

Lafayette Parks, Trails & Recreation

Creating Community and Enhancing the Quality of Life for the People of Lafayette

Some changes are rolling around out at the Community Center! In June, the City Council approved plans for resurfacing the parking lot at the Community Center and building a full-sized, outdoor skating rink in order to expand and enhance the successful roller hockey program that has been in place for the last 10 years. Not only will older kids now have the opportunity to join the league, the rink can be used for basketball or soccer practice when the fields are too wet or unavailable. There also are plans to offer Weekend Skate Nights with lights and music.

The new skating rink is just the most recent addition to the wide range of projects and programs undertaken by the Parks, Trails & Recreation Department. Today, the department offers 200 activities per season, serves 10,000 people per year and manages 5.75 miles of neighborhood trails and 89 acres of park facilities. We have certainly come a long way since 1977, when the city offered only 18 classes that were held in churches, schools and even private homes.

History

Lafayette has always been committed to the three "Ps" – police, public works and parks. But in 1968, when the City incorporated, the only park in Lafayette was Plaza Park, a small triangle of grass in the center of town. With no property tax revenue to spend, the City had very little money available to purchase or develop new parks, and thus relied heavily on donations from the community to grow its infant programs. In 1975, when plans to build a large community center on what is now Buckeye Fields – complete with swimming pool – failed to muster enough support from voters, the property was given to the City by Lafayette Community Center Inc. And it wasn't until 1979, with major assistance from the Lafayette Rotary, that Brook Street Park was built as the City's first neighborhood park.

Starting in 1983, things really started to take off for the Parks, Trails & Recreation Department. The City purchased 68 acres from Cal Trans – land that is now the current Community Park. With its beautiful rolling hills, gorgeous meadows and rip-

pling creeks, it's hard to believe that the site was once destined to be a freeway to Moraga! Luckily for Lafayette, neighbors protested the project and now, instead of big rigs and asphalt, we have sports fields, a picnic area, a play structure and acres of peaceful open space crisscrossed by natural meandering trails.

1983 was also the year when the City found a permanent home for its recreation classes and activities. In that year, the City purchased the old Burton Valley School, which had been closed for seven years. For the next six years, staff and volunteers worked hard to rehabilitate the building one



room at a time; repairing the extensive water damage, cleaning out the mold, and replacing the roof.

For the next 20 years, the department continued to grow its programs and develop new projects. Thanks in large part to grants, the Lafayette Community Center Foundation, local youth sports organizations, resident contributions and developer fees, the City has been able to purchase and develop Leigh Creekside Park, build playgrounds and tot lots at the Community Center and the Lafayette Community Park, complete the south end of the Community Park, completely renovate the ballfields at Buckeye, and install a bridge connecting the Community Center to the north end of the Community Park.

Programs

The halls of the former Burton School once again ring out with the voices and laughter of children each and every day as they attend one of the 100+ programs offered for children at the Lafayette Community Center. In the Kindergym, 1 & 2 year-olds climb over, up, under and through a variety of play structures in the fully padded room. Tiny Tots, the preschool program, is

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LAFAYETTE MASTER TRAILS PLAN: *A Unique Opportunity*

*Afoot and lighthearted, I take to the open road
healthy, free, the world before me*

*The long brown path before me
leading wherever I choose*

Good fortune, I, myself and good fortune.

—Walt Whitman



This neighborhood trail in the Hidden Oaks development will open soon.

Lafayette has an existing network of over 16 miles of community trails. In addition, Lafayette has many unique aspects that enable the development of an exceptional trail system, including convenient access to three large regional facilities: Lafayette Reservoir, Briones Regional Park and Las Trampas Regional Wilderness. Together, these trails distinguish our fair City and provide a wide array of opportunities for hiking, biking, and horseback riding.

Lafayette is also fortunate to have a dedicated, well informed and highly organized group of trail activists who are willing to devote their time and resources to preserving and enhancing current trails, and to developing and maintaining new trail opportunities. Towards this end, the Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission is currently working on updating the Lafayette Trails Master Plan.

The Goals & Objectives of the Plan include:

- Providing diversity in trail experiences including variety in terrain difficulty, environment and the exploration of interpretive opportunities.
- Providing safe, well marked connections to parks, open space, schools, community facilities, and other trail systems within the Lamorinda area.
- Setting trail standards and providing on-going maintenance to insure trail safety.
- Developing a process for acquiring new trail segments and seeking easements on private parcels so that future developments will not interrupt current trails.

The trails system as described in the plan will provide access to public places and scenic vistas that represent a significant natural amenity to the community. Where feasible, the proposed trails will interconnect, providing a continuous trails system.

