE LOCATION)
- OFFSTREET PARKING
- RETAIL SHOPPING FACILITY
- BANK & PARK
- PEDESTRIAN SHOPPING PLAZA
- ARCADE AT EXISTING BUILDING
- PROFESSIONAL & ADMINISTRATIVE
- MULTIPLE DWELLING
- LANDSCAPED DRAINAGE WAY
- ENTRANCE SIGN
- EXISTING BUILDINGS

SCALE 1"=100'-0"

LAFAYETTE, CALIFORNIA
 LOYD WRIGHT FOUNDATION

STATEMENT TO THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Business centers in large and small communities throughout the nation are experiencing similar troubles. Where they are not facing up to the challenge of today's fast changes they are paying for it. Traffic congestion, obsolete buildings, insufficient parking, general neglect of property, and a resulting uninviting street scene, have combined to drive shoppers away from town centers to the decentralized shopping centers.

Symptomatic of this condition is the visual image one first experiences in Lafayette where the approach to the city seems through the "rear yard", a view not at all representative of the otherwise pleasant character of the community. We see a disorderly "strip" commercial district within which the small merchant competes by adding another and more blatant neonized sign; a step toward obscurity of his individual effort through chaos and disorganization of the whole. Here is the all too familiar jumble and jungle of traffic, telephone poles leaning hither and yon between festoons of service wires and discordant signs.

Stores gradually become vacated, property values decline and new construction and business ventures are slowed. To change this direction requires action and it should come primarily from the merchants and owners of commercial property. Many communities suffering similar problems are well along towards solutions. In all cases, the prime effective action has required the support of the business community and in practically all cases the business community has spearheaded the action.

The efforts of the Lafayette Design Project have resulted in a good beginning but these efforts at times have been opposed by that segment of the community most direct in its responsibilities to the community, most responsible for the worst problems, and most subject to economic gain from improvements.

In order to best serve this community and their own interests, the merchants and property owners should develop an organization which will dedicate its activity and financial support to the program of self improvement necessary to establish a completely related program of revitalization. It should join in the efforts of the Lafayette Design Project and should become the most important supporting segment of the community. It should join in all areas of activity, whereby the interests of the entire community are considered, to the end that recriminations do not develop from an inactive group towards those actively devoting time and effort in sincere attempt to turn ideas into reality.

The need for serving in a manner fitting the standards of the community is a responsibility of persons who hold control of development through ownership of land, through real estate and construction activity, and through other business relationships. It is to be hoped that they will recognize the value to themselves and the entire community in working with the correlated, cooperative effort necessary to create of this business section a properly functioning, properly beautiful environment; to the extent that the citizens will be proud of it, and proud to participate in its use.

If carried out with sufficiently high standard, the development of this general plan can bring back the 60% of shopping now leaving Lafayette for surrounding communities and can attract shoppers from the other communities. Although a considerable expenditure of time, energy, and money will be required, increased business and increased property values will more than compensate.

THE UPGRADING OF MT. DIABLO BOULEVARD

Merchants and property owners alike must realize the need for action to change the face and character of shops on Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

Although the landscaped street islands, with a very few years of planting growth, and further development, as planned, of fountains, flagpoles, and lighting will give a great lift to aesthetic appearance more must be done to augment and continue this direction in the way of coordinated development. In fact, the landscaped island development will tend to make the shabby shop fronts appear even shabbier and the incongruity of the situation will become more apparent.

1. UNIFY WITH COLOR

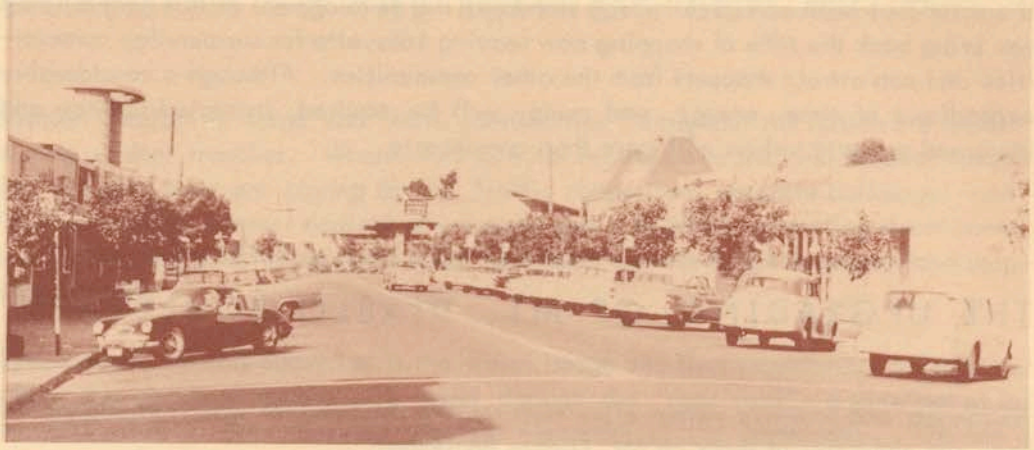
The first and simplest step will be cleanup and painting. If properly coordinated in design and color, painting can be uniquely effective. We recommend that the upper portion of all buildings in each block (above canopy line) be painted the same color. This will tend to unify the present disorganized appearance and will serve to identify each block to shoppers. Relatively strong colors should be used, however the entire color scheme must be carefully designed by capable and experienced professional help.

