

Legacy Lafayette

Legacy Lafayette
Summary of Discussion – Stakeholder
Meeting (Strong Economy Topic)
July 18th, 2019
6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Lafayette Senior Center

Attendees: Paul Rayl (City), Jana Easley (City), Britt Palmberg (RICK), Martin Landers (Plan Tools), Vicky Uhland, Guy Higgins, Karen Norback, Stephanie Walton, Nancy Nixon, Bob Magin, Tjwant Mangat, Seth White, Roger Wilcox, Linda Blanch, Marsha Rabidian, Debbie Cook, Gail Reeds, Doug Connaroe, Lynn Riedel

Note: The summary below does not include every comment made during the meeting. These notes are intended to capture the key takeaways and comments from participants at the stakeholder meeting.

Summary of Takeaways from Group Discussions

1. **Redevelopment:** Any discussion about the economy in Lafayette cannot avoid the elephant in the room – redevelopment. Lands in Lafayette can be classified as either privately owned and developed lands, publicly owned land that is developed, or parks and open space. The big question is how Lafayette will handle the pressure for development. The current comprehensive plan doesn't talk very much about redevelopment or densifying the community. One participant thought that redevelopment represented the upcoming "third phase" of the City's development (after its development as a small town, then as a suburban community). The City needs to set priorities about redevelopment and what information and guidance about redevelopment will end up in the comprehensive plan. Lafayette should learn from Boulder's mistakes from the past in this regard.
2. **Attracting Consumers:** Guy Higgins noted that Lafayette really can't grow very much at this point through population, so the question is how we can attract consumers. Anthem, to our east, has zero stores. How do we get folks from the residential communities like Anthem to come here for their goods and services?
3. **Attracting and Nurturing Other Kinds of Businesses:** Karen Norback indicated that the City needs an economic development strategy for small businesses. Many of the deals and incentives that the City has provided have not been for small businesses. We should explore having incubators for innovative companies. If we don't have these kinds of incubators, many of these companies will

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start up somewhere else. It would be good to explore the use of “scaled incentives” to keep small businesses here and to get innovators to come here. It may also make sense to have a “mentoring center” for small businesses in Lafayette.

4. Planning for the Lifecycle of Big Box Retailers: Karen Norback indicated that the City needs an “end of life” planning strategy for when big box retail stores end their useful life and close. We need a plan for these buildings, in much the same way that we develop a strategy for small businesses. Many of these elements of economic development are interconnected.
5. Discussion of Urban Growth Boundary: Bob Magin indicated that the current urban growth boundary is limiting Lafayette. He suggested that we could expand the urban growth boundary, but do it with a stipulation. The boundary could be expanded, but only for developments that provide a certain percentage of their projects for permanently affordable housing. This is “thinking outside the box”. Bob indicated that Lafayette could work with Boulder County in coordinating efforts to expand the urban growth boundary with affordable housing efforts.
6. Further Discussion of Incubator Idea: The Chamber of Commerce could be encouraged to sponsor “job opportunity fairs” and could work with startups, to help to transition from being in incubators to operating on their own. The 1380 building on Public Road is empty, in part because its \$26 per foot rents are too high for startups. We should explore a program to subsidize rents in order to encourage businesses to be developed and come out of incubators. Subsidies for startups and small businesses would be a good idea.
7. Mixed Use Development – We have an opportunity to develop more mixed use along major corridors such as Highway 7, with retail below, and residential above.
8. Support for artists: Lafayette needs to explore having space for arts to operate and sell their goods. The rent is too high for most artists in the Lafayette area.
9. Mobile home housing: Debbie Cook’s table indicated support for mobile homes and modular housing. There is a great deal of concern about improving the management of trailer parks in Lafayette.

