

Lafayette Road Work

By Lee Borrowman

The City of Lafayette is completing its annual slurry seal of selected road surfaces. The sealant is applied to roads to prevent water from penetrating through the cracks, thereby extending the useful life of roads that are otherwise in relatively good condition. City staff report that they received several letters from curious residents who wondered whether this work was related to the upcoming ballot Measure C, which would institute a 30-year parcel tax to provide additional funding to repair or replace some of Lafayette's decaying roadways.

City Manager Steve Falk explains, "We have two types of roads that are in need of repair. There are the roads that are so old and damaged that they have to be completely torn up and replaced," as with the roads that would receive such treatment should Measure C succeed on June 5, "and then there are the roads which, with a little preventive maintenance, such as slurry seals, can last for many more years." Falk says that these routine measures are, "the most efficient way to spend the taxpayers' money."

Funding for the slurry seal project comes each year from the city's General Fund, from which \$1 million is appropriated annually for the road and drain maintenance program. Opponents of the proposed parcel tax argue that taxpayers should not bear the burden of funding the more extensive repairs, but that the city should find other resources from which to pay for any necessary work. The position of the city, and of the many other supporters of the measure, is that there are no other resources available to make up the difference between the estimated \$42 million in total repair costs and the \$18 million that the city has identified in funding sources.

Some have suggested that the road repairs that have been in process over the last few weeks were timed badly by a city that holds strong hope that voters will approve the parcel tax by the required 2/3 majority. Falk says, "I'm not interested in politicizing our streets. This work needs to be done now whether there's a ballot measure or not." Road maintenance work takes place in Lafayette and many other communities, such as Orinda, annually at this time of year. "Had we waited until July or August (after the election), the cost to the city (to have this work done) would have been much higher. And the idea of not doing any maintenance this year was unthinkable." Doing routine maintenance now, concludes Falk, "is efficient, it's good public policy, and it's good government."

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Presented by the Lafayette Crime Prevention Commission along with the Lafayette Emergency Preparedness Commission and the Lafayette Police Department

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Location: Lafayette Community Center
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Manzanita Room

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