2. CURBS, GUTTERS AND SIDEWALKS

If a merchant will try wheeling an infant in a toddler's cart, while carrying parcels along an area of Mt. Diablo Boulevard with intermittent sidewalks, alternating with rough unpaved and littered areas, he will quickly realize the psychological resistance this poses for potential customers. Not only is it unpleasant and inconvenient but dangerous as well for normal pedestrian shopping. Sidewalks have not been considered luxury items in business districts for decades. They are an absolute necessity and should be immediately installed throughout the Lafayette business area.

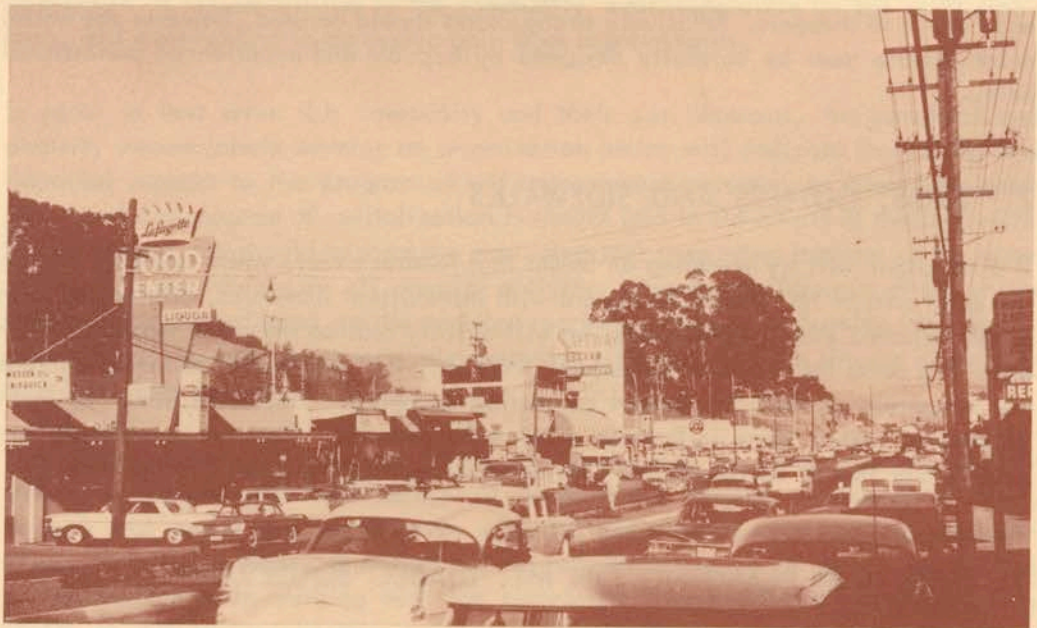
3. TREES AND PLANTING ON MT. DIABLO BOULEVARD

As discussed in another section of this report, the importance of planting trees on Mt. Diablo Boulevard to help remove the blighted character is a relatively simple and inexpensive but very effective measure. The natural pleasure obtained by the



TREE PLANTING ON MAIN BUSINESS STREET - NOTE LIMITED SIGNS AND OLDER BUILDINGS MERGED BY STREET TREES, LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA

