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## Stimulus Package: No Pork for Lamorinda

By *Sophie Braccini*

The Contra Costa Transportation Agency (CCTA), during its Jan. 28 meeting, approved the list of infrastructure projects that have been prepared by its 22 jurisdictions to take advantage of a possible \$825 billion federal stimulus package.

If Contra Costa County gets the anticipated \$21 million, Orinda is slated to receive \$690,000, Moraga \$665,000 and Lafayette \$740,000. The three cities have all proposed roads rehabilitation projects that are dearly needed.

While Congress debates the passage of the stimulus bill, towns and cities have been working hard to ensure infrastructure projects are ready to go.

"While the final provisions may change," said Hisham Noeimi, Engineering Manager for CCTA, "it appears that some of the funds will flow according to the Surface Transportation Program (STP) formula, and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) will therefore distribute the funds to each county in the Bay Area."

Projects need to be designed and ready to be bid on by the time the bill is approved, so all city engineers are doing their best to be ready by the Feb. 15 deadline.

"The amount [from the government] is an educated guess from what the general package would be," says Lafayette Mayor Don Tatzin, who sits on CCTA board. "The decision was made to give each entity a base of \$400,000 and to divide the remainder between them according to the size of their population and infrastructure."

Tatzin believes that the decision created a fair balance between large and small jurisdictions. "One of the strong points of CCTA has been that the organization works to achieve broad support among participating jurisdictions for its actions. As a result, all jurisdictions feel they are recognized and few get exactly what they want," he said.

In preparation for this meeting, each of the towns and cities prepared a list of projects, with the priority of being able to put them to bid within three months, and the requirement of addressing only arterials and major collector roads (federal-aid eligible).

"Millions could be spent on our roads at this time," said Jill Mercurio, Moraga's Town Engineer, "but we were told that the projects would be considered only if we would be able to break ground within three months." Mercurio and her team spent two weekends getting the documents ready and Moraga was first to file its project.

"Contracts for all of these projects could be awarded within 90 days pending selection for funding," said Steve Falk, Lafayette City Manager. "The 90-day deadline to award and 30 days to obligate the funds are the most current timeframe requirements that we have received from the CCTA." Falk noted that these priorities, projects, and even project descriptions are subject to change.

In Orinda, staff had prepared an ambitious list of projects amounting to more than \$2 million, which boiled down to a pavement rehabilitation project of a continuous 4,530 foot section of collector streets at Charles Hill Road, Honey Hill Road, and Miner Road.

Lafayette had prepared a list of seven projects with a cost amounting to nearly \$4 million. With \$740,000, Lafayette would focus renovation on Deer Hill Road and its overlay, along with minor repairs on 1.2 miles of a major two-lane regional arterial, along with related bike lane upgrades, and minor sidewalk and shoulder

improvements. On St. Mary's Rd., work would include overlay over 3/4 of a mile of the major two-lane regional arterial along with related shoulder improvements and drainage.

In Moraga, Mercurio had a list of three projects that could be ready to go within the time-frame. The allocation allows for applying a rubber cape seal to Moraga Road between Buckingham Drive to Draeger Drive.

The three towns are happy with the allocation, even though they obviously could use more. "I'm not at all disappointed by the \$740,000 that Lafayette might receive," said Falk. "This is very good news! It's money that we would not otherwise have received."

"Every bit helps," added Monica Pacheco, assistant to the Orinda City Manager. "We are pleased to receive the money so we can begin work on much need road repairs."

Unless the schedule from MTC or the federal government changes, Tatzin explained that funds might be reallocated if some jurisdictions are not ready within three weeks. Some jurisdictions allocated millions might have a harder time approving projects by the Feb. 15 deadline (Richmond got more than \$4 million and San Pablo \$3 million).

"I expect that all jurisdictions, including the three Lamorinda cities, will work very hard to meet the deadline."

If all goes according to plan, the work will start this summer.

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