Look for a draft of the Trails Master Plan to be posted on the city's website – www.lovelafayette.org – by this Fall.

GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD TRAILS

Imagine, in your own backyard, there are beautiful valleys, peaceful knolls, vistas and canopied pathways – all of which offer a treasure chest of relaxation and inspiration. We encourage you, your family and friends to enjoy your neighborhood trails and explore the areas beyond by hiking the regional network of trails, all of which are available to you without the use of a car. Horseback riding is allowed where posted and dogs are allowed on leashes, but bicycles and motorized vehicles are prohibited on these trails. These feeder trails have been designed for neighborhood use to provide easy access to the other scenic regional areas in and around Lafayette.

■ Silver Springs Loop • Distance: 0.78 miles

The beginning of the trail is off the cul de sac at the end of Silver Springs Court. To the east, this loop rises quickly to the ridge between Lafayette & Moraga. To the west, the trail meanders across open fields, with full views of North Lafayette, and gently climbs through oak and bay laurel woods to the ridge.

■ Moraga Road to Reservoir Rim Distance: .62 miles

The entrance from Moraga Road is just south of the intersection of Moraga Road and Via Granada. The trail follows the beautiful hillside contours beneath oaks and bay laurels. The route is gentle up and down until the last tenth of a mile when it turns west and climbs to the hill via several stepped switchbacks. Persistent hikers will be rewarded with a magnificent view and access to the Reservoir trails.

■ Peter Jakovina Trail • Distance: .75 miles

Note: Parking not permitted on Sessions Road

This trail may be reached on foot starting at the intersection of Deer Hill Road and Sierra Vista. Walking up Sierra Vista, turn left at Sessions Road and continue uphill 1/4 mile where you will find a bench to enjoy the vista, a canyon with lush vegetation, and a peaceful creek. The hike is mostly uphill involving a large number of steps and will connect you to the Lafayette Ridge Trail.

■ Springhill Valley Trail • Distance: .75 miles

Note: Parking not permitted on Leslyn Drive

The entrance from Springhill Valley is at the intersection of Goyak Drive and Leslyn Drive. From there, the trail proceeds up Leslyn Drive 1/4 mile then leaves the asphalt road and follows the beautiful hillside contours beneath the oaks, maples and bay laurels as it rises to meet the Lafayette Ridge Trail.

■ Walter Costa Trail • Distance: 2.17 miles

The trail begins on the north side of Mt. Diablo Blvd. at the signed entrance to the EBMUD yard across from the Reservoir. At Pine Lane, the trail follows the road, turns left on Timothy Lane, turns right on Los Arabis Drive and follows the road to a cul de sac. Here, the trail follows the paved fire lane to connect with Quail Ridge Road, follows the road to the dirt trail on the north across from Quail Ridge Court. The trail climbs a small rise and drops down through a wooded area to the paved driveway which leads to Cambridge Drive. Follow the road to the cul de sac at the end of Cambridge Drive and take the paved trail over the bridge and next to the school to Happy Valley Road. Turn right on Happy Valley Road to Panorama Drive and follow the road to the trail head entering Briones Regional Park.

