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Published March 2nd, 2011

RECON Issues Road Warning

By Sophie Braccini

Repairing and maintaining a road that is in very poor condition costs 11 times more than maintaining a road that is in fair condition. 15% of Moraga's residential roads are in very poor condition today and if spending on roads does not increase that number will jump to 40% 10 years from now, resulting in skyrocketing costs to remedy the situation. Bob Kennedy, representing Moraga's Revenue Enhancement Community Outreach to Neighborhoods (RECON) team, presented a report to the Town Council on February 16 that concluded Moraga should not expect a bailout on such infrastructure problems and that a solution must be found locally.

Moraga officials often refer to Orinda roads as being the future of Moraga roads if nothing is done today. The Orinda Citizens Infrastructure Oversight Commission's 2010 annual report was received by the Orinda City Council on February 15. The City's policy focuses on maintaining arterials and collectors, leaving residential roads in a condition of accelerating deterioration. The average rating of Orinda's residential roads is poor; 150 of the 354 residential roads are considered very poor. The cost of deferred maintenance on these roads is estimated to be at \$43 million by 2014. One of the Commission's recommendations is to allow citizens to raise private funds to repair residential roads.

25% of Moraga's 56 miles of public roads are categorized as arterials (roads that carry major traffic flow) - Moraga Road, Moraga Way and Saint Mary's Road. The Town can apply for grants to maintain these roads; as a result, only 14% of Moraga's arterials are in poor or very poor condition.

However, 50% of the remaining roads (collectors and neighborhood roads, excluding private streets) have been rated poor or very poor. According to the RECON report, with a \$1 million annual increase in spending, in 10 years 67% of these roads would be very good and 23% very poor; if spending increased by \$2 million per year, the percentage of very poor roads would drop to 14%; and at \$3 million per year, 17% of the roads would be in poor condition while 83% would be in good condition.

The state of the Moraga's sewer and storm drains remains largely unassessed. The system was installed in 1974 and is expected to last 55-60 years.

"Developing a sustainable plan for funding the Town's ongoing infrastructure needs is of critical importance to the Town of Moraga," commented Mayor Karen Mendonca after the meeting, "The recommendations contained in the Revenue Enhancement Committee's Report and the subsequent work completed by the RECON Committee serve to make it clear that this issue must be a top priority for the Moraga Town Council, and it is imperative that we work together to make timely decisions regarding our next steps in this process."

The RECON report is available on the Town's website, www.moraga.ca.us.

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