

Dear Lafayette Consolidated Government Council:

October 2, 2018

Hello, I am Mrs. Denise Richard Lanclos, Co Chairperson for the Lafayette Azalea Trail Committee.

I want to share with you a five year plan to promote Lafayette as a “City of Azaleas”; similar to Tyler TX, the “City of Roses” and Mobile, AL, the Azalea Trail and Historic Properties Attractions. The Azalea committee of Scenic Lafayette inventoried over 2,000 azaleas along the trail and revitalized the Historic Azalea Trail by planting over 800 azaleas. Because of their efforts the Azalea Society of America officially certified Lafayette as an Azalea City; one of only 15 in the USA. We have received overwhelming support from the community for keeping the trail beautiful. This year’s project is to revitalize Coolidge Blvd. in the Oil Center in November. Our azalea trail is over 80 years old and is a cultural asset and attraction to this day. I would like to grow this attraction across our city onto our Grand Boulevards and Historic Landmark Properties!

As a native of Lafayette, I enjoyed bicycling the azalea trail and participating in the azalea trail runs in the 1990’s. I still have one of the T-shirts from those events which I am wearing tonight. You will find in your handouts a cultural map of what the City of Azaleas could become over the next five years. I have studied other floral trails in our country and found that many of them attract thousands of visitors a year during their bloom seasons! Lafayette used to attract over 40,000 in the 1940’s and 50’s to drive the trail. Lafayette has stunning lush landscapes of evergreen trees and shrubs with rich soil that is perfect for growing azaleas. The Southern Indica Azaleas grown here are some of the largest in the world, often over 8’ tall and have an extreme amount of flower power. Over the next five years I would like to plant Indica Formosa azaleas on our grand boulevards between the live oaks. Most of these grand boulevards of Teurlings Drive, Cajun Dome, Camellia, Louisiana Avenue, La Rue France, Frem Boustany, South City, Bertrand boulevards all have beautiful live oaks.

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Cajun Dome would be planted with Red & White Formosa azaleas (ULL Colors) in the athletic sections from Johnston to Congress. I would like to CREATE a kaleidoscope of various Formosa azalea colors along Camellia. The other boulevards could take on themes of just one or two colors etc. The Grand Walk of Oaks in Moncus Park is planned to have a white azalea brocade along that entire walk!

*I would like you to consider updating the street signs in these areas to have the word "Boulevard" included. Our boulevards of oak trees are a perfect landscape for the Southern Indica Azaleas. The city watering truck would be used to water these plants for at least the first year or two after planting projects are done. We can promote this cultural floral attraction by inviting visitors to come to Lafayette and drive the **"Grand Boulevards of Live Oaks & Azaleas"**. This attraction will bring business to restaurants, hotels, shops and other events. We have a vibrant community with so much to offer and I feel this would be the most beautiful springtime attraction we could CREATE. Lafayette "can do" this, let's put our Historic Azalea Trail and City of Azaleas on the world map and **"Watch us Bloom"**! I designed a new brochure and postcards this summer and distributed them to all Louisiana Welcome centers across the state. I designed and launched a new website this summer for Lafayette's Historic Azalea Trail and City of Azaleas.*

We are partnering with TRAIL, Mr. Scott Schilling, to lead our annual spring bike ride and classic car cruise. We are promoting this event to car clubs throughout the state and beyond. We are also partnering with the Historic Properties by planting azaleas on their grounds to bring those properties back to their former azalea glory. In a few years we will redesign our brochure to have three to four trails in the city; the Historic & Downtown District, a Historic Gardens District, University and Hub City Trail, and the Grand Boulevard Trails. I feel confident with the support of the CREATE plan and matching donations and grants we will Keep Lafayette Beautiful with azaleas. This cultural floral asset will add to the quality of life and have a positive economic impact. In your handouts you will find a beautiful new postcard, please mail it to someone you know out of state! I appreciate your time and consideration tonight. Thank you for the work you do for our beautiful community.

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