

City of Lafayette Staff Report

For: Lafayette City Council
By: Steven Falk, Lafayette City Manager
Date Written: July 30, 2009
Meeting Date: August 10, 2009
Subject: Draft Letter to Property Owners Regarding City's Interest in Purchasing Downtown Property for the Purpose of Public Parking

Introduction

At your meeting on July 13th, the City Council directed staff to draft a letter that would be sent to certain downtown property owners regarding the City's interest in purchasing a downtown property for the purpose of public parking. Staff has attached the draft letter, along with a map indicating eleven properties that would be good candidates for this purpose.

Background

The City Council has long had an interest in expanding the amount of off-street parking in the downtown area. To this end, in the early 1990's the Council installed parking meters and ordered that the proceeds from the meters be gathered in a special fund for the purpose of acquiring additional off-street parking. The parking fund now has an estimated fund balance of \$2.5M.

In January of this year, the Council added "Goal Eight: Secure Additional Downtown Parking" to its annual workplan. Incorporated in that goal is the directive to "pursue options for new downtown parking."

More recently, as part of the downtown strategic planning process, the Council articulated a "parking boundary" within which it will seek to acquire off-street parking. This boundary stretches, roughly, from Town Center to Second Street along Mt. Diablo Boulevard, and up Moraga Road to Brook Street.

At its meeting on July 13th, the City Council directed staff to draft a letter that would be sent to certain property owners within the parking boundary regarding the City's interest in purchasing a downtown property for the purpose of public parking. Staff has drafted this letter (attached).

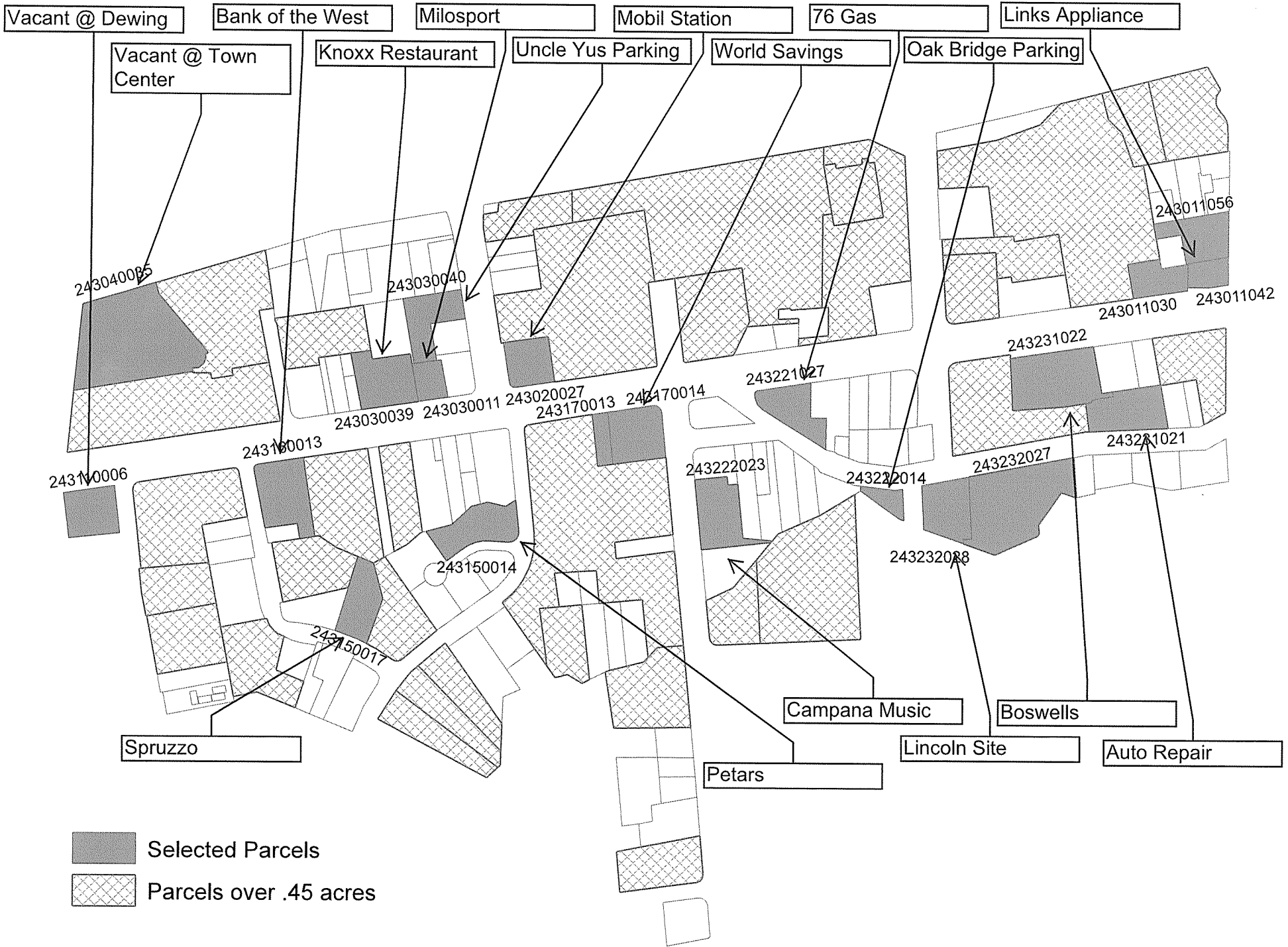
Staff has also attached a map indicating seventeen properties that might be good candidates for this purpose. In developing the map, staff rejected parcels that were too small, too narrow, too

