

# Lafayette

# Lamorinda Community

# Lafayette

Calendar	
City Council	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Monday, April 27	
Planning Comm.	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Thursday, April 16 Thursday, May 7	
Design Review	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Tuesday, April 21	
Senior Services	3:30pm
Community Center, Alder Room 500 St Mary's Road Thursday, April 23	
City of Lafayette: http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us Chamber of Commerce: http://www.lafayettechamber.org	



**Missing Cell Phone, 3/25/09**  
Lafayette Police were notified about a missing cell phone at Acalanes High School. The owner of the \$100 AT&T cell phone had placed the phone on the ground during a lacrosse practice. When he went to retrieve the phone after practice, it was gone. There are no leads at this time.

**Trash Bin Food and Warrants, 3/25/09**  
Lafayette Police made contact with a subject who was eating out of the trash bin next to Panda Express on Mt. Diablo Boulevard. When police ran the subject's name, they discovered he had 5 outstanding warrants in Alameda County. The man was arrested and taken to the Martinez Detention Facility for booking. He was likely delighted with the fresh jail food.

**Vehicle Burglary, 3/26/09**  
A Sunset Loop resident discovered an unknown suspect had burglarized his car. The police report indicated missing goods were valued at \$350 and damage to the vehicle was estimated at \$300. There are no leads at this time.

**Renew or Call Yellow Cab, 3/28/09**  
Lafayette Police pulled a vehicle over for a routine traffic stop on Highway 24 at St. Stephen's. Police discovered the driver was driving on a suspended California Driver's License. The driver indicated she knew her license was suspended. The woman's car was towed from the scene and she was sent home in a Yellow Cab. We suggest that citizens renew their driver's licenses before they expire.

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## Recommendations for the Specific Plan

By Cathy Tyson

Height and density in the development area would be reduced from the current draft Downtown Strategy and Specific Plan according to the recommendations of the Building Height and Density Subcommittee. Tasked with reviewing the Specific Plan, the Subcommittee took into account views, topography, existing uses and infrastructure. After a year and half of hard work, they came up with some significant differences, in most instances proposed building heights and densities were reduced from the WRT plan.

The Subcommittee's recommendations were presented to the City Council this week (after press time) along with input from a number of volunteer committees, interest groups like the Lafayette Homeowners Council and individual citizens. Anticipating that the scheduled three hour meeting will not be adequate to hear from all interested parties, **a second all-day meeting is scheduled for May 9, 2009.**

Keeping the small town flavor of Lafayette is a common refrain heard in Workshops and countless meetings, the Subcommittee felt that increasing the density to 65 dwelling units per acre, as spelled out in the draft Plan, "will greatly impact the town, potentially changing its character. Therefore, we recommend eliminating them from the Plan," noted their report. Instead, they recommend 35 dwelling units per acre, with one

small exception that is adjacent to the BART station at 45 dwelling units per acre.

In order to keep the scale low as part of the transition into the downtown area, the Subcommittee suggests a twenty-five foot height limit at the Hungry Hunter site and changed the properties next to the Lafayette Park Hotel from 42.5 feet high to 35 feet high with a corresponding reduction in density. Nearby properties adjacent to Highway 24 would also be reduced from 42.5 feet to 35 feet.

The height reduction theme continued along Mt. Diablo Boulevard from Moraga Road to Blackwood including Golden Gate Way, "At the Downtown Civic and Cultural district, we recommend changing the proposed 42.5' height / 45 dwelling units per acre to 35' height/35 dwelling units per acre along the north side of Mt. Diablo Blvd. Our thinking is that the large retail block between First Street and Oak Hill Road (Safeway and Whole Foods) has two protected views across its extent, therefore we feel the 35' height limit should remain," noted the report.

"I think the proposal of the Subcommittee is a great improvement of what WRT has proposed," said Elliott Hudson who attended the Planning Commission meeting at which the Subcommittee report was presented. "I urge the commission to get rid of height increases." Ann Coleman, one of the owners of Diamond K said, "I too am against increased heights."

Tom Chastain sits on both the Downtown Strategic Plan Advisory Committee (DSPAC) and is a member, along with Jeanne Ateljevich, of the Building Height and Density Subcommittee. He said that although the Advisory Committee is composed of over a dozen members with different points of view, they were able to "arrive at a consensus on issues." He said, "It's all part of a process."

Even "Funky Town" also known as the Brown Avenue area would have a 25 foot overlay, to promote its small scale and keep the current structures. The Subcommittee report also spelled out recommendations for the downtown retail district, east end and residential areas.

In a February 24 open letter to the City Council, the Lafayette Homeowners Council noted several concerns with the Draft Strategy and Specific Plan including, "The downtown as shown is too dense, the buildings too tall, the setbacks, too short." Other concerns included traffic congestion, maintaining a semi-rural identity, maintaining creeks and parks along with a number of other concerns.

"I'd like to see the City do more studies on height. This is not a city that hankers for more yuppie stuff," said Jeanne Ateljevich, Planning Commissioner and DSPAC member.

To view the draft Plan and support documents, go to [www.lovelafayette.org](http://www.lovelafayette.org) and scroll down to Downtown Strategy News.

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## Town Hall Theatre Flood Aftermath

By Cathy Tyson



Lobby stairs Photo provided

Although 1,000 gallons of water gushing from the second story of a 94-year-old building is never a good thing, it could have been much worse. Coming right in the middle of spring break, much of the Town Hall Theatre staff was out of town. Lamorinda resident Denise Murphy happened to be driving home that April Fool's evening when she noticed water flowing out the front door. Luckily at that point the malfunctioning sprinkler had been running for less than an hour.

"To our amazement, the stage and the production room were dry," said Dennis Erokan,

Board President, so only one performance of "The Odd Couple" was cancelled. Just days before the flood, Director of Education, Janice Peacock had negotiated with Butler-Conti Dodge to use a portion of their space for off-site classes, due to their increasing popularity. The building owner generously gave Town Hall Theatre the rest of the space to use as a temporary home for rehearsals and storage after hearing of the water damage. Finally the one computer that was spared contained all of their important back-up data.

The big white tent on the side of the building is the new interim lobby during the expected three to five months of construction and a temporary wall was put up so that the bathrooms and lift are now available for patrons to use.

"This theatre is a gem and with help from our community, it will come back stronger than before," said Amy Goodheart, Board Member and Fundraiser. "I get a little gushy every time I say how proud I am of everyone at the theatre and the tremendous effort they made. Our new artistic director, Clive Worsley worked tirelessly for 48 hours and coordinated with Service Masters to dry us out, Dennis Markham and Emily Garcia figured out how to make an outdoor box office work without any electricity or internet connection and our teen helpers were swabbing down the porta-potties before guests arrived for the show."

The final bit of good news is a fundraising gala was already in the works, scheduled for May 16. Because they usually function with a very tight budget, coming up with a \$5,000 insurance deductible will be challenging, along with other costs that Erokan expects could add up to \$25,000. At least the fundraiser couldn't have come at a better time. For more information go to [www.thct.org](http://www.thct.org).

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