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# Lafayette City Council approves 2021-22 final budget and workplan, adding four new staff positions to city

By Lou Fancher

Continuing a discussion begun in December 2021, City Manager Niroop Srivatsa and Administrative Services Director Tracy Robinson at the Jan. 24 city council meeting provided the city council with the final budget and workplan for FY 2021-22. The update included changes adopted by the council following approval of the proposed budget in June 2021, recommendations from department directors, and items reflecting the impact of the ongoing pandemic.

Robinson said the General Fund balance as of June 30, 2021, stood at \$14,588,795; a figure equal to 96% of annual

general fund expenditures that exceeds the council's 60% target by \$5.4 million. The estimated balance for the same month in 2022 is projected to be \$12 million, representing a 68% reserve expenditure that is \$1.5 million above the targeted goal.

Although expenditures are roughly \$2.1 million more than projected, the overages are related to timing, such as distributions from the ARPA funds and contributions to the Park Theatre purchase. Robinson said savings were realized in police services, projects carried over to the next fiscal year, and unspent funds related to project reserves. Revenue was realized in sales taxes, property

tax transfers, grants, and city fees for services.

With COVID and the variants continuing, Robinson emphasized that knowing and anticipating revenue trends is especially important for all cities. She said FY 2019 was the last "normal year," 2020 a half-pandemic year, and 2021 a full pandemic year. "We're all hoping that fiscal year 2022 is not another full pandemic year," she said.

Detailing the revenue sectors, Robinson's presentation showed "Swiss cheese" style recovery patterns: sales tax revenue was recovering, but not back to levels prior to the pandemic; property and vehicle and franchise revenue re-

mained virtually unaffected. Property tax revenue Robinson suggested picked up in 2021 with pent-up demand as homes started selling, but transient occupancy took "a huge hit of about 23%." Projections are difficult, with some signs showing possible faster recovery than expected as people come together for larger events or travel.

Robinson said investment and rental revenue figures reported in the update are reliant on two factors: interest rates declining and the fact that the category includes interest booked on "phantom" redevelopment loans that have been written off. Overall, she noted the 4% economic growth dur-

ing the three year period from 2019 to January 2022 was low compared to the (pre-pandemic) 3 to 5% increases typically recorded year over year.

Special revenue realized in the last year included \$3.2 million from the first tranche of ARPA funds that were put into a sinking fund out of which they will be drawn as needed, and \$2.25 million from the Palos Colorados Settlement. (Those funds were distributed into a sinking fund of \$1.75 million for engineering staff to implement Vision Zero, and \$500,000 into a separate sinking fund for money to seed Vision Zero capital projects.)

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# World class art to be featured at new Brant development



Image provided

By M.D. Jones

The Lafayette City Council at its Jan. 10 meeting voted unanimously to approve the installation of two works of art at the new Brant development by Lennar at the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Dolores Drive. The decision was the culmination of three years of proposals and modifications from developer Lennar in coordina-

tion with the city of Lafayette's Public Art Committee and the Lafayette City Council, according to a report by Public Art Committee Staff Liaison Jenny Rosen.

The new artwork will be comprised of works by two separate artists. The first artist selected by the city council, ceramic artist Aileen Barr, will install handmade tile mosaic panels for planter boxes along the news walkway leading from Mt.

Diablo Boulevard to the public trail above the development, as well as a staircase design along that path. According to the staff report presented by Rosen, Barr's work will feature "colors and curved lines and stylized plant life that coordinate with the building and with the hills behind the development and culminate in a stairway featuring a flight of birds to the cloud and sky." Barr's prior notable

work includes a similar stairway mosaic on the steps at Lincoln Park in San Francisco.

The second art feature will be designed by the art partnership Wowhaus, who was asked that the piece reflect the natural environment of Lafayette. It will feature a laser-etched, stainless steel, free-standing vertical totemic sculpture of Brant geese in flight as a nod to the name of the development, "The Brant." Lighting from the sun during the day and from an LED lighting component at night will illuminate a dot-matrix pattern, the staff report noted. This pattern will create an image of migratory birds and thereby also complement the design of the mosaic stairway of the first art installation.

The cost for both art installations is \$302,960 and was made possible by Section 6-2603 of the Lafayette Municipal Code which requires not less than 1% of the final construction or alteration cost to go toward instal-

lation of public art. Further consideration for approval by the city council included a minimal cost of maintenance of these art projects. According to a proposal submitted by Leah Denman, project manager for Lennar, this will be accomplished with the durable nature of the high-fired tile artwork and the steel composition of the sculptural work, as well as its lightbox only needing replacing about every 10 years. The cost of the maintenance of these exhibits will be recorded with the county as part of the CC&R's for the condo's Homeowner's Association.

In reference to the new art installations Vice Mayor Carl Anduri stated, "This is exactly how the public art committee and the art requirement for buildings is supposed to work. These are truly exciting works that we are going to have in the city."

The artwork is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2022.

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