

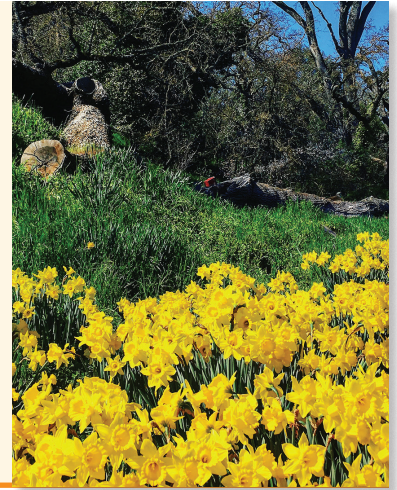


# LAFAYETTE VISTAS

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**2023** began with huge winter storms throughout northern California and although the destruction was much more prevalent in other parts of the State, some of your neighbors have been dealing with damage caused by flooding, strong winds and toppled trees. Thankfully, springtime is here, bringing with it daffodils, poppies and a general sense of renewal and optimism. However, since the best time to prepare for a disaster is before it happens, it is as important as ever to be mindful of the risks we face as both a community, and as individuals moving through our daily routines. In this issue of *Vistas*, we encourage you to dedicate time to preparedness tasks to keep yourself, your family, household, and business safe. For example, if you experienced drainage issues during the storms, consider performing maintenance or making alterations now to reduce the chance of flooding or erosion next rainy season. For more preparedness tips, see [www.lovelafayette.org/ready](http://www.lovelafayette.org/ready).



## CITY TAKES STEPS TO BE RESILIENT BY UPDATING SAFETY ELEMENT

**B**enjamin Franklin is quoted as saying, "if you fail to plan, you are planning to fail." Thankfully, the City Council, staff and Lafayette community have been dedicated to planning for our future since the City incorporated in 1968. Together, we are currently in the middle of a multi-year process to update the City's General Plan, the City's blueprint regarding the future character and quality of development for Lafayette. With professional staff and expert consultants, the City's General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) is leading the community engagement to update this important document which serves as the long-term (20-year) "constitution" for development and preservation in the city. After preparing the 2023-2031 Housing Element, the next chapter to be updated is the Safety Element. The Safety Element is one of seven state-mandated General Plan elements. It discusses potential risks from natural and human-caused hazards and presents the City's approach to minimizing harm to residents, visitors, buildings, infrastructure, economic drivers, services, and natural systems.

The existing Safety Element was adopted in 2009 and does

not adequately cover many of the required topics in current state laws, such as climate change adaptation and emergency evacuation. The Safety Element Update was led by the Planning Department and the GPAC, with technical support from consultants and input from community members. It is expected to be presented to the City Council for adoption in the coming months. You are encouraged to read the Safety Element to familiarize yourself with the potential hazards facing our community and how the City plans to reduce risks to life and property from earthquakes, landslides, floods, fire, hazardous materials, etc. as well as address climate change resiliency. You can find out more about the process to update the Safety Element, as well as the drafted document

at [www.planlafayette.org/safety-element](http://www.planlafayette.org/safety-element). To learn more about the General Plan and how you can get involved as we update the remaining elements of Land Use, Circulation, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, Air Quality, and Growth Management, visit [www.planlafayette.org](http://www.planlafayette.org) or attend an upcoming GPAC meeting.



Emergency Preparedness Coordinator John Cornell talks with a community member at the Safety Element workshop in March.

# LAFAYETTE IS AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

In 2019, the City created a bold vision of how Lafayette could improve as a livable city that includes and welcomes people of all ages and abilities, particularly older adults.

Using the AARP/World Health Organization's 8 criteria for Age-Friendly Communities, the Senior Service Commission has been developing an Age Friendly Action Plan for the City. Recently, we took a step towards helping older residents live rewarding, productive, and safe lives by partnering with the local non-profit, Lamorinda Village, to provide City supported memberships to the Village.

Lamorinda Village is a community-based network of people over age 55 living in Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda. Its purpose is to connect seniors with practical services that help them to maintain independence and remain in their homes as they age. Services include social events, wellness classes, local transportation, grocery shopping, meal



preparation, minor household repairs, assistance with computer issues, and phone check-ins to help older adults remain safely in their homes.

The new partnership provides a discounted rate to income-qualified Lafayette residents so they can access full membership benefits provided by the Village at a reduced monthly rate. To apply for Supported Membership, visit [lovelafayette.org/seniors](http://lovelafayette.org/seniors) or call 284-5050.

The City also encourages community members (adults of any age, from college students, to professionals, to retirees) to volunteer with the Village and commit 1 to 3 hours once or twice a month to help older adult neighbors. As Lamorinda Village grows, there will be a need for more drivers, handy-persons, gardeners, and people who care. Learn more about becoming a volunteer or member of Lamorinda Village at <https://lamorindavillage.org> or call 283-3500.

