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Letters to the Editor

Measure L Increases Home Values

Dear Editor,

The Wallace family has lived or worked in Orinda in the real estate business since the 1930s when my dad sold homes, lots and land here in Orinda. After graduating from Cal as a real estate major in 1955 and a three year stint in the U.S. Navy I came into the family real estate business here in 1958, permanently residing here since 1963. My wife Gerry and I have been active members in many facets of this wonderful community ever since.

The largest investment most of us make is in our homes and fortunately for Orindans our homes have almost always risen in value. On the plus side, one obvious reason is our top-of-the-line school system; another is scarcity or a limited supply with an on-going large demand. Conversely, a huge negative has always been our inferior road system which have been a financial issue for let's just say, forever.

Almost no one over the years, and I believe now, would disagree that our roads and drainage are a continuing serious problem. To that I add, "And they have a real negative impact on our home values." Measure L is the third leg of a long-term plan devised over the past 10 years to correct this deficiency in small bite-size chunks which our community has in previous elections found palatable. We need to stay the course.

As a long time senior Orindan, with grown kids, settled and here to stay, I have no direct interest in this issue; however, I do have big indirect interest - VOTE YES ON MEASURE L- my Orinda home value will grow 24/7 even when I am sound asleep at night.

Clark Wallace
Orinda

Hall Drive Needs Enforcements

Dear Editor,

Hall Drive's 25 mph speed limit needs enforcement. Cars and trucks routinely fly down and up the hill at 40 to 50 mph. It's a very narrow country road without street lights and blind areas around curves. I was once told by an Orinda police officer that he would cite any driver who drove on Hall at more than 40 mph. It's very dangerous for walkers, runners and animals. Hall Drive needs consistent enforcement of the 25 mph similar to enforcement of the Glorietta speed limit. Radar equipment is needed on a regular basis (like Glorietta). Stop signs or a traffic signal is critical for Hall Drive and Moraga Way intersection. It is virtually impossible at certain times of the day to cross that intersection by foot or in a vehicle. And a left turn off Hall Drive onto Moraga Way in busy traffic when students are on their way to Miramonte is dangerous. (Somehow my son and my daughter survived.) I recommend speed bump(s) on Hall Drive, radar enforcement, and either a stop sign or preferably a traffic signal at the intersection of Hall Drive and Moraga Way. These changes should have been implemented years ago.

Michael Woods
Orinda

Moraga Should Take Lessons
on Sinkholes From San Francisco

Dear Editor,

I have observed the lack of progress the city of Moraga is making to repair the pothole that opened up at Rheem Boulevard and Moraga Road on March 14. The city hired consultants to perform a forensic analysis of the cause of the failure - along with a repair recommendation. How much did

that cost? Just recently, almost two-months later, the area was opened to limited traffic, but the sinkhole has not been repaired. The purported multi-million dollar repair is still months away from completion.

Compare this to the recent sinkholes that have opened in San Francisco. On Wednesday, May 11, a 12-foot-by-5-foot sinkhole opened on Mission Street near New Montgomery Street. The hole was caused by a broken 1880s era brick sewer line. City officials estimated that it would take three days to fix. On Friday, April 21, a 17-foot by 22-foot by 10-foot sinkhole appeared on Sacramento Street, between Lyon and Baker streets that was also caused by a broken sewer main. The city had the street reopened by Monday morning. There are many other examples of sinkholes in San Francisco that were fixed in a matter of days, and none cost millions of dollars to repair.

Moraga does not have the same resources or experience as San Francisco with sinkholes, but the inability to promptly repair the sinkhole is puzzling. Moraga should have asked San Francisco for advice. How much does it really take to fix a pipe and fill a hole with dirt and pave it over? Citizens of Moraga should be asking.

Don Kavanagh
Orinda, CA

Town Council Ignored Residents' Wishes

Dear Editor,

The Moraga Town Council voted 3-2 to reduce Moraga Road from four lanes to three lanes between Draeger Drive and Corliss Drive, despite the public survey results overwhelmingly indicating that residents prefer four lanes!

Last year, we were asked to opine on four configurations of Moraga Road: the existing four lane configuration, Option 1 (three lanes), Option 2, (two lanes) and Option 3 (four narrower lanes). Moragans overwhelmingly preferred four lanes as the best solution for drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians and public transit.

65 percent liked a four-lane configuration (existing configuration or Option 3).

87 percent liked having two travel lanes in each direction.

78 percent indicated easing traffic congestion within Moraga is important.