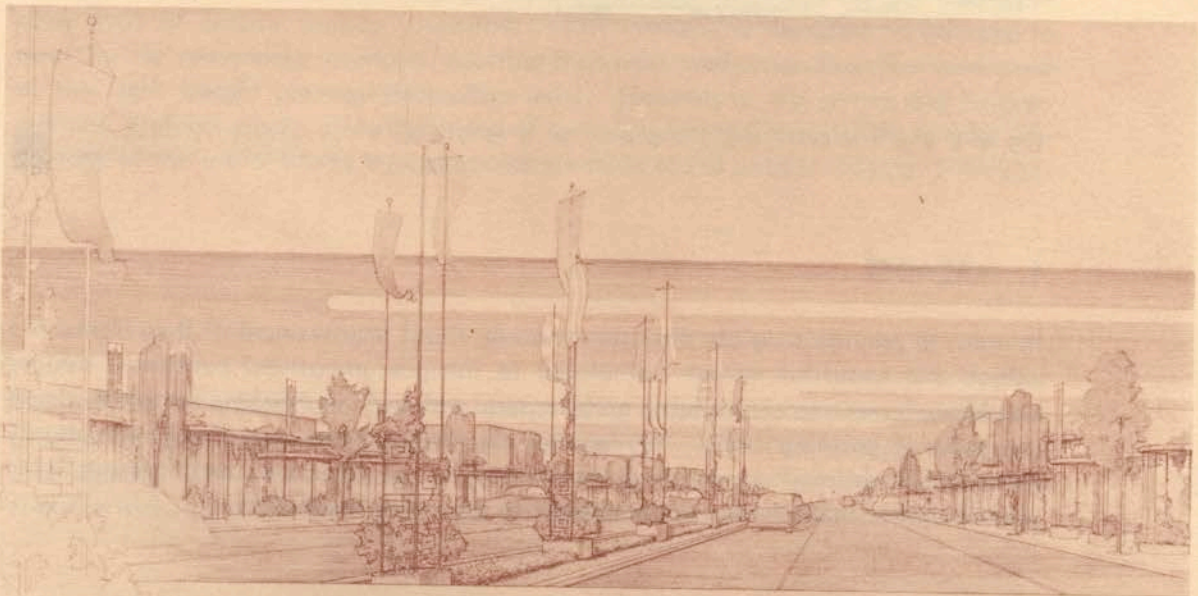
mottled shade, color, and beauty of trees is a well known experience. Wherever new sidewalks are installed trees should be planted in wells provided during construction. In existing sidewalks, wells should be constructed as soon as possible for tree planting. Trees growing in sidewalk wells are easier to maintain and healthier than those growing in plant containers. Normally for the cost of the container, the well can be created. Trees should not be all of one type but should be varied to help create informal character and interest by variety in shape, color, texture, and height. Trees will help obscure the raucous and unpleasant jumble of utility poles and wires and signs.



MT. DIABLO BOULEVARD 1961 NOTE THE LARGE GROUP OF TREES RIGHT OF CENTER SCHEDULED SOON TO BE REMOVED FOR "DEVELOPMENT"

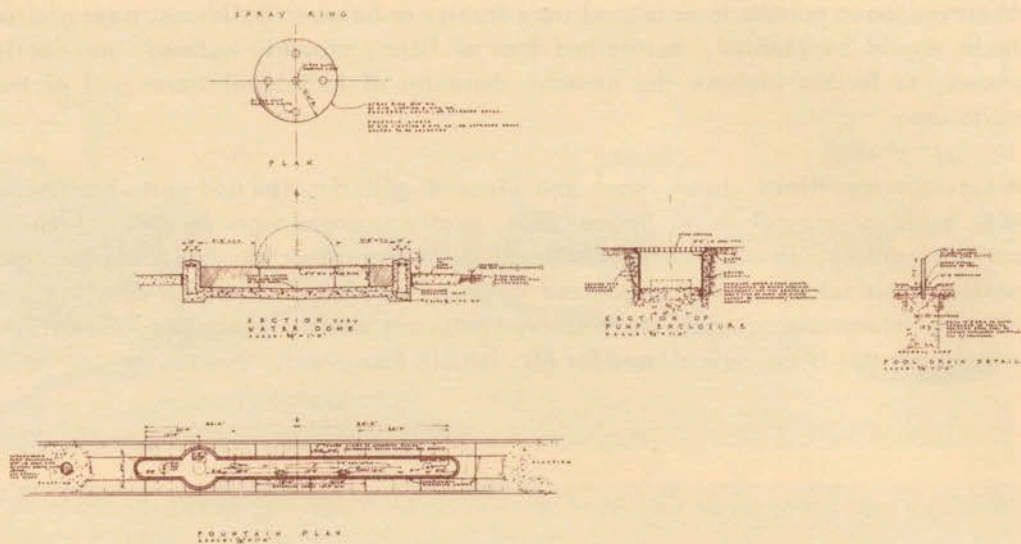
Wherever space permits in or around store fronts, or between buildings, trees and/or shrubs should be planted, maintained free of litter, properly watered, and neatly pruned, to further improve the general character of individual stores and of the entire area.

A spacious tree-lined street, cool and pleasant with dappled and patterned shade, with music of playful water in fountains, neatly arranged signs serving to identify but not confuse, slowly moving traffic of customers rather than speeding through-traffic, satisfaction of well organized color in buildings, attention creating and visually interesting arcades, vari-colored pennants waving to awaken interest from a distance; this is the new picture for Mt. Diablo Boulevard.



