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Outgoing mayor discusses 2021 Year in Review

By Vera Kochan

While 13 is typically viewed as an unlucky number in American culture, Moraga's 13 town council and community goals and priorities for 2021 were met with favorable results.

Before he exited his position on Dec. 8, Mayor Mike McCluer gave his 2021 Year in Review presentation to the town council noting either a completion or work in progress status.

Fiscal sustainability came in the form of an adopted 5-year Capital Improvement Budget; approved initial expenditure plan for use of the American Rescue Plan Act funds; a completed 2020-21 Year End Comprehensive Annual Financial Report; the June 30 \$5 million General Reserve Fund; receipt of \$2.25 million payment from the Palos Colorado developer; and the progress made on unfunded needs such as the storm drain infrastructure and asset replacement.

The focus on traffic safety was realized in multiple ways. Moraga received a \$230,000 Highway Safety Improvement Program Grant to improve striping and signage pertaining to multiple crosswalks. Another HSIP Grant for \$40,000 was targeted for the development of a Local Road Safety Plan, along with other funding geared toward the Corliss Drive One-Way Safe Routes to School; a pedestrian push-button upgrade; and the Moraga Road/Canyon Road streets traffic studies and construction plans.

The improvement of diversity and inclusion in town involved an Ad Hoc Committee, made up of McCluer and Council Member Renata Sos, who met with community groups to forward the cause. Moraga also proclaimed Nov. 14-20 United Against Hate Week with information on its website, distribution of posters and banners, social media presence and a mayor's video of support.

Work on the 6th Cycle Housing Element began by identifying funding and the creation of an action plan. Multiple town council/planning commission meetings and community meetings were held in support of the process.

The town has taken steps to rezone the Bollinger Canyon Special Study Area by providing funds to retain the services of consultants.

The Moraga Police Department saw a marked decrease in major crimes from 162 in 2020 down to 125 in 2021; and in conjunction with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, fine-tuned its Evacuation Plan with virtual drills, sent informative postcards to residents and continued to encourage residents to sign up for the Community Warning System at cwsalerts.com.

Planning review procedures have been streamlined; and Moraga's Climate Action Plan now has funding for a Town Facilities Energy Generation Study along with the implementation of Mandatory Organic Water Reduction.

Progress continues on the Canyon Road Bridge with an expected completion for two-way traffic in January 2022. East Bay Municipal Utility District's Phase 1 to repair the damage caused by landslides has been completed.

Phase 1 of the Pavement Resurfacing Program and Annual Street Repairs have been completed with Phase 2 headed for completion in spring 2022. Design work has begun on the \$8 million 2022-23 Worst First Pavement Reconstruction Program.

The 2021-23 Annual Storm Drain Repairs Project is underway beginning with a Drainage Sedimentation and Slide Failure Study; a completed engineering design of the Moraga Road/Hacienda Storm Drain Repair Project; and work on the Moraga Road Drainage Project.

The town continues to maintain its parks, open spaces and facilities with the Wedgewood Weddings agreement; Laguna Creek Restoration Project; the Hacienda ADA Pathway; and the Commons Park irrigation improvement project.

McCluer and Vice Mayor Steve Woehleke created a Community Engagement Tour to discuss community issues by surveying civic organizations within Moraga.

While not part of the initial 13 goals, the town opposed the MOFD study of the consolidation/dissolution process and MOFD's consideration of an increase in Moraga's fire flow tax rate; the Moraga Municipal Code was updated to address resident concerns over small cell wireless facilities and accessory dwelling units; and the town council rejected the South Camino Pablo subdivision appeal.

McCluer's presentation was concluded with the acknowledgment of Council Member Sona Makker's appointment to fill the seat vacated by Council Member David Stromberg's resignation; honoring the loss of Corp. Kevin Mooney; and the tireless work of town staff.

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[back](#)

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