LAMORINDA TRAIL LOOP PROJECT

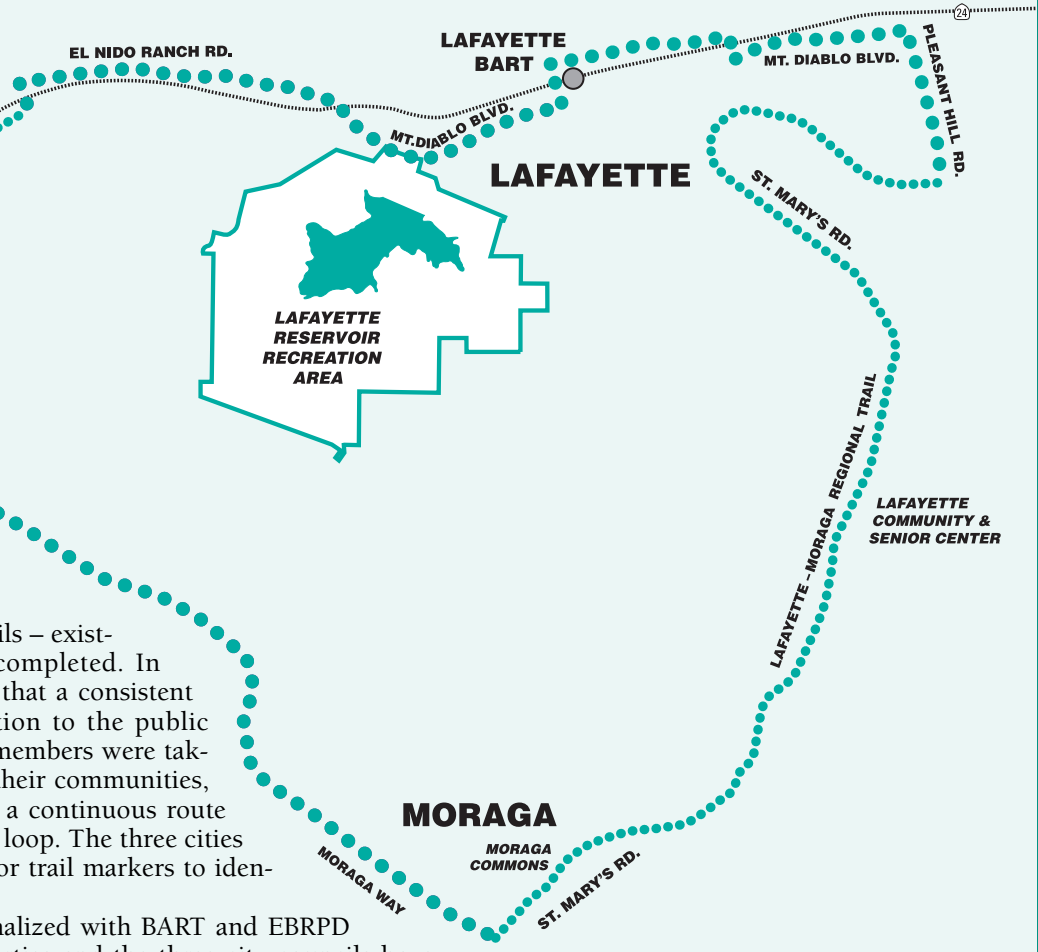
ORINDA

ORINDA BART

The Lamorinda Trails Connections Committee was established by agreement of the Orinda, Moraga, and Lafayette City Councils in Spring 2002. The goal of the Committee was to create a comprehensive trail system throughout Lamorinda.

In 2005, a detailed inventory of trails – existing, planned, and imagined – was completed. In addition, the Committee determined that a consistent method of signage and communication to the public was necessary. While the committee members were taking inventory of the trails located in their communities, they discovered there already existed a continuous route linking the three cities via a 17.5 mile loop. The three cities supported a \$25,000 grant proposal for trail markers to identify the Lamorinda Trail Loop.

Agreements are currently being finalized with BART and EBRPD for placement of signs on their properties and the three city councils have approved the designs for the Lamorinda Trail Loop display signs. Detailed maps of the loop are currently available at the Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda Community Centers. Look for the new signs along the trail in Fall 2005.



AROUND TOWN

Sept. 17 & 18

7TH ANNUAL ART & WINE FESTIVAL

– Arts and crafts booths, food, wine, micro-brewed beer, and live music. Downtown Lafayette. For more info: Chamber of Commerce, 284-7404 or www.lafayettechamber.org

Oct. 28, 29

LAFAYETTE YOUTH COMMISSION'S HAUNTED HOUSE

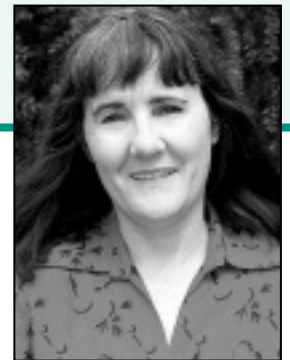
– Lafayette Community Center, 5:00-9:30pm. Ages 8+: \$5; ages 7 & under: \$3. Call 284-5815 for more information.

Oct. 30

LAFAYETTE RESERVOIR RUN

– Mark your calendars so you don't miss out on Northern California's most scenic fun run! There is a 10K course, as well as shorter, flat 3-5K courses for walkers and "the stroller brigade." For more information call the Chamber of Commerce: 284-7404 or visit www.lafayettechamber.org

PASSIONATE ABOUT People, Parks & Programs



Q: Who is the City's longest tenured employee?

Q: Who has worked for the City of Lafayette more than half her life?

Q: Who has cultivated the recreation programs into a business that generates over \$1 million in revenue each year?

Q: Who has overseen the development of 80 acres of parkland and transformed a 50-year-old elementary school into a community center?

A: Jennifer Russell, Director of Parks, Trails & Recreation, that's who!

Jennifer grew up in Lafayette and graduated from Acalanes High School. For three summers, starting in 1976, while she was in college, Jennifer worked as a temporary city employee managing the gym and swim programs for Lafayette Recreation. She was then hired as the City's first permanent recreation employee serving as a Commission Aide in 1979 after she graduated from San Francisco State. She became the Director of the department in 1983. For 29 years, Jennifer's love for nature and her playful attitude have been a tremendous benefit to the city as she has worked diligently to develop entertaining recreation programs and build beautiful parks for the residents of Lafayette. When asked about her experience here, Jennifer says, "I am kind of like a parent. I've helped this department grow from infancy to what it is today. I love it and I'm very proud of it. This is the best job in the world! I am so lucky to be here." We are lucky to have her here, too.

