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## Public Invited to Open Space Workshop

By Cathy Tyson



Acalanes High School 1950 Photo provided by the City of Lafayette

The pictures tell the story. Realizing how the landscape has changed over the last fifty years, and knowing that once open space is developed, it really is gone forever, a group of concerned citizens have stepped up to volunteer their time on Lafayette's Open Space Committee.

Wanting to inform the public of their findings and gather comments in order to form a plan that's expected to be completed in the fall, the Committee will be hosting a public Workshop on July 16 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lafayette Community Center in the Sequoia Room, 500 St. Mary's Road. Attendees can expect a presentation on what is open space and why it's important along with a variety of historical photos from as early as the 1930's.

Against a backdrop of concern swirling around future development and potential loss of Lafayette's semi-rural appeal, the work of the Committee couldn't have come at a more opportune moment. Their mission to identify, protect and preserve open space is the manifestation of the one of the principles of the General Plan: "Encourage the

involvement of citizen volunteers in land use and policy planning."

That coupled with "Protect the natural and scenic quality of our surrounding hillsides and ridgelines, creek areas, trees and other vegetation" is what this Committee is all about.

As a first step in the process, the Committee has drafted identification criteria that qualifies exactly what kind of open space the City is looking for. Some desirable characteristics include: close to existing open space, land that provides vistas of the surrounding landscape, has habitat restoration or preservation potential, encompasses sensitive species or provides wildlife corridors.

The burning question on everyone's mind these days is who is going to pay for this? "Monies from federal, state, and regional agencies along with other private and public funding sources could be used to acquire permanent open space in Lafayette," said Zoe Merideth, Open Space Committee Intern.

Alison Hill, a member of the Committee said, "It takes long range planning and getting other funding that can help this really happen."

Residents are encouraged to attend the Workshop on Thursday July 16th at 7:00 p.m. at the Lafayette Community Center. Members of the public are invited to comment on the draft criteria and the plan in general. Questions or comments should be directed to Merideth, at [zmerideth@ci.lafayette.ca.us](mailto:zmerideth@ci.lafayette.ca.us).



Acalanes High School 2008 Photo Google Earth

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