## THE BEST DEFENSE IS A GOOD OFFENSE

Spring is a time for mowing weeds, trimming trees and bushes, and undertaking home-hardening or other preparedness tasks before "fire season" starts. Last year, an updated version of the Lamorinda Residents Guide to Wildfire Preparedness & Evacuation booklet was mailed to every household. Refer to the booklet to learn how to:

- be better prepared for a wildfire, earthquake, or other disaster
- sign up to receive emergency alerts from the Lafayette Police Department
- look up your evacuation zone
- harden your home to make it safer during a wildfire, including which plant species are fire hazards

If your mailed booklet isn't handy, you can read it online or download it at: [http://bit.ly/Lamorinda\\_Wildfire\\_Guide](http://bit.ly/Lamorinda_Wildfire_Guide).

**Creating a Defensible Space:** An important strategy to protect your home is to create a "defensible space." This means to limit flammable materials close to any buildings. It includes selecting appropriate plants and landscaping based on how close they are to your home, as well as trimming back plant growth in the zones within 30' of any building, and 30' to 100' away. For example, any living or dead vegetation that could allow a fire to climb up from the ground into the tree canopy

(referred to as "ladder fuels") needs be removed from trees so that foliage, twigs, or branches are a minimum of six feet above the ground, or higher based on site and slope conditions. (If your property is sloped, the minimum clearance may be higher since fire can travel faster on a slope!) Learn more about creating a defensible space on Con Fire's website at [www.cccfpd.org/defensible-space](http://www.cccfpd.org/defensible-space). There is also more information on Cal Fire's website at [www.readyforwildfire.org/defensible-space](http://www.readyforwildfire.org/defensible-space).



**Fire Inspection May Be Required at Time of Home Sale:** Did you know? The State requires any seller of real property located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone to provide the buyer with documentation that the property complies with local defensible space requirements.

To see the California Fire Hazard Severity Zone map, visit <https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ>. In Contra Costa County, Con Fire carries out the Defensible Space Inspection. If you are thinking of putting your property on the market, you can have the inspection completed up to six months prior to the sale. Talk with your real estate agent or contact Con Fire for more information at [info@cccfpd.org](mailto:info@cccfpd.org) or call their administrative office at 941-3300.



# CELEBRATING 175+ YEARS: A LOOK AT MEXICAN LAND GRANTS

This year we are celebrating more than 175 years of Lafayette's history through presentations and events offered in partnership with the Lafayette Historical Society. In the last issue of *Vistas*, you read about the Saklan, a Native American tribelet of the Bay Miwok people, who lived in this area. The next group of inhabitants to live in our area were the Spanish.

The Spanish first came through the Bay Area in 1772 and established missions in San Francisco in 1776 and in San Jose (really Fremont) in 1797. All the surrounding land was considered mission land. Mission San Jose's land extended from Fremont to the Carquinez Straits. In addition to establishing missions, the Spanish government gave land to former soldiers, but the Spanish Crown retained ownership of the land. So, when Mexico won its War of Independence against Spain in 1821, the missions were dissolved and the Mexican government was pressured to give the Spanish-owned land back to the people (mostly soldiers) who had been of service during the war.

By the end of the Mexican Period, (1822–1848) about 500 land grants had been made; however, with an influx of Americans from the east during the Gold Rush, many were easily bilked out of their land because they were not knowledgeable about things like mortgages or other debt.

There are parts of 4 different Mexican land grants that make up present day Lafayette. Very few land grants in the state were given to women, yet two of "ours" were!

- **Acalanes:** The smallest land grant in Contra Costa County. It was granted to Candelario Valencia who was the son of a soldier on Spanish Commander Juan Bautista de Anza's expedition and had been a soldier himself. He sold the Acalanes Rancho to William Leidesdorff, a San Francisco land speculator, who sold it to Elam Brown in 1847. In the present day, Lafayette's downtown is on the east edge of the grant, and it extends west to the Orinda border. There is a plaque at 50 Lafayette Circle noting the location of the site of Elam & Margaret Brown's home.

- **La Boca de la Canada del Pinole:** Meaning "Mouth of the Pinole Valley", this grant contains the Springhill and Reliez area and Briones Park. Pinole is derived from a native word for flour often made of cattails or other local

plants. Maria Manuela Valencia de Briones (1796 – 1884), was granted the land in 1842. A mother of 12, she was the widow of soldier Felipe Briones, and the sister of Candelario Valencia.

- **Canada del Hambre y las Bolsas:** The lower part of Reliez Creek formed a boundary between La Boca de la Canada del Pinole and this land grant. It was granted to another widow, Teodora Soto, in 1842. The name means Valley of Hunger and Pockets of Land. This grant was made of Sobrante – left-over land from the other land grants. These non-contiguous bits of land are the Bolsas (pockets). The east side of Pleasant Hill Road to Olympic Boulevard was in this land grant.



The land grant Maria Manuela Valencia de Briones received includes present day Briones Regional Park. The Briones family began cattle ranching in the area, which continues to the present day.

- **Laguna de Los Palos Colorados:** This land was granted to the namesake of the Town of Moraga, Joaquin Moraga, and his cousin, Juan Bernal, in 1841. Palos Colorados refers to the redwood trees in Canyon, Moraga and over the hill to Oakland. The Laguna was a lake that was filled in to create a field and is under Campolindo High School. In addition to Burton Valley, all of Moraga and part of Orinda fall into this grant.

Want to learn more? Visit the Lafayette Historical Society website at [www.lafayettehistory.org](http://www.lafayettehistory.org) to read more in-depth about the local Mexican land grantees. Visit our "Celebrating 175+ Years" webpage at [www.lovelafayette.org/175plus](http://www.lovelafayette.org/175plus) for links to resources such as:

- Recordings of historical presentations to the City Council
- How to borrow a free copy of the *Images of Lafayette* book
- Locations of utility boxes downtown featuring collages of historical photos



Map showing Mexican land grants in the area.

*Thank you to the Lafayette Historical Society for researching and compiling this information.*



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## EFFORTS TO IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY UNDERWAY

Since the last issue of *Vistas*, we've made significant progress towards developing a Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP). Once adopted by the City Council, the LRSP will identify and prioritize actions to address traffic safety issues unique to Lafayette, with the goal of working towards the City's Vision Zero initiative to eliminate transportation-related fatalities and injuries in Lafayette for all roadway users. Learn more at [www.lovelafayette.org/LRSP](http://www.lovelafayette.org/LRSP). As part of this effort, the city's Traffic Calming program will be revamped and a more formal process for evaluating requests for traffic calming interventions will be rolled out. This new process will be consistent with the LRSP, data-driven, transparent, and reflect the city's funding availability to implement traffic calming measures.

Additionally, the Police Department is developing a new program to help reduce the incidents of speeding in Lafayette by using technologies such as radar speed signs to slow drivers by alerting to their speed, while also providing valuable data to law enforcement and traffic engineers about traffic and driver behavior. Stay tuned for an announcement when this program rolls out later this summer!



Community members helped to identify and prioritize traffic safety issues throughout town.

## SAVE THE DATE FOR ART & WINE FESTIVAL



If you have enjoyed the music at the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce's free Friday evening concerts at Lafayette Plaza (June 2 through 23), then be sure to save the date for the Chamber's annual Art & Wine Festival on September 23 & 24, 2023. It's one of the largest outdoor festivals in Contra Costa County. Go to [www.lafayettechamber.org](http://www.lafayettechamber.org) for details. We hope to see you there!

## CITY DIRECTORY

### Council Members

Carl Anduri	Mayor
Gina Dawson	Vice Mayor
Susan Candell	Councilmember
Teresa Gerringe	Councilmember
Wei-Tai Kwok	Councilmember

For Council Members call: 925-284-1968

Messages to all Council Members:

[cityhall@lovelafayette.org](mailto:cityhall@lovelafayette.org)

### City Departments

Main Offices	3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. #210
City Manager – Niroop K. Srivatsa	
General Reception	925-284-1968
City Website	<a href="http://lovelafayette.org">lovelafayette.org</a>

Connect with us on social media and sign-up for agenda notices:

[lovelafayette.org/connect](http://lovelafayette.org/connect)

### Administration

925-284-1968

Admin. Services Director – Tracy Robinson  
City Clerk – Joanne Robbins

### Engineering Services & Public Works

Director & City Engineer – Mike Moran	
Engineering Dept.	925-284-1951
Maintenance/Corp. Yard	925-934-3908

Submit Public Works maintenance requests online at:

[lovelafayette.org/maintenance-request](http://lovelafayette.org/maintenance-request)

Report illegal dumping into waterways and accidental spills to Contra Costa Hazardous Materials Division 925-646-2286

### Parks, Trails, Recreation

500 St. Mary's Rd	
Director – Jonathan Katayanagi	
Youth/Adult Recreation,	
Parks & Trails	925-284-2232
Senior Services	925-284-5050
Lafayette Spirit Van	925-283-3534
<a href="http://lovelafayette.org/rec">lovelafayette.org/rec</a>	

### Planning & Building

925-284-1976

Director – Greg Wolff	
Building Department	925-655-2704
<a href="http://lovelafayette.org/Planning">lovelafayette.org/Planning</a>	

### Police Services

3471 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Police Chief – Ben Alldritt	
Emergency (24 Hours):	911
Police Dispatch (24 Hours):	925-284-5010
Administrative Office:	925-283-3680
Code Enforcement:	925-299-3280

Anonymous tipline, traffic enforcement suggestions & LEARN (Laf. Emergency Action Response Network): 925-299-3230 or [94549Tip@gmail.com](mailto:94549Tip@gmail.com)