

FIX OUR ROADS – SUPPORT MEASURE C

Guest Commentary

Submitted By Carol Federghi, Mayor, City of Lafayette

Measure C on Lafayette's June 5th ballot deserves our community's support. Lafayette currently faces a \$24 million gap between anticipated revenues for roads and the expenditures required to maintain all roads and fix the 118 that have failed. Measure C would provide the necessary monies to bring all public roads to a good quality and maintain them for the next 30 years. Road repair and maintenance would be funded by a parcel tax, not to exceed \$150 per year per equivalent residential unit for thirty years.

Most of Lafayette's homes and the neighborhood roads that serve them were built in the early 1960s. Without maintenance, roads will last for twelve to fifteen years before their condition declines sharply and will fail totally after about forty years. Reconstruction of totally failed roads costs as much as ten times more than maintaining roads in good condition.

In 1995, recognizing that the City did not have the funds to repair and rebuild its failing roads, voters approved a \$13 million bond which financed the repair of arterial and collector streets used by the most city residents. The work contemplated by that bond is complete and the money has now been spent.

While \$13 million was a significant amount, it was far short of that needed to repair all of Lafayette's public roads. Currently, 118 in Lafayette are considered to be in a "failed" condition. The City consistently spends \$1 million a year from its General Fund on roads. In addition, it has contributed \$2.6 million from its reserves since 2004 to repair some roads before they failed, but those excess reserves are now depleted.

Some residents have questioned why the City has not dedicated to roads money spent on or committed to projects such as the Veterans Memorial, the new library, the Downtown Specific Plan, the multi-sport court project, or the Pleasant Hill Road improvements. First, the City could not have legally used funds on neighborhood roads that it spent or is spending – redevelopment dollars, contributions, or state grants – for the Veterans Memorial, the new library, or the Downtown Specific Plan. The multi-sport court will be funded entirely by Parkland Dedication Fees and donations. The City's funds are committed to the parking lot - for which Parkland Dedication Fees cannot be used – which will serve hundreds of people who come to the Community Center each month for various programs, events, and meetings. While the City contributed General Fund dollars to Pleasant Hill road improvements sought by scores of neighbors, 85% of expenditures came from outside grants, unavailable to repair neighborhood roads.

Of necessity, the City must balance its scarce resources among many worthwhile interests. Forty-three percent of our \$10 million General Fund budget goes toward our small police force. The rest supports planning, public works, engineering, and administration, several of which generate revenue that helps offset their costs. Cutting the \$5.7 million on non-police expenditures in the General Fund budget by even 10% is not supportable, in my opinion, and would yield only \$570,000 annually, not nearly enough to solve our \$24 million problem.



Camino Colorados, Lafayette

Photo by Andy Schreck

A vote for Measure C is a vote for fairness. Our neighbors on failed roads have paid their taxes to help repair arterial, collector, and some more highly used residential roads. Owners of commercial real property will also pay their share. A vote for Measure C is a good investment. Once repaired, anticipated revenues can continue to maintain all roads in good condition, and good roads throughout Lafayette will enhance property values. Without the needed funds from Measure C, our roads will continue to deteriorate, and the cost to repair them will increase substantially. A vote for Measure C is a vote for safety. Good roads are safer for our cars, our pedestrians, and our bicyclists. A vote for Measure C is a vote for an affordable tax, an amount of money many couples spend on only two dinners out in town. Finally, a vote for Measure C is a vote for accountability. Measure C provides for an oversight committee to ensure that moneys are spent for intended purposes.

I urge Lafayette residents to join the Lafayette City Council, the Lafayette School District Trustees, the Lafayette Homeowners Council, the Lafayette Taxpayers Association, the Diablo Valley League of Women Voters, the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, the Lafayette Citizens for Fair Taxes and a long list of concerned citizens in voting "yes" for Measure C on June 5.



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