



Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Feb. 13, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, Feb. 4, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd.

Design Review

Monday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd.

School Board Meeting

Moraga School District

Tuesday, Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
www.moraga.k12.ca.us
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

Town of Moraga:

www.moraga.ca.us
Phone: (925) 888-7022

Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org



Police Report

Pitching in to find victim, 1/21/13 Officers were dispatched to assist Contra Costa County Sheriff's deputies with a dead body lying on one of the hiking trails off of Ridge Crest Road near Canyon. Fire personnel confirmed the person was deceased; the cause of death did not appear to be foul play and will be determined by the coroner.

Car paint scratched, 1/21/13 A Jeep Compass was parked on Ascot Drive around 9 p.m. When the owner went out to the car three days later, he found scratches in the driver's side doors. Estimated damage about \$1,100.

Abandoned car, 1/21/13 An anonymous person reported that there had been a car left unattended for the past six weeks near the intersection of Alta Mesa and Moraga Road. Cops placed a 72-hour notice on the car, no word yet if the owner finally moved it.

Beer boy, 1/21/13 Perhaps celebrating Martin Luther King Day or the school holiday, shortly after midnight, cops came upon a young person under the age of 21 holding a carton filled with beer near an apartment complex on Moraga Road – the mystery youth received a citation.

Loud party complaint, 1/21/13 Cops saw college-age subjects standing in front of the very same apartment on Moraga Road where loud music and voices could be heard. As the police approached the front door – the students ducked inside. Oddly enough, when the police knocked, no one answered, so they mailed the tenant a Town of Moraga loud party ordinance violation citation.

Halloween gear, 1/20/13 Police received a call about what appeared to be a body wrapped in duct tape with hiking boots exposed in the back of a Dodge pick-up truck on Moraga Way. Although the truck left in an unknown direction the reporting person wisely jotted down the license plate number. A check with the DMV found the vehicle registered to a home in Orinda. The homeowner told cops they are big fans of Halloween and the body had been a prop – they also have a fake casket.

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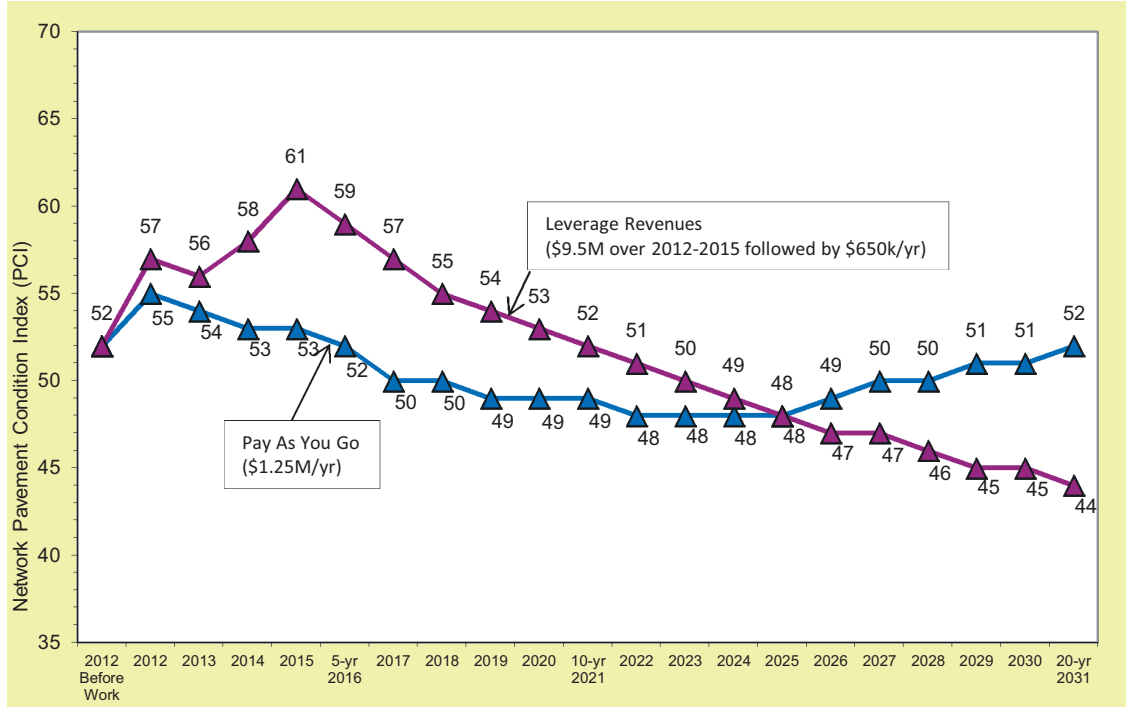
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\$7 Million Plan for Moraga's Roads

By Sophie Braccini



PCI Comparisons of Network (Residential, Collector and Arterials)

Graph provided

The Moraga Town Council plans to launch a significant pavement rehabilitation program for neighborhood streets. To that end, the council decided Jan. 23 to leverage about 50 percent of the revenue stream from the town's new 1 percent sales tax in order to raise \$7 million for the project.

