

Published May 27th, 2009

## Moraga Improves Accessibility for Disabled Residents, but Challenges Persist

By Sophie Braccini



(L-R): Moraga Town Engineer/Public Works Director Jill Mercurio, Anne Reed and Tim McNerney  
Photo Sophie Braccini

Moraga's newly-formed Americans with Disabilities Act Advisory Committee (ADAAC) met on April 27 for its second quarterly meeting. The three-member group took up two issues, addressing a question about a sidewalk on a portion of Moraga Road, and recommending the adjustment of the curb cuts at the corner of Moraga Way and Moraga Road. Even when that curb improvement is completed some challenges will remain for residents with disabilities as they travel through the town.

□ The ADAAC was formed to review and report to the Town staff on issues affecting accessibility within the public pedestrian rights of way throughout Moraga and on the prioritization of funds available for accessibility improvements. The committee's creation was part of the settlement of a law suit brought against Moraga (and other communities) regarding lack of access for individuals with disabilities.

□ Moraga residents Anne Reed and Tim McInerney volunteered to serve on the committee with Jill Mercurio, Town Public Works Director and Engineer.

□ Reed is a Human Resources director who has strived to make sure that a disability would not stand in the way of the hiring of a qualified individual. When asked how many people in Moraga are considered disabled, she replied, "The question is not how many people are disabled, but rather can how all of us make sure that those with disabilities can live a full life."

□ McInerney commutes daily to his Berkeley job in his electric wheelchair, using public transportation, including the increasingly shrinking bus system.

□ The ADAAC agreed to recommend that the Town improve two curb cuts at Moraga Way and Moraga Road. "The work has not been completed yet because of the extra cost added by storm drains that have to be relocated in order for proper curb cuts to be put into place," explained Mercurio.

□ The total cost is higher than the current ADAAC budget. "I am budgeting a total of \$40,000 for the installation of the curb ramps at Moraga Way at Moraga Road/Canyon Road," said Mercurio, "the design is completed and I'm hoping to reduce the overall cost by bidding and constructing it with another project that has a similar storm drain/ADA curb ramp situation."

□ The project will be proposed to Council as one of the capital projects they evaluate during the budget process."

□ The committee also addressed a letter it received from former Mayor Lynda Deschambault, who asked that they look into completing the sidewalk along the north side of Moraga Road, between Devin Drive and Ascot Drive. "With the installation of the stop lights at Ascot, the town has improved accessibility for the residents all the way to Rheem," Deschambault wrote, "completing the few missing feet of sidewalk along the road would make sense."

□ As Mercurio explained it, the construction of sidewalks is the responsibility of individual homeowners. Cities such as Concord have adopted ordinances that require residents to complete sidewalks in front of their properties if such walkways are present along more than 50% of the path. The committee unanimously agreed to both send a letter to the few property owners who have not built a sidewalk along that portion of Moraga Road and to ask the Town to study a sidewalk ordinance.

□ "Regarding installation of sidewalk on properties that are a gap in an existing sidewalk network, I have that on my list of things to go to Council in the future," confirmed Mercurio.

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