



**Lafayette**

**Public Meetings**

**City Council**

Monday, Dec. 11, 7 p.m.  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,  
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

**Planning Commission**

Monday, Dec. 4, 7 p.m.  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,  
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

**Design Review**

Monday, Dec. 11, 7 p.m.  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,  
Arts & Science Discovery Center,  
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

**School Board Meetings**

**Acalanes Union High School District**  
Wednesday, Dec. 6, 7 p.m.  
AUHSD Board Room  
1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette  
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

**Lafayette School District**

Wednesday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m.  
Regular Board Meeting  
District Office Board Room  
3477 School St., Lafayette  
www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

**City of Lafayette:**

www.ci.lafayette.ca.us  
Phone: (925) 284-1968

**Chamber of Commerce:**

www.lafayettechamber.org



The Lafayette Police Department has changed their reporting and we were unable to get the complete information before press time.

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The Dana Green Team is once again proudly joining the Chamber of Commerce in sponsoring the 5th Annual Community Holiday Celebration and Tree Lighting.

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**Date: Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup>**

**Time: 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.**

**Place: Lafayette Plaza**

Visit [LAFAYETTECHAMBER.ORG](http://LAFAYETTECHAMBER.ORG) for Details



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## New online forum opens civic discussions for Lafayette residents

By Pippa Fisher

Lafayette has added another tool to its communications toolbox by bringing a new electronic communication forum for civic engagement online.

Lafayette City Manager Steven Falk made the point during a presentation at the Nov. 13 city council meeting that since 1968 residents have had only the same couple of options available for making their voices heard to local government: either by speaking at a city meeting or by writing a letter or email.

With the unveiling of "Lafayette Listens!" on Nov. 9, residents now have the option of accessing the forum at their convenience any time of day or night from a computer or smartphone. As residents navigate this platform they can read what others are saying and give their own opinions on impor-

tant Lafayette topics. City leaders will take into consideration these comments and responses as they make their decisions.

In this age of social media, Falk said that this tool, run by Peak Democracy, a nonpartisan company whose mission is to broaden civic engagement and build public trust in government, will be a great alternative to other social media platforms out there such as Nextdoor, which has several drawbacks including its divisions by neighborhoods, distracting advertising and an extreme range of conversation threads from dogs barking to babysitter recommendations.

Falk has high hopes that this platform will become a focal point for people registering their thoughts and he urged city council members to check the site frequently. "I

know that Lafayette residents are super smart and super engaged," he said, "But they won't embrace this tool if they feel like it's not substantive and if it doesn't register with the council. We need a commitment to have real questions, even if they are 'sticky,' on the website."

Falk suggested the possibility of making periodic presentations at the council meetings to keep council members aware of opinions being shared. City Council Member Cam Burks concurred. "I heartily agree we have to demonstrate that we are receiving the input, open to the input and maybe agendizing topics."

Lafayette Listens allows only one comment per topic from each computer, preventing residents from hijacking a subject and posting multiple comments. Falk drew

attention to sophisticated civility filters, taking out foul language.

The forum is intuitive to navigate and can be reached simply by typing Lafayette Listens into the browser. It is also accessible from the home page of the city website at [www.lovelafayette.org](http://www.lovelafayette.org).

For now there are six topics available, from the question of whether the city should own or rent its city offices to the topic of how well residents think the new roundabout is working. Users are directed to offer opinions through polls, surveys and other interactive media.

With in excess of 260 registered responses within the first 10 days of going live, it looks like this is going to be a useful new way of encouraging feedback and engaging residents on local issues.

## Reliez Valley Road sees immediate measures on safety

By Pippa Fisher



The public works department creates a new stop sign Nov. 17 on Reliez Valley Road. Photo Pippa Fisher

Lafayette is moving fast to address the safety issue on Reliez Valley Road with the immediate implementation of two new stop signs, a new crosswalk, painted speed reminders on the pavement and, at the Pleasant Hill intersection, a "No Right Turn" sign.

But does addressing the issue of safety come at the expense of the issue of congestion? Will some of the measures such as two extra stops add time to the drive along the corridor and add to driver frustration during peak hours? These issues were once again before the city council at its Nov. 13 meeting.

Lafayette Chief of Police Eric Christensen gave the five measures for addressing the issue of safety as his recommendation to the council following two weeks of directed police enforcement along Reliez Valley Road.

With police handing out a steady flow of speeding tickets during this time, some for speeds as high as 65 mph, it became very apparent that certain stretches of the road pose a real danger.

Over 16 local residents including several students got up to speak – many in favor of the stop signs, while others foresaw increased congestion as a result. All other measures were supported. The students in particular spoke of long commutes from the north end of Reliez Valley Road.

Concerned residents have

formed the group Reliez Valley Residents for Reduced Traffic demanding No Turn and No Thru signs at various locations on Grayson Road, Withers Avenue and Taylor Boulevard aimed at stopping the WAZE app from sending thru traffic along the corridor.

Kristen Altbaum, a Reliez Valley resident, says she supports stop signs and anything that facilitates more safety along the road, but emphasizes that she wishes the city and county supported efforts at mitigating congestion prior to adding more stop signs.

"School commutes have grown considerably over the last few years because out-of-area commuters are flooding Reliez as a 'shortcut' to Hwy 24 and an alternative to traveling south on Taylor or Hwy 680," says Altbaum, referring to the WAZE app that directs drivers along the residential road. "A two-minute saving for these out of area drivers costs residents an extra 20-30 minutes on many days. School tardies are at an all time high and (school) buses keep adjusting their pickup times earlier and earlier."

Council Member Cam Burks, who has been spearheading the push for immediate safety measures, called for the council to be "nimble," saying it should "take interim steps while the circulation committee meets to come up with a holistic plan."

Vice Mayor Don Tatzin agreed and was keen to have the results come back to the council in three months as well as maintaining continued enforcement. With Mayor Mike Anderson of like mind, the only council member to voice concern about the proposed measures was Ivor Samson, saying that he found it hard to divorce safety from congestion. Samson feared additional stop signs would bunch up traffic and said he would also like to see electronic speed feedback signs and speed cushions or speed bumps.

However in the end, Samson

made the vote unanimous, 4-0 (with Council Member Mark Mitchell absent) to start the implementation of all five recommendations, with the added wording that police enforcement should continue for the foreseeable future and that the stop signs' effects are studied with the results brought back to the council in three months.

As far as safety goes, in the first week following the installation of the new stop signs Christensen says that his officers have reported the sign at Fairholm Court is having the desired effect, slowing the traffic down

along that portion of the roadway. "While I am sure the enforcement has also had some effect in the area, we were still getting people speeding along the route before the signs – now they can't get anyone in that area."

"We are still collecting data from the area which will show us how the driver behaviors have changed," says Christensen, "but I think preliminarily, it is safe to say the signs are doing exactly what was expected."

As for how the controversial stop signs will affect congestion, time will tell.



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