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Trial Dates of Farmers' Market Approved

By Cathy Tyson

After much discussion the Lafayette Certified Farmers' Market got the official thumbs up for just three trial days, down from the originally proposed five. Look for some street closures around Plaza Park on three Thursdays in September - 3, 10, 17 from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Although a number of sites were evaluated, City Council Members chose Plaza Park as the best location to enhance a sense of community and for a potential multiplier effect; for every dollar spent at the market, shoppers spend additional dollars at nearby establishments - perhaps getting a haircut at the adjacent barber shop, picking up some dog food, or grabbing dinner.

Despite vocal community support, on-going concerns about parking lingered. Members of Sustainable Lafayette and Acalanes students volunteered to be crossing guards and monitor parking. One supporter said, "We do believe it will strengthen the community and you can make some good money from parking meters." Another enthusiastically chimed in, "It's high time! Wake up guys!" Noting the proximity of Chateau Lafayette, another supporter said, "I believe the centralized location is essential for seniors to walk there."

Council Member Anduri said it's a "no-brainer" and was "amazed at the set of correspondence" the Council received - 63 letters in support of the Market. Other members weren't quite so sure;

Council Member Carol Federighi said, "It's an interesting balancing act, but I'm willing to go along with a test." Council Member Mike Anderson, while noting he supports the market said, "I'm afraid it could be a disaster" and "We may regret it."

An independent evaluation will occur after the trial program to see if future markets are warranted. At that time, location issues or a potential change in venue can be addressed.

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[back](#)

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