difficult to access, or that had new or particularly successful development. The properties include:

- Vacant parcel @ Mt. Diablo and Dewing
- Town Center III
- Bank of the West
- Knoxx Restaurant
- Milosport
- Uncle Yu's Parking Lot
- Mobile Station @ Oak Hill Road
- World Savings
- 76 Gas @ Lafayette Plaza
- Oak Bridge Parking Lot on Golden Gate Way
- Abandoned Links Appliance Store
- Abandoned Spruzzo Restaurant site
- Petars
- Campana Music
- Lincoln Site (Golden Gate Way at First Street)
- Boswells
- Auto Repair Building (Golden Gate Way next to new Library Parking Lot)

Recommendation

Review and amend draft letter and list of properties. Direct staff to send amended letter to property owners.



DRAFT

[LETTERHEAD]

7/28/2009

Property Owner
Address

Dear Property Owner:

The City of Lafayette has long had an interest in expanding off-street public parking in the downtown area. To this end, in the early 1990's the Council installed parking meters and ordered that the proceeds from the meters be gathered in a special fund for the purpose of acquiring additional off-street parking. The parking fund now has an estimated fund balance of \$2.5M. In January of this year, the Council added a goal to secure additional downtown parking to its annual work plan.

More recently, as part of the downtown strategic planning process, the Council articulated a "parking boundary" within which it will actively seek to acquire off-street parking. This boundary stretches, roughly, from Dewing Avenue to Second Street along Mt. Diablo Boulevard, and up Moraga Road to Brook Street.

At its meeting on July 13th, the City Council directed staff to contact certain property owners within the parking boundary to determine their interest in entering into negotiations for this purpose. You are one of those owners.

Public parking may not have to be the only use for the parcel. The draft Downtown Specific Plan also explores the potential for shared public/private parking under or over retail or office development and so, if you have development plans that can accommodate additional public parking, we should have a conversation.

While the City has \$2.5M in the parking fund, other monies may also be available from the Lafayette Redevelopment Agency. Note, however, that California State Law prohibits the City from paying more than appraised fair market value for properties, and any price negotiations would thus be limited by the findings of an independent appraiser.

Finally – and this is very important -- the City Council has no intention to use eminent domain or otherwise force a property owner to sell its property to the City. Any and every transaction will be voluntary.

Given the state of the economy, we expect that several property owners will be interested in this proposition. The City's funds, however, are limited and so if you are interested in discussing this further, please contact me at 925-284-1968, or sfalk@lovelafayette.org. So that the City might consider its options in an orderly fashion, I would appreciate hearing from you not later than September 30, 2009.

Most sincerely,

Steven Falk
Lafayette City Manager