This option was chosen over using the money as it trickles in, a pay-as-you-go alternative that would not have incurred any financial charges for the town but would have only been enough to maintain the roads at current levels without any visible improvements.

From the get-go staff said that the sales tax would be a way to start addressing the road problem, but that more money would be needed in the future. "We said that the sales tax would stop the bleeding, but not solve the problem," said Town Manager Jill Keimach. "By leveraging some of the money, we will show the community

that we can improve the roads dramatically. Once we've proven to residents that we can make a difference, in five to six years, we'll look at other revenue measures or other financing opportunities."

Last fall the maintenance backlog was estimated at \$24 million and Moraga's roads were rated at the bottom of the scale.

There was some initial skepticism on the council about the leveraging mechanism. Vice Mayor Ken Chew asked about the cost of borrowing, and he was given a figure of roughly \$3 million, including an upfront envelope of \$200,000. Chew first indicated that, being financially conservative, he would favor a pay-as-you-go plan, especially since an initial large influx of money did not seem to have a positive impact on the long term.

Council Members Phil Arth and Mike Metcalf disagreed, stating that inflation was bound to come back and

that the dollars to pay the debt would be much less valuable than dollars today. Additionally, Metcalf said that it was not a good idea to disappoint the public by just maintaining the roads at the level they are now. "Pay-as-you-go would not show any improvement over what we have now," he said. "Residents would be disappointed. We need to make some improvement so that people will say, 'that's pretty damn good.'"

Metcalf also said that he believes the City of Orinda, which also passed a sales tax measure in November, was leaning toward a pay-as-you-go plan. Orinda City Council Member Victoria Smith said recently that the city is still in the planning phase, and that the council is likely to take a fairly conservative approach.

Eileen Gallagher, of municipal finance underwriter Stone & Youngberg, explained that California law does not allow municipalities to pledge general funds for borrowing—

instead, the town will use a lease structure.

Gallagher indicated that diverse factors will impact the rate the town receives. Under current conditions Moraga could get a rate of approximately 3.04 percent for a \$7 million loan over 20 years. This would cost \$500,000 per year, which is roughly half of what the tax is estimated to produce.

The sales tax will take effect in April and revenues should reach Moraga in July, so Gallagher estimated that the financing could be done over the summer.

Metcalf asked Public Works Director Edric Kwan what effects residents would see on the roads within three years. "Currently 30 percent of our roads are in good condition, 20 percent are fair, 40 percent are poor and 10 percent are very poor," answered Kwan. "After the 3-year plan we anticipate that 48 percent of the roads will be good, the number of fair roads will stay stable, the number of poor roads will decrease to 13 percent, and the very poor ones will increase to 21 percent." Council members were surprised to hear the latter figure, and Kwan explained that it makes more sense to maintain the better roads because failed ones cost so much more to reconstruct. He added that some of the very poor roads would still be addressed.

Finally, Metcalf and Wykle challenged the assumption that if roads are improved in the short term, they will degrade below current conditions within 20 years if no new funding source is found. "There are ways to maintain roads that are in good condition very inexpensively," said Metcalf. "Our philosophy was to stop the bleeding, make improvements and sustain it as long as we can."

Orinda reporter Laurie Snyder contributed to this article.

No Mid-Year Adjustment for Balanced Budget

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council accepted the mid-year budget report at its Jan. 23 meeting. Administrative Director Stephanie Hom said revenues and expenditures at year-end should meet expectations and keep Moraga in the positive. She did not recommend any adjustments at this time. However, since the most recent report indicates sales tax receipts are running lower than expected, staff will continue to monitor the situation.

Hom estimates that the revenue from property tax, estimated at \$1,646,273, should reach that target

based on actual receipts and mid-December Contra Costa County preliminary property tax settlement data. Her projection shows a \$20,000 shortfall in sales tax. Mayor Dave Trotter asked for additional information on this topic.

"The receipts are consistent with last year's receipts at this time," said Hom. "Staff did not propose any budget adjustments at mid-year but we will monitor the revenue receipts and if we end the year lower than budgeted expectations, I am aware that we can make up the difference with the refund

we received from the county for prior year over-charges in administrative fees."

Sales tax revenue will be even more closely monitored in Moraga this year because the size and stability of this source of revenue will impact Moraga's ability to borrow money against future sales tax revenue.

Other sources of revenue include fees from the Parks and Recreation Department and Planning Department. Due in large part to exceptionally high activity in the Planning Department and a new fee

structure adopted last year, those revenues are at an all time high.

As for expenses, the results are lower than expected and mostly due to staff vacancies. Personnel expense represents 63 percent of the budget; mid-year expense is at 46 percent instead of 50 percent, even with additional costs of overtime for police officers and the hiring of consultants in Public Works and Planning. The hiring of new staff in the second part of the budget cycle should offset the savings. Other expenditures are also on track.

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community. **Send a letter to the editor:** letters@lamorindaweekly.com

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Bill with Comerford Solar ²	\$83	\$214	\$420	\$637	\$855	\$1,073	\$1,290	\$1,508	\$1,726

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¹Based on 6.7% inflation from the utility company. ²Includes all necessary expenses ³Combination of Utility Company and PPA