"Respondents showed a desire to improve safety and convenience for bicyclists and pedestrians ..., but not to the extent of reducing the number of travel lanes within the limited existing right-of-way"

When residents who preferred Options 1 and 2 were advised that fewer lanes would result in greater vehicle delay, about half changed their opinion to the existing configuration or Option 3. The Town spent \$40,000 on the survey and the staff says the results are meaningful. Yet, three council members ignored the results and voted for an option that will lead to greater congestion. Years ago, the council arbitrarily installed speed bumps on Camino Pablo without surveying the residents, consulting with rescue authorities, or considering that Camino Pablo was designed to be a 35 mph thoroughfare. Ultimately, the council had to undo some of that work, and the changes unexpectedly redirected extra traffic onto Larch Avenue.

Last time, the council didn't bother to ask us, which was bad enough. This time, the council asked us, but then ignored what we said. Why spend \$40,000 for your constituency's input if you're going to disregard what we tell you?

We all know how bad Moraga Road can get during rush hours, school commute periods at Rheem and Campo, and frequent Campo special events such as swim meets, athletics and theatrical performances.

Please contact the town council and let them know if you are opposed to a decision that will increase traffic.

Ted Ting
Moraga

Watch out for Misinformation about Measure L

Dear Editor,

Voters deserve the facts about Measure L Orinda Road Repairs on the June ballot.

In the last seven years, the city has repaired almost one-third of the public roads. Recent roads

repaired include Ivy Drive, Camino Sobrante, St. Stephen's Drive, Overhill Road and portions of Camino Pablo. For a complete list of roads repaired and those scheduled for repair, visit the city's website at cityoforinda.org, and click on the tab for Roads & Infrastructure and look for: "Current Projects" for 2015 and 2016 program roads "Pending 2017" for 2017 program roads "Accomplishments to Date" for roads repaired since 2008.

The first part of the \$20 million generated by Measure J, passed by the voters two years ago, was spent on 2015 road projects, and the remainder is committed to the 2016 and 2017 road projects. Measure L bonds will double road repair expenditures beginning in 2017. All road repairs have been thoroughly discussed at more than 16 public meetings of the Citizens Infrastructure Oversight Commission (CIOC) and the city council.

To continue making progress towards fixing Orinda's residential roads, we need to pass Measure L on the June ballot. If we do not, we will 1) lose momentum on road repair; 2) take far longer to repair all of our roads, and 3) the total cost to repair will be higher because as more roads deteriorate the costs of borrowing and materials will likely increase.

Measure L bond proceeds will add a professional Project Manager to oversee the increased level of road repairs. A YES vote on Measure L will bring the Project Manager on board. A NO vote will unnecessarily delay road repairs and increase costs. A YES vote will expedite repairing all Orinda's public roads to a good condition at a lower cost.

Let's continue the progress we have begun. Vote YES on measure L!

Brad Barber, Bob Burt, Mark Roberts, Sue Severson

Community Volunteer Co-Chairs, Fix Orinda Roads

Orinda residents

All Trail-users Need to Follow Rules

Dear Editor,

As a Moraga bicyclist I frequently ride the Lafayette/Moraga Trail. While I attempt to be courteous and cognizant in my behavior I cannot say the same for others I encounter. Some of the actions I have had to deal with: Minimally-supervised kids on bikes riding erratically (I actually had a father tell me, after his son veered directly into my path, "He's six, that's how he's supposed to ride."); Moms with strollers walking three abreast and apparently expecting me to go off trail to pass them; people so lost in the content of their device that no "On your left!" is loud enough to penetrate their consciousness (if it's that engrossing, why don't you stay home and enjoy it undisturbed?). The trail signage is clear that cyclists are to brake and call out when passing — and that pedestrians need to be aware of their surroundings. I'm holding up my end; can't say the same for my fellow travelers.

William Raffetto

Moraga

Moraga Community Comes

Together for Faire

Dear Editor,

A substantial number of volunteers are always needed on the day of the Moraga Community Faire. Scout Troop 246 has always sent a dozen or more boys who help set up the tables, chairs, canopies and much more with a wonderful cooperative spirit. In fact, they have done this for 10 consecutive years. Last year a large number of Saint Mary's College students supervised all of the day's children's activities like the climbing wall, hi-stryker and face painting.

Just days before the Faire opened this year, we learned that there were LESS than a handful of Saint Mary's students who had responded to the request for volunteers. No one had realized that finals started at Saint Mary's on the Monday after the Faire, not a week after the Faire as had occurred in other years. I had a mini-crisis on my hands. Do we shut down these activities or are there other sources of volunteers at this eleventh hour?