MAXIMUM DEVELOPMENT
STREET DEVELOPMENT FOR MT. DIABLO BOULEVARD
LAFAYETTE DESIGN PROJECT LAFAYETTE, CALIFORNIA
TALIEPIN ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS THE FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT FOUNDATION
CAROL O. BACHMANN ARCHITECT ASSOCIATED

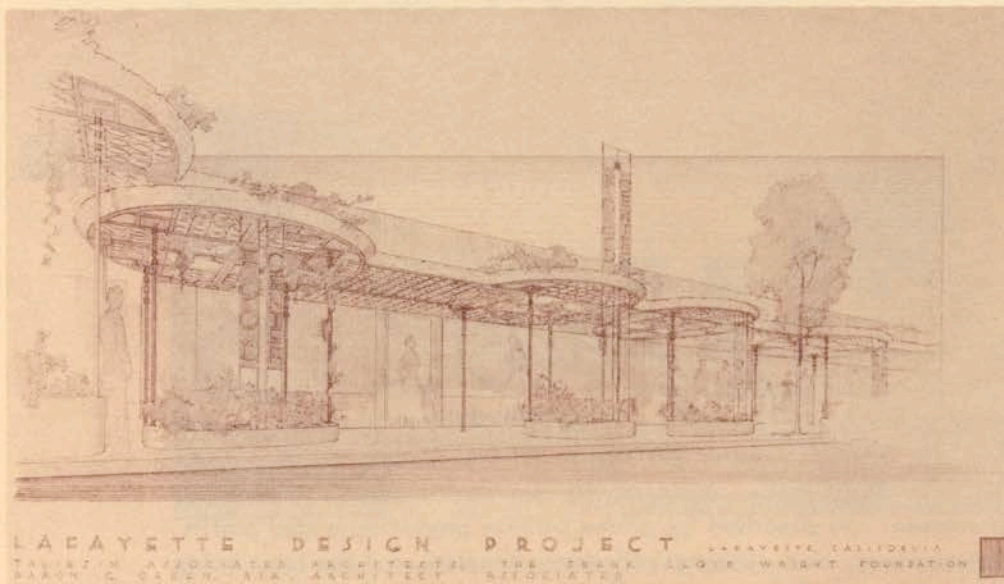
With the stimulation and interest created by this atmosphere and the convenience of landscaped off street parking areas closely adjoining shops, the citizens of Lafayette, potential customers all, will enjoy shopping in Lafayette. To join the existing merchant group will be attracted additional merchants, to serve the needs of a growing number of customers interested in purchasing wares of a higher standard than now exists, inasmuch as the average income per family is considerably higher in this area than other parts of the County. Business will then be increased to the extent that costs of improvement are absorbed by added volume producing added profits. Merchants, property owners, and citizens will share benefits, not the least being satisfaction of accomplishment.



FOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT
LAFAYETTE DESIGN PROJECT LAFAYETTE, CALIFORNIA
 TALIB S.H. ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS, THE FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT FOUNDATION
 SARAH C. GREEN AIA ARCHITECT ASSOCIATED

4. ARCADES

In order to provide tangible direction towards visual improvement of shop fronts in a unique and beautiful manner calculated to intrigue and attract customers, designs are shown for extremely variable architectural units which may be adapted to almost any type of building front. We believe the design ideas shown to be completely practicable while of a very high standard of visual character and interest; completely unique and having no counterpart in any other community.

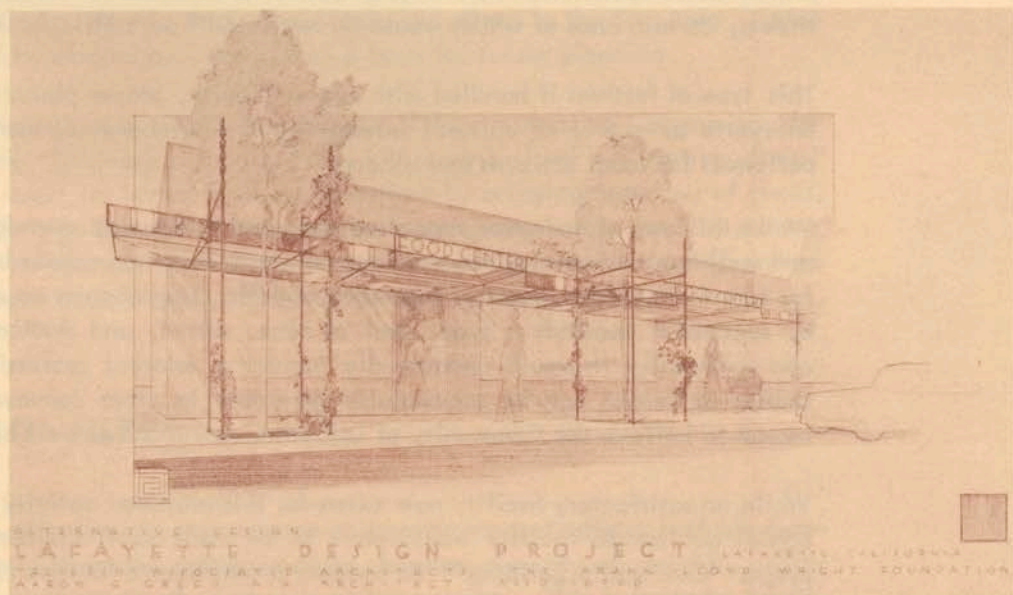


With the coordination and cooperation of the majority of shop owners, and/or property owners in any one block, the installation of such a sidewalk arcade as is shown, can create the unified but varied enhancement sufficient to overcome a major part of the existing visual blight. Interspersed with trees, vines, and shrubs and providing fascinating and changing geometric shadow-patterned walks, shopping will be an enhanced experience.

