



Independent, locally owned and operated!

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published September 29th, 2010

Public Forum

The Case for Open Space

A recent poll of Lafayette voters showed that preserving open space is our highest priority, even higher than improving public education or repairing our roads. We are fortunate to be surrounded by open ridgelines and hillsides where we still see more trees than houses. The open hills and ridges are what make highway 24 a scenic route.

But the open space we experience is not just a view. Everywhere we go, we are aware of the openness around us. Our winding streets provide vistas of our hills and remind us that we live on and around them. From many of our homes and yards, we are aware not only of our neighborhood, but of the landscape beyond it. In the downtown, we don't just drive from block to block. We have the context of the topography around us - as the view changes, we understand that we are moving through a spacious valley surrounded by a complex of hills.

Many of us spend time in parks, on trails, and along our creeks. These smaller open spaces are no less critical to our sense of our community and our environment. They reinforce our appreciation that not everything is paved and landscaped, that we have a connection to the land we occupy.

That same poll of Lafayette voters showed that open space was not high on the list of things we want to spend our money on. In part, this is because there are so many other important uses for our tax dollars. In part, it is because many people assume our open spaces all belong to us. In fact, much of the open space around Lafayette is still in private hands.

To preserve our open spaces and the special sense of space they provide requires action on several fronts. First, Lafayette has set priorities to acquire and preserve open space. Acalanes Ridge was one of those identified priorities. Lafayette, Walnut Creek, East Bay Regional Parks, and the Muir Heritage Land Trust combined our resources and experience to acquire and permanently preserve that key open space. That illustrates the second action, cooperation between agencies and organizations with an interest in preserving open space. Money for acquisitions will be tight for the foreseeable future, and cooperation is essential. Third, we need to continue to plan for the preservation of open spaces and to create opportunities to open parks, creeks, and trails so that we not only see open space, but experience it.

Preserving open space will require persistence and creativity, but it is essential to maintain the identity of our communities.

Brandt Andersson
(Mayor, City of Lafayette)

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA