

AFTER 20 YEARS, THE TIME HAS COME FOR LAFAYETTE'S GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Like most cities in the Bay Area and across the country, Lafayette has experienced significant changes over the last 20 years. Lafayette's downtown has been revitalized with new buildings, businesses, restaurants, and, of course, traffic. The City has grown by more than 400 units to house new families – and more housing, per state law, has recently been approved for construction. And there is no question that the City will continue to grow and evolve. The question is, how and where? It has been 20 years since Lafayette completed its last General Plan and now it's time for a new one, which can help answer those exact questions.

The General Plan visualizes how the community would like to develop over time and specifies areas for various land uses, transportation improvements, new parks and open spaces, and other public infrastructure. It reflects the community's priorities regarding development and articulates a desired balance between Lafayette's social, environmental, and economic values. It guides development within the city limits and is used as a basis for land-use decisions by the Planning Commission and the City Council.

Every jurisdiction in California must have a General Plan, a local government's long-term framework or "constitution" for future growth and development. Some version of a General or Master Plan has been required for each city by California State Law since the 1920's, but the document became more important in 1971 when the State Legislature established several changes to the state planning and zoning laws making the General Plan *the* document to which all land-use regulations and approvals must conform.

Think of a city's General Plan as a kind of a yardstick for how each action does or does not meet the community's future goals. While each city and county is required to adopt a General Plan for the physical development of its jurisdiction, it is also something that we want to do to guide us into the future. Stated another way: if we set out on a road trip without a map, we probably won't end up where we intended to go.

Deconstructing a General Plan

There are four defining features of a General Plan. The first is that a General Plan provides general policy guidance that will be used to direct future land-use and resource decisions. Next, it is a comprehensive overview, covering broad and interrelated topics, such as land-use, housing, economic development, infra-

structure, public safety, recreation, natural resources, and much more. This is followed by an internally consistent approach to all elements of the Plan. While portions of the General Plan may have competing goals (e.g., wanting more housing and more open space), all elements within a General Plan have equal status; and in the event of a conflict between elements, one element cannot overrule another. And finally, a General Plan must be forward-thinking and provide guidance on reaching a future envisioned 20 or

more years down the road. To achieve the vision, a comprehensive plan includes goals, policies, and actions that address both immediate and long-term needs.

A General Plan is comprised of "elements," or chapters, seven of which are mandatory: land-use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, safety, and noise. Communities may include other elements that address issues of local concern, such as economic vitality, community character, or urban design. Each element is required to include goals, policies, and programs that translate community values into actionable items. Think of the General Plan as a cookbook where the goals are the recipes, the policies are the ingredients, and the programs are the instructions to follow to achieve that perfect loaf of bread.

Continuing that analogy, as part of their project review, planning staff must make sure that any proposed development projects follow the recipes to ensure that they are aligned with the General Plan goals, policies, and programs.

Visit www.PlanLafayette.org to learn how to contribute to Lafayette's future. This website is the community's resource for up-to-date information, including upcoming meetings, answers to frequently asked questions, background information, and much more.



It Takes a Village: Let's Update the General Plan Together

And just who is updating Lafayette's General Plan? It's not the State of California, it's all of us – that means you! Lafayette's General Plan process is guided by the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), a group of 11 of your friends and neighbors who have volunteered to serve the Lafayette community by helping to shape our new General Plan. You can check out a roster of just who these dedicated folks are on www.PlanLafayette.org. We bet you probably know one or more of the group members.

While the GPAC was established to do the hard work of formulating the content of the General Plan document, community input will be at the center of the process and will inform the recommendations that the GPAC puts forward to the Planning Commission and City Council. The GPAC will be seeking thoughts and ideas through public workshops and engagement activities to



ensure the General Plan's goals, policies, and programs are reflective of Lafayette's values. The GPAC and the public – that means you – will be reviewing, discussing, and drafting all elements of the General Plan over the next four years. We will need long-term public involvement to ensure the plan captures community values while also meeting the city's legal obligations.

The City Council directed the GPAC to explore updating the City's mission statement to align with current Lafayette community values. Municipal mission statements are often also accompanied by a vision statement. Mission and vision statements provide long-term guidance for city governance and elected officials. The GPAC will be soliciting community input to draft a mission statement for approval by the City Council. Visit www.PlanLafayette.org to make your voice heard.

