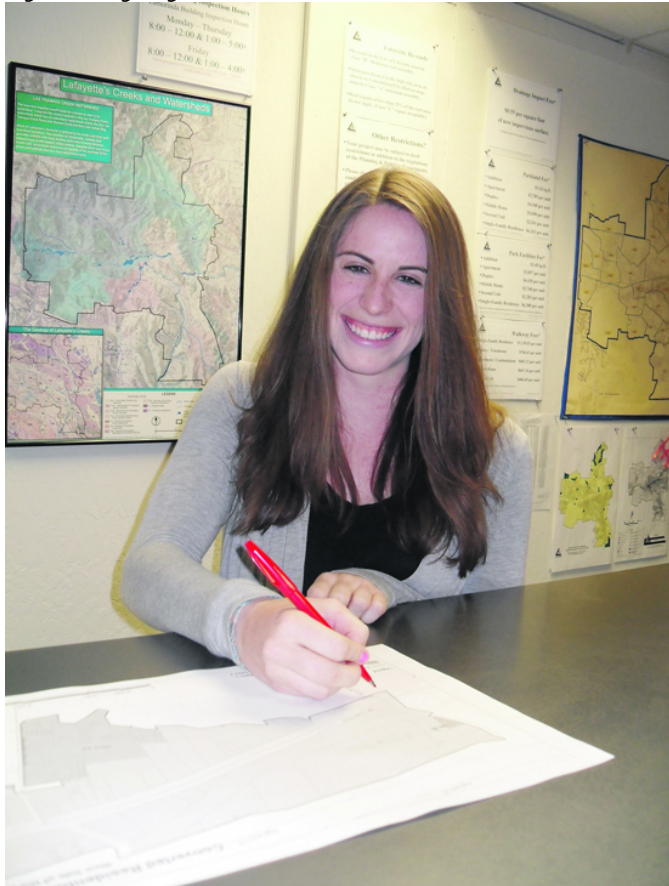


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Productive Summer Interns Wow Lafayette

By Cathy Tyson



Summer Intern Megan Canales working the Planning counter at the City of Lafayette offices. Photo C. Tyson

member of our planning staff." He joins current Planning Technician Sarah Allen, Administrative Assistant Donica Katayanai, and Public Works Technician David Terhune - all former interns who now work for the City.

This year's summer interns took on a variety of tasks include posting public hearing notices and reviewing development applications for completeness, working on the downtown streetlight replacement project, and the Lafayette Open Space Plan.

Born into a family of engineers, Lafayette resident and Miramonte senior Robert Burt worked in the Engineering Department under Leah Greenblatt, Transportation Planner. "He has a big future ahead of him," said Greenblatt. He spent most of his time this summer working on an interactive map with traffic counts - recording the number of cars and their speed. "It was a great opportunity for hands on experience and this will definitely help with college applications," said Burt. He hopes to go to UC Berkeley or Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. He describes staff as "extremely friendly" and "very efficient." He's President of the Young Engineers Association at Miramonte and still works for the City on Wednesdays - after school.

Michael Cass supervised the charming, effervescent Megan Canales, who just started her senior year at University of Oregon and anticipates receiving her degree in Public Policy Management this coming June. "I learned so much - it's a really dynamic environment....and very inclusive." She describes the Planning Department as a "tight knit group - eager to teach, very collegial - gathering input from each other, and extremely helpful." She split her time interning between Danville, where she worked two days per week, and Lafayette where she spent the other three. Between her college classes and this interning experience, she has a keen appreciation for the benefits of good planning: "Planning helps mold and preserve lifestyle already here and enhance it further." Armed with a diploma, perhaps last year's intern can become next year's new employee?

Embracing summer interns for more than thirty years, the City of Lafayette has been a training ground for bright eyed students from nearly the dawn of time - or the incorporation of the city. This summer six young men and women contributed to keeping the city running, gained valuable experience and lightened the load of staff members- a good deal all the way around.

"This year's crop of interns, which include Zoe Merideth and Zachary Baron (Planning), Jay Yu (Public Works), Spencer Stahl and Robert Burt (Engineering), and Megan Canales (Planning), has been a particularly good group," said City Manager Steven Falk. "To give you a sense of their range consider that, just as Zoe departed to begin her Master's Degree program at Harvard University, Robert will be entering his senior year at Miramonte High School."

"I know how invaluable an internship can be to someone fresh out of college," said former intern and now Planning & Building Services Manager Niroop Srivatsa. "In the Planning Department, our interns get to participate in such important tasks as the General Plan update, the Downtown Specific Plan, amendments to the zoning ordinance and development review and are able to present their work to the Planning and Design Review Commissions and the City Council. The City benefits from their fresh perspectives and innovative ideas. So it's a win-win situation."

In fact the city's longest-tenured employee at thirty years and counting, Jennifer Russell, who is now the Director of the Parks Trails and Recreation Department, started as an intern. Falk reports that two of Lafayette's interns - Dan Singer and Karen Stein - went on to become city managers (Stein once filled that position in Moraga).

Assistant Planner Michael Cass must really "Love Lafayette;" he attended Acalanes High School and started interning while attending St. Mary's College. Falk now calls him, "a grizzled veteran and key

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