

# Residents gather on rainy Saturday to work together on Two Parks

Submitted by Grace Dixon



Photo Scientific Art Studio

The early morning chill and constant rainfall on Jan. 20 did not dampen the neighborhood's collaboration on two park designs. Residents age 0-85 years joined together in the spirit of mutual respect and shared love for Leigh Creekside Park and Gazebo Park.

City Parks Director Jonathan Katayangi welcomed the large crowd into a 600-square-foot tent, and more neighbors gathered outside under umbrellas. Scientific Art Studio (SAS), the design team for these two projects, began the workshop with Creative Director Ron Holthuysen.

SAS designed the artful playgrounds at San Francisco Zoo, Oakland Zoo, Bay Area Discovery Museum Lookout Cove, and more. As raindrops tapped nonstop overhead, Holthuysen invited members of the public to share their hopes for the two parks. He emphasized the studio's preference for natural-looking play environments and natural materials, a sentiment shared by key stakeholders and the commu-

nity. Members of the public then offered constructive feedback and ideas, including a request that East Bay Regional Parks District repair the adjacent connecting trail.

After more than 10 years, the key stakeholders agreed that a small front section of Leigh Creekside Park, between the pathway and Moraga Boulevard, may be re-designed as a nature-inspired play area for children up to 4 years old. They also agreed that the larger, active play environment for 5- to 8-year-olds will shift to a creekside portion of the Gazebo parking lot.

One 85-year-old park neighbor said, "I think change is inevitable and I have no problem with what is going on. I think it is wonderful. ... I think it will be a better thing. One of the things that never changes is change." The workshop concluded with SAS's Jon Betthausen and Xilou Wang distributing dot stickers for audience members to place on the displayed play element images they preferred from other SAS projects.

Both properties are city-owned, but these designs require community donations. All Ages Recreation Downtown (AARD) is a Lafayette-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit actively fundraising for these two new park designs. The deadline to raise the remaining \$50,000 needed for Phase 1 is quickly approaching this October. To make a tax-deductible donation or to volunteer to help, visit [allagesplay.org](http://allagesplay.org).

Mayor Gina Dawson, Council Member Carl Anduri, East Bay Regional Park District's Dee Rosario, and Lafayette's Parks, Trails, and Recreation Commission also attended the workshop. The Community Foundation of Lafayette and All Ages Recreation Downtown brought children's activities, multiple tents, and seven teen volunteers to help kids play and craft.

The second parks design workshop date is to be determined. To stay informed, sign up at [www.lovelafayette.org/two-parks](http://www.lovelafayette.org/two-parks) to receive email updates from the City of Lafayette.

# Lafayette council streamlines transportation projects for future funding

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and the Pleasant Hill Road Center-Median Multi-Use Pathway Project. Each project involves funding for different phases, such as to initiate studies, or move into design stages, or to complete construction of approved designs, among others.

Council Member Carl Anduri voiced concern about downtown corridor mobility and safety planning that he believes should be more complete before investing council discussion and staff time into the unfunded projects. Public comments primarily addressed the center-median pathway project,

with people suggesting the project needed more clarification as to location, design, and other details before being included on the project list. Prioritizing and eliminating some of the projects to better focus on fewer projects most important to the city and its residents received support from a person participating virtually.

Mayor Gina Dawson said prioritizing the list in consideration of staff's limited time as was suggested by the public speaker was advisable. Council Member Teresa Gerringer and Anduri said it would be premature to approve the entire list without more time for the coun-

cil to study and hold conversations about the Pleasant Hill pathway project. That project was removed from the list.

The EBMUD Aqueduct Pathway Project was determined by the council to be a priority, and council invited the engineering department to determine the prioritization of the remaining four projects based on which are best positioned for grant opportunities as they arise. The council unanimously approved a motion to support the staff's request to move forward with funding requests when they become available.

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