Shop entrances should be remodeled and display facilities improved and made more interesting. They should be designed in relationship to the arcade design wherever possible. Sub-standard and obsolete buildings should be either removed or completely remodelled.

If sufficient volume can be developed, through coordinated contracting, relatively reasonable construction costs may be obtained for installation of the pre-cast concrete type of arcade canopy illustrated. This element is designed to be used in quantity for reasonable economy resulting from mass production from the same mold of the light weight pre-cast decorative units. Elements of this system may be pre-cut and prefabricated, allowing speed of assembly and the opportunity to take advantage of the use of heavy equipment for erection of the units.

For individual efforts, the alternate design using an assembly of pipes and colorful plastic will be simple and comparatively economical. It will be unique, effective, and visually attractive. Many variations of color and design are possible with this flexible idea, and it incorporates signs integrated within the canopy.



ALTERNATIVE DESIGN
LAFAYETTE DESIGN PROJECT LAFAYETTE, CALIFORNIA
TASSEL & ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS AND ARNOLD LLOYD WRIGHT FOUNDATION
ARON & OWEN PAUL ARCHITECTS AND ASSOCIATES

FESTIVAL

The number of festivals sponsored by California communities forms a surprisingly large list. Only a few of these festivals however, are of important significance on a local or national level. Some festivals which are of such significance are the Bach Festival at Carmel, Monterey Jazz Festival, San Francisco International Film Festival, Ojai Music Festival.

We recommend that Lafayette consider establishing an annual festival, of a high standard of cultural significance and of unique nature. Such an endeavor could be of considerable importance to the community. It could add a great deal to the value of community pride, interesting activity for numerous citizens, and economic help to those in business. It should only be contemplated on a very high plane, as adding to the list of the many relatively unknown and unimportant festivals would be of no particular asset to the community.

In analyzing the possibilities for Lafayette regarding a unique type of festival, one community activity stands out as an important possibility. The "Straw Hat" group and the present "Dramateurs" have made Lafayette known in Little Theatre circles and this could be the nucleus around which an interesting and unique type of festival might develop. We herein recommend that consideration be given to establish a festival in which Little Theatre groups participate by presenting their best production in a manner similar to that sponsored by a film festival. This would interest, if done well, the best Little Theatre groups from various parts of the country, who would be invited to participate in the festival. It would be expected that communities having Little Theatre groups of excellent standard would support their expenses to participate in such a festival, hoping to win an award and thereby publicity for their own community. As the idea grew, it could be expanded into a festival which combined drama and other theatre arts such as dance. In this case, various types of dance groups; folk dance, square dance, modern dance, etc. would be presented in competition. Part of such activities could occur directly on the business streets, certain ones of which would be restricted from traffic for the occasion.

This type of festival if handled with proper dignity, proper planning, could identify Lafayette as a city of cultural interests and as well provide many fascinating experiences for local citizens and others.

While this type of endeavor cannot be expected to develop overnight as a successful and well known activity, it would appear worthwhile to include in long range plans for community improvement. Promotion and directing of such an endeavor if it is to be successful demands a great deal of time, effort, and dedication from citizens and eventually it would undoubtedly require a salaried professional director. If similar activities can be successfully sponsored in other communities, there is no reason to believe the Community of Lafayette cannot do as well or better.

While no satisfactory facility now exists for this proposed activity, temporary use of school auditorium facility would have to be made until the community supports a proper "Community Building". An outdoor amphitheatre facility might be developed with relatively low cost.

Obviously this ties in with the need for community facilities to serve cultural activities. The development of a community center facility could be eventually expanded to include proper functional needs of festival and other activities. Both open air amphitheatre and enclosed theatre should be considered.

S I G N S

There is a growing national awareness of the objectionable nature of excessive use of signs in our environment. Many states and cities are waging war on the desecration of natural scenery posed by signs with laws regulating their use.

The Lafayette business district is an appalling example of the overuse of signs. Not only do they present a most disorganized appearance but as well, the entire purpose of identification is often defeated because the multitude and size of the signs develops an overlapping in perspective wherein the signs cover each other from view.

Many progressive shopping centers have demonstrated that small neat signs can do a more satisfactory job of identification and contribution to the orderly character of the "whole". It is important of course to identify the shopping center itself. In the case of Lafayette, our recommended program will create of the business community the character of an inviting shopping center. Thereby the main point of identification is that of the overall city. Lafayette can create its own beautiful and unique identity by establishing a proper environment.