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10. Jobs Needed: Debbie’s table thought that Lafayette needed more tech jobs, particularly mid-level tech jobs. The group thought having more live / work space would help with gaining jobs other than in the tech field. Need a mixture of small and large businesses.
11. Outreach to small businesses: Need more outreach, to attract them and market to them to come to Lafayette.
12. 120th Street: City needs a strategy for this part of town, as there are a number of underutilized properties in the area.
13. Geographic areas to focus on: Public Road, Baseline Road
14. Needs of younger people: A number of comments that there isn’t enough for young people to do in Lafayette (for fun) especially at night.
15. Discussion of training, human development: A number of comments were made that Lafayette needs to explore having more vocational technical training programs available. Longmont is an example of a community that has successfully pursued vo-tech training. The reality is that many people do not have the money to go to college, and the focus should be on allowing people to gain the skills they will need in the workforce. Need more training for the trades. In many cases, even a six month training program will provide more marketable skills for a young person than a four year degree would.
16. Need to step up outreach, marketing, recruitment efforts: Need more outreach to small businesses who may want to locate here. Need more outreach to prospective companies in general. We need more activity on 120th Street. Need to study what Louisville has done with the Tech Center to make it a success. Need to study what has worked in other towns from an economic development perspective. Need to approach prospective multi-national companies, as well as companies with only five or ten employees. Need to set up an outreach and marketing program.
17. Involvement of young people: Several comments that the Comprehensive Plan needs to engage young people, as this town is their future.
18. Takeaway comments from Councilor Walton: 1) The Comprehensive Plan needs opportunities to recognize that the aging population is still an important driver for economic growth. How can

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companies in Lafayette employ seniors so that they are investing and giving back? 2) How can the Chamber partner in economic activities? 3) The state now allows local municipalities to set a minimum wage. This is an important conversation to have, and it is happening in Boulder and in Boulder County. The City of Lafayette should be part of the conversation.

19. Comments about Training: The City needs a skills training center for young people. It is also possible that older people could help with the training of young people (for example, for plumbers, electricians, or welders). Not sure if the government should get involved in this effort necessarily. The training could be offered on an income-eligible basis. Through training, master trades people could gain helpers.
20. Small versus large businesses: The City needs to consider whether its decisions will be helping a bigger business to simply supplant a smaller one. For example, will the TSC just supplant Jax, which has been a great local business for many years?
21. Housing – Discussion of trailers: Would it be possible to have two-level homes on the sites of trailer park lots? Could we integrate this and other forms of new housing into the trailer parks? Need to go more vertical with housing.
22. Closing comments by Seth White: 1) He doesn't like the implication from the economics board that densification may be needed for economic growth. He is not in favor of greater densification. 2) If people who tend to have white collar jobs are living in Lafayette, then we need to have more white collar jobs here. 3) The Chamber has been ineffectual. It needs to be taking charge more than it has been.
23. Closing comments by Vicky Uhland: Between what we already have and what is in the pipeline, very soon the City will have over 3,000 apartments or condos. This is a lot of units, and it seems to fly in the face of arguments for having more multi-family units.
24. Closing comments by Karen Norback: The "shop local" campaign needs to be promoted more. We are losing sales tax dollars to other communities when we already have the items that people need, right here. The City needs a greater educational effort to push the need to shop local. Need to focus

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on educating people about what their sales taxes pay for in a fun way, so that people see the need to shop local.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM COMMENT SHEETS:

- For housing, there is limited room for additional housing. The market is driven by Boulder, and we should increase inventory to help the situation.
- Need more wealth creating jobs
- Small businesses drive most growth, but they do tend to fail the most often
- Need to reach out to Anthem residents
- Need to attract high-tech companies in key areas such as medical, agriculture, and water reuse
- Need to explore how to make Lafayette attractive for buying local
- Need “affordable business” scaled incentives for smaller businesses
- Don’t incentivize already successful businesses.
- Need to preserve the “naturally occurring” affordable housing of mobile home parks
- Need to consider multi-generational housing
- The Waneka property could be a good location for micro housing or for permanently affordable housing
- Need more housing near areas where BRT is planned...this would be great for housing geared to lower wage or entry level households
- Need more economic activity in areas where seniors have a need for affordable housing and access to basic services.
- Should some of the industrial zoned areas be rezoned as mixed use?
- How do we get people in Indian Peaks, Louisville shopping in Lafayette?
- The City could support a general improvement district geared to small businesses
- Need to attract more regional spending. For downtown Lafayette, this means capitalizing on Highway 7 and areas east of town.

