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## 2016 Citizen of the Year **Nominations Requested**

Do you have a person in mind for the City of Lafayette to honor as 2016 Citizen of the Year?

Criteria are as follows:

- Must NOT be a current elected or paid member of any city council, school board or commission;
- Must be a current Lafayette resident;
- Must be someone who has given of their time, money or energy to help make Lafayette a healthy community, where people will want to live, work and shop;
- Must be someone who models excellence in everything they do;
- Must be someone who brings this community together and/or makes us proud to be a member of the community.

A celebration dinner will be held on Friday, March 18 at the Lafayette Park Hotel and Spa to honor the winner. The deadline for submitting nominations is Friday, Feb. 12. The 2016 Lafayette Citizen of the Year Award is co-sponsored by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and Lamorinda Weekly. Please email your nomination to Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jay Lifson at jay@lafayettechamber.org or send your nomiation to the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, attention Lafayette Citizen of Year nomination, 100 Lafayette Circle, Suite103, Lafayette, CA 94549. - C. Tyson

# **Bond Feasibility Study Results Presented**

#### By Cathy Tyson

consultants at a Jan. 13 meeting held would vote definitely yes or probably at Stanley Middle School presented yes. the results of a bond feasibility survey to see if there was potential voter support to maintain the quality of education in local public schools.

A telephone survey reached out to 400 random Lafayette households of residents who would likely vote in either the June or November elections. The very first question asked by consultant True North Research determined how the issues stacked up in voters' minds, with 90 percent of respondents agreeing that maintaining the quality of education in local public schools was either extremely important or very important.

The Lafayette School District has a two-fold problem: The average age likely be long and may have other tax of schools is 62 years old, with asso- measures from the Contra Costa

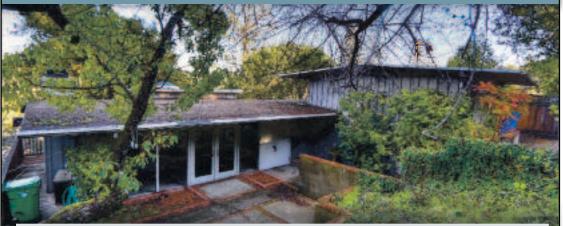
afayette School Board members port remained similar, ranging from ⊿got a resounding "yes" when 63 to 66 percent of likely voters who

> When respondents were asked how they would choose to spend the bond proceeds, almost three-quarters said they preferred to renovate and upgrade existing schools. Only 15 percent were in favor of reoccupying and renovating the White Pony School that is currently being used by The Meher Schools.

> While the consultant's survey demonstrated voters' understanding that maintaining the quality of education is the most important issue facing the community, it will be up to the school board to decide if and when to place a bond measure on the ballot.

The November 2016 ballot will ciated serious infrastructure issues re- Transit Authority and the City of

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lated to buildings that age - plumbing, Lafayette for a bump in the rate of roofs, electrical – and there is a need to accommodate a growing number of students.

With no matching money availbudget cutbacks that started in 2008, the Lafayette School District is grappling with "a place where time has stood still," said architect and consultant Dara Youngdale when presenting facilities assessment findings in October.

Tim McLarney of True North Research explained at the Jan. 13 school board meeting that there was "robust support" for a \$64 million general obligation bond measure with independent citizen oversight that would provide modern, safe classrooms and schools, and no money for administrative salaries.

age homeowner in Lafavette \$194 per increasing number of pupils. year. At each of four price levels sup-

sales tax. This can "definitely create a headwind," said District Superintendent Rachel Zinn.

Further public discussions are able from the state due to significant slated to address Bond Capacity and how to balance multiple objectives: assessment of facility needs and wants, assessment of voter support, and development of a prudent financing plan.

"We're encouraged by the very positive survey results," said Zinn, but she cautioned that even with voter support of a \$64-\$70 million bond measure, all the district facilities were evaluated in 2015 and \$130 million worth of repairs and renovations were needed for the district's four elementary schools and one middle school. facilities at elementary and middle With California ranking 46 out of 50 in per-student state spending, according to Ed Source on Jan. 7, 2015, the Potential voters were also asked \$64 million question becomes about their comfort level with a tax whether voters will be willing to tax threshold of amounts ranging from themselves, and if so, what the prior-\$30 to \$21 dollars per \$100,000 of as- ities will be to keep students, safe, dry sessed value that would cost the aver- and warm, while accommodating an

## Will City Ask for Increased Sales Tax?

The Sales Tax Subcommittee presented its findings, which determined the amount of available funds as compared to the estimated cost for a variety of potential projects, to the Lafayette City Council at its Jan. 11 meeting. Recent Community Conversations gathered information on a variety of city priorities and residents' willingness to pay for those items - preserving open space and crime surveillance topped both of those lists.

At issue is a new additional sales tax that could generate revenue for the next 10 years: a one-cent tax level would generate \$30 million, and a halfcent would garner \$15 million. City council members unanimously agreed to have the Sales Tax Subcommittee investigate further. Council Member Traci Reilly suggested narrowing down the focus of priorities in order to set realistic expectations. Everyone agreed with Mayor Mark Mitchell who was "willing to go to the next step" to clearly define parameters. The issue will be heard again at the Feb. 22 council meeting. - C. Tyson.



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