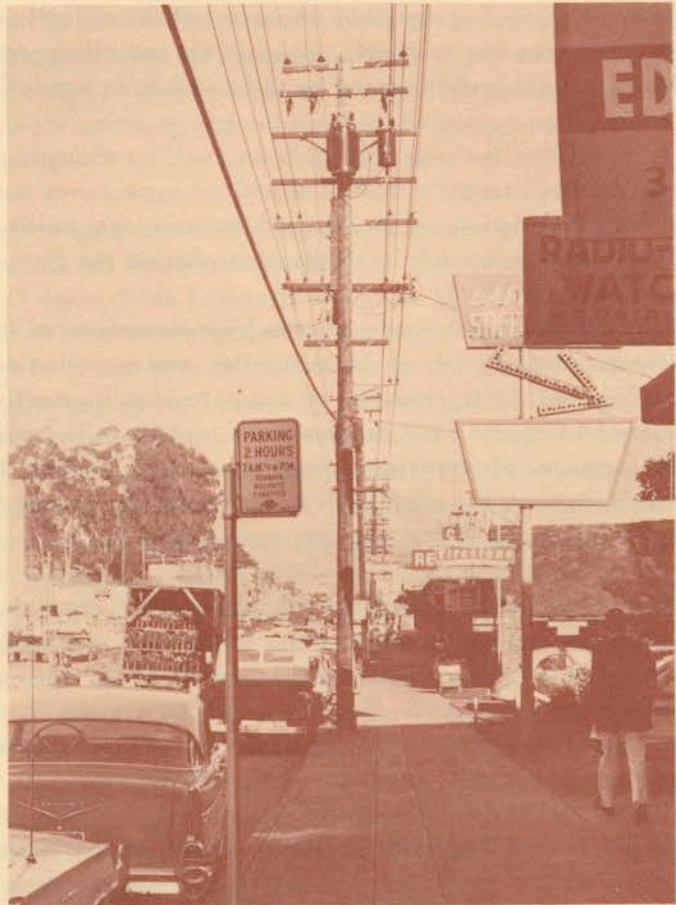
Many cities are successfully enhancing their character by sign ordinances. These ordinances usually regulate size, placement, and general use and when originally written usually have a clause allowing between three and five years for removal of non-conforming signs. Good sign ordinances are in existence in the communities of Carmel, Los Gatos, Menlo Park, Los Altos, and others in the Bay Area. These ordinances should be studied by Lafayette as a basis for future planning.

The California Roadside Council in its brochure, "More Attractive Communities for California", states "Ordinances such as those just described are not "anti-business" measures. They result in better business conditions by bringing order out of chaos, by reducing costly sign competition, by enhancing property values, and by making the district and the community an attractive, pleasant one in which to shop and do business. Many such ordinances have been promoted by business leaders."

P O L E S A N D W I R E S

Nothing is more offensive to the concept of a handsome and orderly business community in Lafayette than the existence of an abnormal quantity of unsightly utility poles and disorderly festoons of wires criss crossing streets. This is indeed a blight.

While the economic aspect of changing all overhead utility wiring to an underground installation is an extremely serious one which at best can be expected to require a number of years to overcome, it should not be considered impossible. Other communities faced with this problem have through perseverance and continued determination accomplished the objective. We emphatically recommend that every means be explored and pursued over whatever time is necessary to bury the offending utility wires as part of the overall direction towards the goal which is the subject of this report.



MT. DIABLO BOULEVARD 1961 - SIGNS NEGATE EACH OTHER

QUESTIONNAIRE

In February, 1961, this questionnaire, authored by the FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT FOUNDATION was distributed in Lafayette with over 560 returns. This can be considered a good statistical cross section of 10% of population based on average family of four. Percentage answers are indicated.

L A F A Y E T T E D E S I G N P R O J E C T
Q U E S T I O N N A I R E

1. How many years have you lived in Lafayette? (average 8.4 years)
2. Where is your place of business or employment located? (not tabulated)
3. How do you get to work? Car (88.2%) Bus (10.8%)
4. Do you expect to ride the rapid transit often when it is built? Yes (32.7%) No (67.3%)
5. How many persons are in your immediate household? Adults (average 2) Children (average 2.5)
6. In what area do you shop for your basic food? (Lafayette)
7. In what area do you shop for your basic clothing? Lafayette - 21.8% Elsewhere - 78.2%
8. In what area do you shop for basic appliances, hardware, etc. Lafayette - 33.3% Elsewhere - 66.7%
9. Do you find parking in Lafayette business area adequate? Yes (62.3%) No (37.7%)
10. Do you find the stock and service in the stores adequate? Yes (62.1%) No (37.9%)
11. Are you interested in community improvement? Yes (96%) No (4%)
12. What would you like the political future of Lafayette to be?
 (38.0%) Incorporate some day
 (3.3%) Eventually merge with Walnut Creek
 (50.7%) Remain unincorporated
 (8.0%) Merging with Orinda and Moraga
13. What do you think will be the political future of Lafayette?
 (62.5%) Incorporate some day
 (3.4%) Eventually merge with Walnut Creek
 (25.6%) Remain unincorporated
 (8.5%) Merging with Orinda and Moraga
14. Do you think that the existing poles in the Lafayette Business District are an eye-sore and should eventually be put out of sight underground? Yes (71.9%) No (28.1%)
15. Do you think there is a need for adequate curbs, gutters, and sidewalks in downtown Lafayette? Yes (77.9%) No (22.1%)
16. Some of your family's major leisure time interests are:

