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Positive Lafayette Bike Park Stakeholders Meeting

By Cathy Tyson



Photo provided by Rachael Lopes

"Give me a shovel, I'm ready," said Nicco DeLuca. He was just one of a standing room only crowd of mostly youthful bike enthusiasts who are fired up about having a bike park in Lafayette.

A presentation by Nat Lopes, of Hilride Progression Development Group, a firm that specializes in bike park design hired by the City of Lafayette, kicked off the first official Stakeholder Meeting with an exciting presentation that energized the already energetic attendees.

"The illegal creek jumps were very popular and a common problem we've seen. It's great to see that the city is being progressive and environmentally sensitive," said Lopes. Indeed there was damage to the Las Trampas Creek riparian area caused by unauthorized BMX and mountain bikers. Parks maintenance staff has repeatedly removed these sites, but diligent bike jumpers keep building more. It's the bike version of "Whack-a-mole."

Located on the south end of the Community Park, the approximately one acre site is an ideal location for the new park that will feature gravity fed jumps for beginning, intermediate and advanced level riders. The 500 foot elevation change, hose and spigot at the bottom, along with an existing storm drain, bathrooms, garbage cans, plus the perfect spot for spectators in a shady eucalyptus grove, are essential elements of a successful park.

"You could really pack in quite a few jumps. This site has a nice slope, great contours, when we look at a park, that's what we want, good flow and circulation," said Lopes.

He emphasized the importance of getting input from stakeholders at the

ground level as to what specifically they would like to see at the Lafayette Bike Park. Attendees were handed a Design Development Survey with elevation lines to pencil in their preferred features and a Community Profile Survey, to gather information on the types of users and develop a list of possible future volunteers.

Bike Park users have asked to build and maintain the jumps in the future bike park, allowing them the flexibility of adjustments over time, this also creates a sense of ownership and promotes volunteerism that will benefit others, and keeps costs down. Area parents will be pleased that there will be a "constructive" summer activity for their teens to engage in, that gets their kids off the couch. In addition, perhaps local merchants will be pleased that this is a potential destination for loitering students.

"We want this to be a model for other parks departments in the Bay Area who are in the same situation," said Lopes. Encouraging the youthful users, "This is your chance; please give detailed descriptions of features you want." Possible options include: rollers, berms, table top jumps, gap jumps - very popular with this crowd, hip jumps, step ups, drop progression, rhythm jumps and more.

When asked if any of the meetings attendees has experience building jumps, quite a few hands went up (possibly the scofflaw creek-bed diggers.)

After initial heavy equipment grading, a substantial number of volunteers will be needed to do jump construction. Potential users are highly encouraged to go online to fill out the Community Profile Survey along with the Design Development Survey. www.lafayettebikepark.com



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