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- Need to encourage more bikes and transit from a transportation perspective.
- How can our chamber participate differently?
- Is there a way to maintain our services as we get to full build out, given our sales and property tax bases?
- Is there an art / historic / tourism economic opportunity?
- Suggestion to renovate the housing along Public Road and Baseline into live work units for artists, combining storefronts with living space.
- Need more tech jobs
- Public Road and Old Town are great areas for small businesses and artists, crafts.
- Need a combination of smaller businesses encouraged in the old part of town where people walk and relax, and larger businesses located in a technology park or larger setting
- Need to define “affordable housing” in such a way that it addresses the most financially precarious members of the community (i.e., household incomes under \$25K, rather than incomes of around \$50K).
- Need more educational jobs
- Baseline is a key area for focus
- Need to build more tiny homes
- Public Road and Baseline (near 287) are in particular need for attention
- Need to focus more on small businesses, and not big box
- Need to help small businesses to stay and promote them. No condos on Public Road.
- Solicit input from architects to brainstorm how to integrate affordable housing into projects with more expensive housing
- Lafayette should develop a skills training center, perhaps in a vacant building such as at 1380 S Public
- Offer reduced prices for low income eligible households to apply for help with electrical, plumbing, carpentry, etc.

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- S. Public Road needs to grow, but not by replacing existing businesses with housing units. Perhaps more businesses should go there instead.
- Need to support both small and large businesses. However, support for large businesses should not result in big businesses pushing out the small ones. Kohl's is an example of a business that is offering something (clothes) that is not as commonly found in Lafayette.
- Lafayette should have a tech park that encourages the multitude of tech leftovers from the big nearby companies to start their own businesses.
- Encourage the Chamber to attract new businesses, especially startups, through job opportunity fairs.
- Can the city or county subsidize start up or mom and pop businesses? Retail and office rents now exceed \$25 per foot and this makes it very difficult for small businesses.
- Explore cohousing ideas.
- Need to allow secondary housing units in all neighborhoods and also tiny house development
- Need "economic gardening" for the businesses that are here and to provide the support that would attract new businesses
- Need public / private job training organizations in Lafayette.
- Need a "buy local" program, and a program for small business to offer hobby or skills classes.
- South Metro Chamber is an example of a well run chamber..little value in the current Lafayette chamber.
- It must be a priority to maintain the currently affordable housing in our mobile home parks. It is very vulnerable.
- Need more white collar jobs here so people don't have to commute to Boulder, Longmont, Louisville, etc.
- The comp plan should not be driven by the complaints of developers who complain about difficulties in doing business in Lafayette.
- Need to allow tiny homes and ADUs city wide.

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- Need more tech jobs. Need an economic development director who goes after smaller tech businesses that support the larger tech businesses in Denver and Boulder.
- The west side of town needs more help with offices and retail.
- Need help for both small and larger businesses.
- We could have a destination downtown and attract more business from Anthem
- We need an economic development director who does that only, not two other jobs
- Need a mentoring center for businesses
- Small businesses aren't getting enough support. Rather, the big businesses are getting the most support.
- We are leaving money on the table by not encouraging more people to shop in Lafayette.
- Need "scaled incentives" to bring in small start ups and support what is here.
- Property taxes have gotten really high and are driving people out.
- Should we explore rent control?
- Need more jobs in insurance and other processing jobs and line work. Data analyst jobs. What is the City's strategy to attract business?
- Need more parking for Baseline and the Public Road corridor.
- Explore the use of City-run Internet
- Need more input from younger people and the Hispanic population