| | | | | |
|-------------|-------|----------------|-------|---------------|
| CULTURAL | (15%) | Ballet | (17%) | Painting |
| | (31%) | Drama | (8%) | Writing |
| | (11%) | Opera | (60%) | Travel |
| | (36%) | Musicals | (8%) | Acting |
| | (22%) | Art Exhibits | (19%) | Singing |
| | (16%) | Craft Exhibits | (53%) | Playing Music |
| | (53%) | Libraries | (77%) | Reading |
| SPECTATOR | (74%) | Football | (14%) | Track |
| SPORTS | (67%) | Baseball | (10%) | Horsereading |
| | (49%) | Basketball | (10%) | Road Racing |
| PARTICIPANT | (31%) | Golf | (33%) | Camping |
| SPORTS | (21%) | Tennis | (18%) | Riding |
| | (73%) | Swimming | (10%) | Flying |
| | (14%) | Yachting | (43%) | Fishing |
| | (23%) | Hunting | (5%) | Skin Diving |
| HOBBIES | (17%) | Woodworking | (70%) | Gardening |
| | (10%) | Ceramics | (30%) | Photography |
| | (18%) | Collecting | | |
| | | Stamps, etc. | | |
17. Would you like to have an annual community event, Festival, or show of some type to add interest to living in Lafayette? Moderately interested - especially for children.
18. What do you like best about living in Lafayette?

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Rural atmosphere | (Random) |
| Good people | (selection:) |
| Quiet, but accessible to big city | (Typical comment) |
19. What do you like least about Lafayette?

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Slipshod looking business center. | (Random) |
| Poor walking areas. | (selection:) |
| Roads beside center strips are poor. | (Typical comment) |

WAYS AND MEANS

INCORPORATION

No single condition more hampers the carrying out of the various proposals recommended in this report, primarily in relation to the business district, than the lack of local administrative and legislative entity, such as incorporation provides.

In rapidly growing communities of this type, the problems attendant upon population growth and greater density of development spawn the need, in fact the demand, by the community for services and facilities beyond the intended scope of County government.

Notwithstanding the fine cooperation and understanding the community has established with the County Board of Supervisors and its various departments, many problems of the Lafayette community require legislation of a purely local jurisdiction rather than County-wide legislation. Therefore the issue of incorporation becomes one of time and extent rather than whether or not incorporate.

Since a fairly recent attempt to incorporate has not met with sufficient voter support, it appears that the community is not yet willing to assume the inherent responsibilities. If incorporation were to be soon again proposed to the voters, the success of the measure might be doubtful unless an area of restricted size be involved, primarily the commercial heart which will benefit most directly by incorporation.

In lieu of and until incorporation, other measures should be pursued by the community which may serve to effectuate solutions to problems.

In this regard, we suggest that the community help to recommend and sponsor legislation in cooperation with County officials which may expand the County's legal authority by allowing specific "planning areas" to be subject to legislation suited to their local needs, regarding zoning, signs, architectural control, etc.

There is growing national awareness of the effectiveness of "metropolitan" systems of government wherein the areas most efficiently and economically subject to overall wide-area administration, i.e. County government, are delineated, with local administration in charge of its most pertinent and efficient areas of administration. This leads to thought regarding need for a more limited type of incorporation than is now possible by California Law but which exists in most eastern areas, wherein the "township" controls purely local administration and county administration is as well active. This type of government, if it were possible, might fit Lafayette's needs for a number of years until future growth interfered with effectiveness of the system.

