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Public Forum Measure O Will Help Fund Improvements To Our Streets and Roads

Voters will have an opportunity on November 2nd to approve a measure that will provide additional annual funding for improvements to local transportation. Measure O proposes a Vehicle Registration Fee (VRF) of \$10 for every motor vehicle in Contra Costa County. The fees can be used only for street and road maintenance and improvements, transit to help relieve traffic congestion, and projects for the benefit of bicycles and pedestrians. Funds generated by the VRF will add considerably to the Return to Source (RTS) funds generated by Measure J, the half-cent sales tax which voters approved in 2004 to fund transportation projects and programs for 25 years. It is on these funds that cities and towns rely for basic maintenance of local streets and roads. For the three Lamorinda cities, Measure O will generate about \$435,000 new funds for street and road maintenance and improvements and for bike and pedestrian projects. For Moraga, this means an additional \$108,000 added to \$258,000 annual RTS funding generated under Measure J-more than a 40% increase. Additionally, Measure O will help fund the Lamorinda School Bus program, which is largely funded by Measure J and is suffering due to diminished county-wide sales tax revenue.

Measure O is designed to put more transportation funds under local control. None of the VRF can be taken away by the State. Every dollar will be under control of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA). Spending by cities and towns must conform to a clearly defined expenditure program, and spending will be subject to regular overview by the Authority, just like Measure J spending. Most important, allocation of funds will be under control of the CCTA regional committees. For the Southwest region (SWAT)-which includes Lamorinda-SWAT has decided that 85% of funds will be spent on street and road maintenance and improvements, 10% on transit programs (namely, the Lamorinda School Bus Program), and 5% on bike and pedestrian improvements (such as crosswalks and sidewalks). This allocation reflects current Lamorinda needs. After five years, the expenditure program can be reconsidered by SWAT to reflect needs at that time.

Why should you vote for this fee on your motor vehicles? Every vehicle using our roads contributes to wear and tear. Vehicle miles driven seem always to increase, yet our ability to maintain our roads continues to fall further and further behind as revenues fail to cover rising costs. The Return to Source funds we receive from Measure J can't possibly fund what's needed to arrest further deterioration, let alone make improvements. We desperately need additional revenues sources, and Measure O is one new source. Good roads are an important element of a wholesome community. It's in all our interests to maintain them. Please vote for Measure O on November 2nd.

For more information on Measure O,
visit www.VoteYesOnMeasureO.com

Mike Metcalf

Moraga

(Mike Metcalf is a Moraga Town Council member. He is a commissioner at Contra Costa Transportation Authority, the agency which is sponsoring Measure O. He represents Moraga on the Southwest Area Transportation Committee (SWAT) and on the board of the Lamorinda School Bus Transportation Agency.)

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