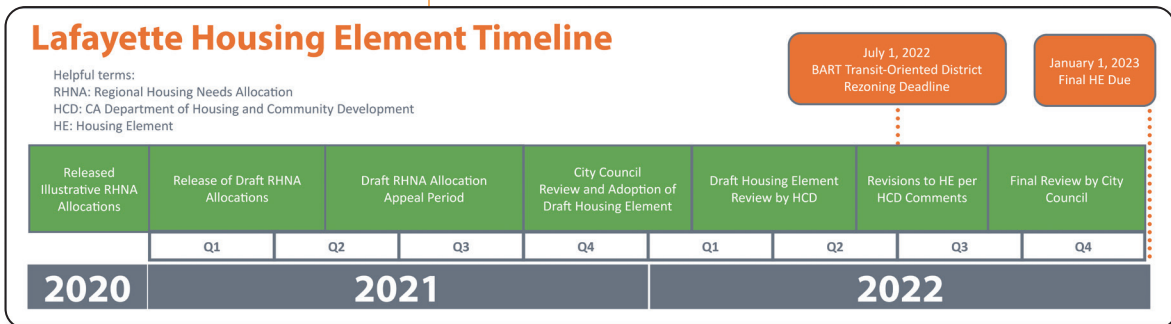
Get Involved: What's Your Vision for the Future of Lafayette?

There are a variety of ways to get involved to help shape the General Plan. To help everyone envision the future, Lafayette's Planning Department will be holding community events, walking tours, workshops, interviews, and conducting surveys that will allow for transparency and participation by all community members and groups. Most of these, of course, will be virtual in keeping with County health orders, but as soon as we are able, in-person events will take place too.

Here's a few more ways you can get involved: Talk to your neighbors! A wide range of community members will need to get involved to make sure the plan reflects the many experiences and values that exist in Lafayette, which means the City and GPAC need your help in spreading awareness of this opportunity. Also, don't forget to log on to EngagementHQ, the online platform community members are using to participate in surveys, mapping exercises, quizzes, and other activities. Join the dialogue today to start brainstorming with your community. EngagementHQ can be accessed through www.PlanLafayette.org.

And make sure you attend General Plan Advisory Committee meetings and watch past meetings on the City of Lafayette YouTube Channel, at <http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>.

These meetings provide a substantial amount of information and background on the elements and are an opportunity to share your thoughts and priorities with the committee.



Each individual voice helps form a collective vision for Lafayette's future and your participation is essential to creating a General Plan that represents the community's values and meets the City's goals. The public engagement process – which takes place long before public hearings are held – will help GPAC better understand the community's values. The City is looking to you to answer the question, "What is our vision for the future of Lafayette?"

Making Lafayette More Inclusive

Lafayette, since its incorporation in 1968, has always sought to be a fair, open-minded, and accepting city. And in large part we have kept to those values. But as we have seen across the nation in recent years, systemic racism still exists in our country and in our community. In an effort to better understand the nature and the extent of systemic racism in Lafayette, the City launched last year an Equity and Inclusion Task Force. The Task Force, led by the Mayor and Vice Mayor, has held several meetings, including two town halls, that were very well attended.

This is a difficult subject for us to face, and some in Lafayette do not think that implicit bias and racism exists in our town. But they do. If one simply took a moment to walk in another's shoes, and to experience what some of our residents experience, as detailed in a few of the stories they have told during our town halls, it's very clear that we can and should do much better here in Lafayette.

Lafayette has a multi-pronged approach to addressing systemic racism. First, our schools are reaching out to parents and students to address the issue. The Chamber of Commerce

has made Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion a top priority as well. And as far as the City of Lafayette goes, the Council's Public Safety Task Force, which addresses policing, will monitor progress on recommendations regarding training and reporting in the police department. The City is also participating in a countywide effort to improve behavioral health services. City staff has completed implicit bias training, and soon so will City Council and Commissioners. And finally, our Equity and Inclusion Task Force aims to address broader issues of racism in our community.

The City is also working with the Chamber of Commerce to develop a system that encourages all of our businesses to foster a stronger message of inclusion throughout Lafayette.

It is our hope that anyone who lives or even just visits Lafayette has the same impression that most of us have: we are a strong and caring community, one that accepts and appreciates all of the different people we encounter, and that we treat everyone with the same dignity and respect that all of us deserve. Help make Lafayette more inclusive.



Equity and Inclusion in the General Plan

In 2020, the City Council established the Equity and Inclusion Task Force and held several public meetings on the topic. One public session was a Town Hall/Listening Session where community members contributed their ideas on how Lafayette may implement best practices to ensure the City is welcoming and accessible to people of all backgrounds. The Town Hall on July 30, 2020 resulted in a list of items to be reviewed while updating the General Plan. Along with the mandatory elements of the plan, there are also optional elements like Environmental Justice,

Sustainability/Climate Change, and Equitable and Resilient Communities, that can be included. At its November 2020 meeting, the GPAC determined that it would analyze each element as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion rather than create a stand-alone element. GPAC will need to view each element in relationship to each of the other elements as well as through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. There are many other aspects of land-use planning that the committee may similarly consider, like sustainability, based on community feedback.