Areas of progress possible under existing laws include the following:

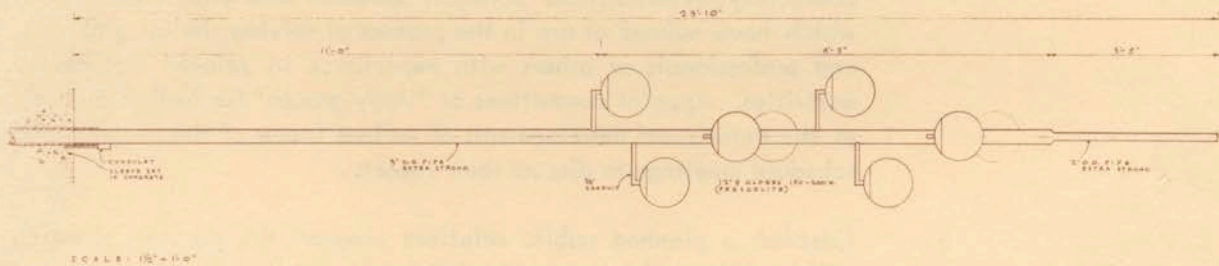
OFF STREET PARKING

Existing maintenance district may be extended to include jurisdiction over creation

and maintenance of parking areas as a "service area" function. Requirements for off street parking with new construction is possible under County jurisdiction if statutes are County-wide. The County Planning Department is currently working towards improving standards in this respect.

STREET LIGHTING

Under recently enacted state legislation, initiated by your enlightened County officials, it is now possible to finance capital improvement costs by bond issue. This will allow, with low annual assessment, the early installation of street lighting as part of the existing Maintenance District. The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation has provided basic designs for decorative lighting for planted islands and intersections. This work should be installed through procedures outlined above.



INTERSECTION LIGHTING - MT. DIABLO BLVD.
LAFAYETTE DESIGN PROJECT LAFAYETTE, CALIFORNIA
 TALIESIN ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS, THE FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT FOUNDATION
 AARON G. GREEN A.I.A. ARCHITECT ASSOCIATED

The Lafayette Design Project organization is unique as a citizens' organization with its widespread representation of practically all segments of the community. It seems well equipped and organized, with definite accomplishments behind it such as development of the Plaza Park. Accomplishments following the advice of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation were:

1. Establishing Lafayette Design Project as a non-profit Corporation.
2. In cooperation with the County, sponsorship of landscape design of the Mt. Diablo center islands.
3. Spearheaded the establishment of a maintenance district for maintaining the landscaped islands, and providing decorative and functional street lighting for the islands.
4. Sponsorship of community meetings related to community improvement.

We believe it proper and feasible that the Lafayette Design Project expand its scope of activity and membership to lead in accomplishing the goals recommended in this report. The most important next accomplishment of the Lafayette Design Project should be to promote the interest of the property holders and merchants in joining the Lafayette Design Group as an active participating arm. It should in every way cooperate with this important segment of the community, to the point that the merchants and property owners association is reassured that their aims and those of the Lafayette Design Project have a mutual goal.

Following are our recommendations for specific activities to be programmed by Lafayette Design Project over the period of years necessary for the desired accomplishment.

1. Develop and maintain a vigorous campaign for extended membership.
2. Develop a program of meetings for discussion of various aspects of community revitalization. Schedule speakers from other communities which have solved or are in the process of solving similar problems, and professionals or others with experience in related community activities. Appoint committees or "study groups" for further analysis of the details and developments of various facets of the program and schedule meetings to discuss their reports.
3. Establish a planned public relations program the purpose of which will be to keep the community informed as well as to solicit interest and support. A most important aspect is to maintain sufficient and interesting activity to provide the local newspaper with news items whenever possible. The community is fortunate to have an outstanding local newspaper, progressive, cooperative, and interested in civic development. The Lafayette Design Project should also enlist the aid of a professional in public relations work whose residence is in the community.

As part of the public relations program, it is suggested that a "film strip" presentation be arranged which can be shown to meetings of all community groups and schools, etc. This can be a combination of color slides synchronized with taped commentary. If well done, this type of presentation can be a most effective aid.

4. Join with the Chamber of Commerce and the Real Estate Group in publicizing to the "outside" business world the accomplishments of Lafayette towards revitalizing its business area. This should be directed towards attracting the more exclusive type of specialty shop and other businesses of very high standard.
5. The local schools are a very important way of disseminating information concerning civic development. It would be wise to encourage school officials to have programs which will educate the students and enlist their aid towards a program of civic improvement. The children thereby may help to enlist the aid and support of the adults in their families.

6. Promote the establishment of "tree planting week" as part of the organized Bay Area Activity now well established, and encourage all groups such as service clubs, garden clubs, school groups, etc. to participate as well as individual citizens. Similarly promote and establish cleanup and paint-up campaigns and maintain an anti-litter campaign.
7. Have an annual ceremony of recognition and award to several business firms having done most to help the program of civic revitalization, judging by specially appointed committee. Similarly develop award ceremonies related to tree-planting week, and cleanup week.

Appreciation is extended to the Community of Los Altos, California and its Consulting City Planner, Lawrence Livingston, Jr., for its example; to the California Roadside Council and Mrs. Ralph Reynolds for information contributed; to William Penn Mott for original encouragement to the community; to Mr. and Mrs. Murray Lehr for generosity, and to many others consulted for information and statistics.