Lafayette Parks, Trails & Recreation *(continued from front page)*

so popular that it literally requires that a lottery be held for enrollment. Before the lottery system however, it wasn't uncommon to find parents camping out overnight to be the first in line to register their kids! Kids Carpentry is another favorite – one mother was so distraught that she missed the registration deadline that she actually cried when she found out the class was full.

But kids aren't the only ones taking advantage of the recreation opportunities available at the Community Center. Any Wednesday you might hear the strains of Glen Miller, Tommy Dorsey, or some hot salsa and mambo echoing through the breezeway as Lafayette seniors come together for the weekly Tea Dance held in the Live Oak room. The department also offers a wide variety of classes specifically for those over 55 – including everything from Driver's Safety to Estate Planning to Podiatry.

Teens and adults can choose from a variety of programs including yoga, pilates, dancing, acting, creative writing and "I Can't Believe I Got a Ticket" classes. Even the furry members of the family can be included in the fun. The department offers dog obedience training and even "Pet First Aid", where you can learn to give Fido CPR if you need to.

However, what makes the Lafayette Parks, Trails & Recreation Department even more unique is its financial goal of being a break-even organization. Where most cities generally subsidize their recreation programs, since 1992 the department has been self-supporting – generating over \$1 million in revenue annually.

Going Forward

The Parks, Trails & Recreation Department continues to look for additional fun and creative ways to enhance the quality of life for Lafayette residents as well as create an extended sense of community with our neighbors.

In 2003, Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda all contributed funds toward the construction of a new skateboard park in the Moraga Commons to serve the needs of youth throughout the Lamorinda area. In addition to the funds contributed by the Lafayette City Council, the Lafayette Youth Commission raised an additional \$50,000 for the project by sponsoring teen events such as The Twilight Zone Party and Ace of Clubs Band Nights and the Halloween Haunted House. With the skate park now complete, the Youth Commission has turned its attention towards the new library and has contributed \$5,000 to date.

In 2004, Lafayette and Moraga combined their recreation programs in an effort to become even more efficient and offer more flexibility to the residents. Classes are now held at both the Community Center on St. Mary's Road as well as the Hacienda in Moraga. Last year, the department also implemented an on-line registration system which allows individuals and families to store their basic information and sign up for multiple classes each season quickly and easily.

The new skating rink won't open until Fall 2006, but you don't have to wait until then to take advantage of all the Parks, Trails & Recreation Department has to offer. This is the year you could learn to Hip Hop dance or play in the Kinderym or create a work of art. Every household in Lafayette and Moraga receives a 32-page recreation guide four times each year – take the time to look inside and you will find a treasure trove of great memories waiting to be made and skills waiting to be learned.



CITY DIRECTORY

For Council Members call: **284-1968**

Council Members

Carl Anduri	Mayor
Ivor Samson	Vice Mayor
Mike Anderson	Council Member
Carol Federighi	Council Member
Don Tatzin	Council Member

Messages to all Council Members:
cityhall@lovelafayette.org

Administration

General Reception and	284-1968
Steven Falk, City Manager	Fax: 284-3169
Tracy Robinson, Admin. Srv. Dir.	299-3227
Gonzalo Silva, Financial Srv. Mgr.	299-3213
Joanne Robbins, City Clerk	299-3210

Community Development

Ann Merideth, Director	299-3218
Tony Coe, Engineering Srv. Mgr.	284-1951
Niroop Srivatsa, Planning Srv. Mgr.	284-1976
Ron Lefler, Public Works Srv. Mgr.	299-3214
P.W. Hotline (to report problems)	299-3259

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

Lamorinda School Bus Program

Juliet Hansen, Program Mgr.	299-3216
	Or 299-3215

Parks, Trails and Recreation

Jennifer Russell, Director	284-2232
Senior Services	284-5050
Teen Programs	284-5815

Police Services

Emergency: 24 Hours	911
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours	284-5010
Police Business Office:	283-3680

Anonymous Tipline, Traffic Enforcement, Suggestions & LEARN (Laf. Emergency Action Response Network), 299-3232 X 2205

Fax **284-3169**

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

Website: **www.ci.lafayette.ca.us**

E-MAIL: Council/staff members can be reached via e-mail using this address format:

First Initial + Last Name@lovelafayette.org

Example: SFalk@lovelafayette.org



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