Word went out to the Moraga community in a wide variety of ways: two posts on Nextdoor.com, announcements at service clubs and other gatherings, phone calls to friends and leaders, calls to contacts in the high school, etc. The Saint Mary's College team I have worked with for eight months continued to promote the opportunity to work with the town on this event. By Friday afternoon we had over 50 volunteers: JM and high school students, more scouts, many college students and

adults.

My experience was one of amazement, as I watched the incredible "give" of so many people in our town. So here's a huge thanks to all of you who helped in passing on the word, and for jumping in with your time. It was truly a "community faire" in more ways than ever, which ensured that our children and adults could have a wonderful day.

Ellen Beans, Moraga Community Faire Coordinator
Moraga

Setting the Record Straight

Dear Editor,

As a current Orinda City Council member I would like to respond to Steve Cohn's May 20 letter published in the East Bay Times regarding my position on Orinda Measure L.

I am in full support of Measure L and urge all Orinda citizens that want our roads and drains to continue to be fixed to vote YES.

During the council's debate on whether a June ballot measure should be for the full amount of the remaining needed capital program or another phase at a lower amount, I stated that my preference was for the entire needed amount.

I expressed concern that the phased approach could result in funding challenges for the last capital phase but I did not say that it wouldn't happen and the city minutes reflect that accurately.

I have worked on the city's road repair plans for over five years. Our phased program is making progress and delivering results. We need to continue this progress.

I will be voting YES on Measure L this June 7.

Darlene K. Gee

Orinda City Council Member

Orinda

Improve Orinda's Image With Better Roads

Dear Editor,

As a 35+ year Orinda real estate broker, I have long been aware of the negative reaction of many prospective relocation buyers to the poor state of Orinda's roads. Coming from prosperous areas in other parts of the country, they think the condition of our roads is at odds with the image I have given them of Orinda — an upscale community, suffused with civic pride. We are very fortunate that a small group of Orinda citizens have volunteered so much of their personal time and energy to champion a low cost solution to help solve the crisis of our roads. To paraphrase Winston Churchill, never has so much been owed by so many to so few!

I hope you will join me in voting in support of Measure L in order that Orinda may continue to retain its image as a vibrant and thriving community in the minds of prospective home buyers, thereby maintaining our property values, not to mention the pride of longtime residents of our town.

Linda Friedman

Orinda

Keep Roads Progress Moving

Dear Editor,

I grew up in Orinda. I learned to drive on Orinda streets when they were smooth and pothole-free. It has been upsetting to watch the streets I live and work on fall apart over the years. I am encouraged by the recent progress Orinda has made restoring so many of our roads. It is great to be able to drive newly repaired roads without dodging potholes (which have damaged my car in the past) or tripping on loose asphalt while walking the dog. Many of our roads have been repaired or are on the schedule, but current funding is not sufficient to repair all the roads that need it. All our roads should be in good condition and provide safe access for drivers, walkers, bike riders and emergency vehicles. We are making good progress but we need funds from Measure L to keep the work going. As you drive around Orinda, you can see that the road plan is working and things are getting better. I urge all Orindans to make the commitment to continue the road work and vote YES ON MEASURE L!

Nancy Booth
Orinda

Don't Delay Orinda Road Repair

Dear Editor,

A recent mailer from those opposed to Orinda's Measure L suggested that voters should wait until the last dollar is actually spent from previous Measure L sales tax and Measure J bond tax measures before we are asked to authorize more bonds. This ignores the fact that all of the previous Measure L sales tax and Measure J bond proceeds have now either been spent or committed to road repairs through 2017.

In order to legally contract for road repairs, the city has to have the necessary funds in hand. To have funds in hand, the city has to sell bonds that are first authorized by the citizens. For authorization, citizens need to vote on a tax measure to repay the bonds.

Once bonds are authorized, final street selection and bid packages need to be completed with Council review. Bids received then need to be reviewed and a contract awarded after Council review.

All of the above necessarily creates a relatively lengthy timeframe between the election and the date work can begin. But payment for the work is not made until the job is done, inspected, and accepted. This adds still more time between the election and the actual disbursement of funds.

Because of the lead time required, we don't want to wait until 2018 for citizens to authorize the next round of bonds. If we did, it would probably mean no road repairs in 2018 and possibly 2019 given the lead time required between the election (bond authorization) and the start of construction.

To maintain the current momentum in road repair, I urge the citizens of Orinda to vote YES on Measure L. If we fail to do so, we will lose time and the repairs will be more expensive as road deterioration continues and the cost of borrowing and paving materials (now at historic lows) likely rise.

Please note that the road repair funds authorized by taxpayers can only be used to pay for road and storm drain repairs. They cannot be used for any other purpose.

Keep up the momentum. Vote YES on Measure L!

Brad Barber
Orinda

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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