General Plan, Zoning Ordinance? What's the Difference?

Although both designate how land may be developed, they do so in different ways. A General Plan has a long-term outlook and identifies the types of development that will be allowed, the spatial relationships among land uses, and the general pattern of future development. A Zoning Ordinance implements the General Plan and regulates development through specific standards such as lot size, building setbacks, height, and allowable uses. The land uses outlined in a

General Plan are reflected in the local zoning maps, and changes to the zoning map are required to be consistent with the adopted General Plan. Development must not only meet the specific requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, but also the broader policies set forth in the General Plan. While the two are related but separate, changes to the General Plan may result in the need to update zoning ordinances to keep both documents in alignment.



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

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lafayette, CA
Permit No. 161

Postal Customer
Lafayette, CA 94549

Get In-the-Know: Sign Up for Lafayette's e-Notifications and the Roundup

What makes 2,885 people the most informed residents in Lafayette? It's simple: they are active subscribers to the City's e-Notifications and regularly receive news, meeting agendas, and other important announcements from the City of Lafayette.

Whether you want to get involved in Lafayette's Equity and Inclusion Task Force, participate in shaping the City's future, attend town halls and public meetings, find out the latest news, or simply learn about the myriad of great events going on around town, all you need to do is sign up and click a couple of boxes right here: www.lovelafayette.org/connect.



And what should you sign up for? Depends on what you are interested in: City Council meetings, planning, housing, senior services, art, recreation, traffic, creeks, police – the list goes on. But one sure way to be in-the-know is to subscribe to the *Weekly Roundup*. Every Friday, the *Roundup* covers all the news and events happening around Lafayette. It's a one-stop-shop designed just for you, chock full of the latest happenings throughout Lafayette.

Want more? Get the *Almost Daily Briefing*, which, as the title suggests, comes out almost every day. The *ADB* features published regional, local, and national media coverage and news stories of interest to Lafayette residents. For important real time alerts, such as the latest COVID-19 public health announcements and wildfire, power outage, and other emergency information, click the box for "General News."

The City offers a wide range of public information outlets, all with one thing in mind: keeping you informed. There is the Love Lafayette YouTube channel with meetings, special events, and workshops, some streamed live. How about the City's SmugMug photo gallery, full of photos that you can download and share? Have you read our "Around Lafayette" newspaper column in the *Lamorinda Sun* and the *East Bay Times*? And you can't miss Lafayette's Community Information and Emergency Radio Station, AM 1670, a 24/7 radio station dedicated to keeping you safe. You can read all about the public information services the City of Lafayette provides here on the City's website: www.lovelafayette.org/connect. While you're there, don't forget to sign up for whichever e-Notifications you wish. Do it today!

CITY DIRECTORY

For Council Members call: **925-284-1968**
Messages to all Council Members:
cityhall@lovelafayette.org

Council Members

Susan Candell	Mayor
Teresa Geringer	Vice Mayor
Carl Anduri	Councilmember
Cameron Burks	Councilmember
Gina Dawson	Councilmember

Administration

General Reception and	925-284-1968
Niroop K. Srivatsa,	Fax: 925-284-3169
City Manager	
Tracy Robinson,	
Admin. Services Director	925-299-3227
Jennifer Wakeman,	
Assist. Admin. Services Dir.	925-299-3213
Joanne Robbins, City Clerk	925-299-3210
Mike Moran, City Engineer	
& Public Works Director	925-299-3203
Greg Wolff, Planning	
& Building Director	925-299-3206
Donna Feehan,	
Public Works Manager	925-299-3214
Jeff Heyman, Communications	925-299-3241

If you observe illegal dumping in creeks & storm drains or accidental spills on roads, call Contra Costa Hazardous Materials Division 925-646-2286.

Parks, Trails, Recreation 925-284-2232
Jonathan Katayanagi, Director

Senior Services 925-284-5050

Police Services
Ben Alldritt, Police Chief
Emergency: 24 Hours **911**
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours **925-284-5010**
Police Business Office: **925-283-3680**

Anonymous tipline, traffic enforcement, suggestions & LEARN (Laf. Emergency Action Response Network), 925-299-3230

Fax 925-284-3169

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

Website www.lovelafayette.org

Contacting the City: During the COVID-19 public health emergency, City offices are being staffed virtually weekdays from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Staff is monitoring telephone lines, email, and social media. You can find a list of how to reach City departments at: <https://bit.ly/LafayetteCovid-19Contact>
You can also access the Planning Department's virtual counter via Zoom Monday through Thursday, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88080672124>

