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Moraga looks ahead to 2020-21 Capital Improvement Program

By Vera Kochan

Trying to remain optimistic in fiscally uncertain times due to coronavirus economic setbacks, Moraga is forging ahead with a Capital Improvement Program budget aimed at strengthening the town's infrastructure needs.

Public Works Director Shawn Knapp, in conjunction with Administrative Services Director Norm Veloso and Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg, began the 2020-21 Fiscal Year budget plan by streamlining the project tracking system for assigning individual projects separate CIP numbers as opposed to using the same number over numerous years as had been done in the past.

The buildings and facilities projects, which involve minor capital improvement along with improvements to government facilities such as funding for construction or upgrades, include continuing upgrades to facilities requiring Americans with Disabilities Act enhancements. The project will also replace the flat roofs located at the town offices and Hacienda de las Flores. Budget costs are expected to come to \$111,000.

Creeks and drainage projects include the Laguna Creek restoration at the Hacienda, which is expected to involve removing the undersized culvert and restoring the natural stream channel in order to prevent another flood like the one that occurred over six years ago. The anticipated cost is \$693,000.

Parks and open space projects will run about \$215,000 and are all directed at the Moraga Commons Park, with plans to renovate two picnic areas in addition to replacing the existing irrigation system with minimal valve control to help conserve water and decrease maintenance and utility costs. The bandshell's composite roof will also need replacing.

The transportation category carries a hefty expected cost of nearly \$11.5 million and involves many projects which are either in final phases or still under construction. These include making curbs ADA compliant; creating a Livable Moraga Road-Corridor Plan (looks at ways to improve the function and character between Campolindo High School and St. Mary's Road); Canyon Bridge Replacement Project; minor traffic safety programs; St. Mary's Road/Rheem/Bollinger Canyon roundabouts design; Moraga Way and Canyon Road/Camino Pablo improvements; and pavement management (fixing neighborhood streets).

Finally, general government projects include the Bollinger Valley Special Study Area; streamlining the planning and zoning review and approval process; and implementing the 6th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation. These costs come in at \$595,000.

The CIP budget proposed for FY 2020-21 and presented to the town council during the May 27 meeting tops out at \$13.1 million. Town staff's diligence in obtaining grant funding will offset that amount by 70% (\$9.2 million). Other sources of funding will come from Measure K, Garbage Vehicle Impact Fees and Measure J, relieving the town of an additional 27% in costs. Taking that into consideration, only 2% (\$325,000) of the proposed budget will be funded from the General Fund revenue. The preliminary FY 2020-21 budget, including updates to the CIP budget, will be presented at the June 10 council meeting.

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