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## Lafayette department of engineering to merge with public works

By Pippa Fisher



New Public Works/Engineering Director Mike Moran Photo Lamo archive

Lafayette's engineering and public works departments are set to merge in early February in a minor reorganization.

Recently approved by the city council, the shuffle was prompted in part by Lafayette City Engineer Tony Coe's announcement that he will be retiring on Feb. 12.

The public works and engineering departments will be combined into a single entity under the public works director; the city engineer position will be eliminated. Two existing employees will be reclassified into new mid-management positions of engineering services manager and public works superintendent.

Additionally the city will be adding a full-time position in administrative services - a communications analyst who will manage the city's social media accounts, write the "Vistas" quarterly newsletter and coordinate the new "Lafayette Listens!" online public opinion-gathering website.

City Manager Steve Falk explains, "Many if not most cities have a single person who directs public works and engineering." He says that Lafayette will be following that approach.

"Mike Moran will assume the new combined position of public works/engineering director. Meanwhile, Donna Feehan will be reclassified as the public works maintenance manager, and Matt Luttrupp will be reclassified as the engineering services manager," says Falk. The merger will take effect in early February. Falk says that Coe will be a part of the transition until he leaves.

After the reclassifications are accounted for, Falk says he believes the savings will be close to \$100,000 annually. However, he points out, "That savings will then be offset by costs associated with the new communications analyst position. Overall, I think we'll be close to cost-neutral."

Moran likes the reorganization and says that he believes merging engineering and public works not only makes them more consistent with similar-sized cities, but also allows better flexibility to share staffing and budget resources between what are now separate departments.

"The retirement of Tony Coe (Lafayette's city engineer for more than 20 years) will leave a large void and I personally would feel uneasy about backfilling that void if we didn't already have a tremendous and experienced staff ready and willing to step up to the challenge," says Moran.

"Matt Luttrupp with his two decades with Lafayette engineering will provide a critical role as the new engineering services manager and one of his main focuses will be development review. Donna Feehan has also worked for Lafayette for more than two decades, first with our finance department but mostly with our public works department. She is very familiar with the everyday tasks, the special projects, and all the contracts associated with the department and I have great confidence that as the new public works services manager she will make sure the public continues to be served well."

Moran is extremely grateful for the opportunities he has received with the city. "I can look back at my last 20 years and remember the streets that were reconstructed, the retaining walls built, the storm drain pipes and traffic signals installed, and the many other tasks I had a hand in, and I feel like I have been part of the many contributors that help keep Lafayette such an incredible place to live, work, shop, eat, explore, and just be."

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[back](#)

