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Letters to the Editor

Shop Local to Support our Communities

Dear Editor,

Although Lamorinda is made up of three very different cities with their own unique identities we do share a common commitment to our great schools, our beautiful neighborhoods and our shopping options. You must have noticed that all three local chambers of commerce have encouraged our residents to shop "local." It means so much to our cities and way of life. Shopping locally supports the small business owners that in turn support our schools and our communities. Local sales tax helps pave roads and pay for police along with other vital services. We weathered a recession and today business in Lamorinda is brisk! However, there are times when you are handed lemons. There are two current utility projects that are making it really difficult for some of our local businesses thrive. One project is the new EBMUD Pumping Station that is being built on the corner of Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Mt. Diablo Court. This project will be ongoing for another 18 months. Currently the new pipelines are being installed. Traffic is down to one lane in each direction and many of our businesses between Blodgett's Abby Carpet & Flooring and the Lafayette Car Wash & Detail Center are affected. These businesses also include Ace Hardware, Mt. Diablo Nursery, Lafayette Auto Body, Minuteman Press and the Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa. The second project is the famous "sinkhole" in Moraga at the corner of Rheem Blvd. and Center Street. Repairs will take another five to six months. The biggest concern is for the businesses that border the hole and construction area. For the most part they are small, privately owned businesses and, quite frankly, they are taking a big hit with this interruption in everyday business. Chef Chao, who has had their restaurant doors open for over 40 years, has had to close on a couple of evenings as there were no customers. These businesses include: The New Rheem Theatre, Rheem Valley Pet Shoppe, Natasha Grasso Jewelry, Subway, Nation's, Ristorante Amoroma, China Moon, Graze Food Bar, home/made kitchen, as well as Chef Chao. This is one of those times when Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda can step up to the plate and make a difference. Shop Orinda! Try Lafayette First! Shop Moragafirst.com! It's time to help each other. Great Communities just don't happen by accident.

Jay Lifson,
Executive Director, Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

Everyone Shares the Burden of Roads
Dear Editor,

The road repair bond in Orinda has started to make a noticeable difference around town. I have no problem with the approximate \$130 a year I pay for this first bond, and I will gladly contribute an additional \$130 annually for another bond if it means I don't have to be embarrassed when visitors come over (let alone save my car's suspension). As a new resident of three years I am thinking of the next 30 years and how little life is left in the existing roads. Those who already have nice roads may not feel a direct impact, but we should all share the burden of improving the rest of Orinda.

Justin Hibner.
Orinda,

Orinda's Roads are Hurting its Reputation
Dear Editor,

We moved from Chicago to Orinda just over a year-and-a half-ago and so far have loved it here. There is, however, one thing I do not love about living in Orinda: the roads. The roads here aren't

just bad; their horrendous state has become a thing of legend that is impacting Orinda's reputation. This fact was brought to light for me during a recent conversation with a good friend.

He said, "When I first moved to the Bay Area from New York, I focused on the East Bay. My realtor showed us lots of homes in Walnut Creek and Lafayette. I asked her about Orinda. It seemed nice and was one BART stop closer to the city. She quickly dismissed it, stating 'You don't want to live in Orinda. They don't pay to keep up their streets. You'll rattle your fillings loose simply going from Hwy. 24 to your house!' Our family now lives in Walnut Creek."

When realtors are telling you not to live somewhere, that somewhere has a major problem. It's time to wake up. Our awful roads are negatively affecting the image of the city we love and driving down our home values.

There is good news: we can fix it! Measure L, a \$25 million bond on the June ballot, will address Orinda's road fiasco. Let's protect Orinda's reputation and in turn our property values by getting our roads fixed. Vote yes on Measure L!

Matt Miller

Renovate Roads Like We Do Our Homes

Dear Editor,

Our family has lived in Orinda for the past 29 years. Our experience living in Orinda has been our most fulfilling and enjoyable.

Like many of us, our home is our largest investment. Over the years, we have resided in two Orinda neighborhoods and have remodeled both homes to further enjoy our daily lives and enhance our investment.

We view plans to renovate our roads much like we have our home investments and renovations. It's an investment that will enhance the value of all our homes and Orinda's outstanding and beautiful environment.

The \$ 25-million-dollar bond measure on the June 7 ballot has our support for all the reasons stated above. The cost of the bond will be supported by a residential property tax increase that will cost the average Orinda household approximately \$12 a month. To us, that's an investment that's well worthwhile and fulfills our commitment to improve the quality of life that we so much enjoy.

Joe and Linda Garvey
Orinda

Smoother Roads are Safer Roads

Dear Editor,

While I'm sure most Orinda residents welcome the repaving of our roads to reduce the wear and tear on our vehicles, a smoother ride yields another benefit: greater safety for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians.

I have been a member of the City of Orinda's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee for seven years and am currently chair. The members of our committee are usually responding to concerns expressed by residents regarding excessive speed or careless driving. But we have also heard concerns about pavement condition and how deteriorating roads increase the emergency response times of fire and police vehicles.

While Measure L will not straighten curves or widen roads, its passage will provide additional funding to bring all of Orinda's roads currently in the worst condition up to a minimum PCI (pavement condition index) of at least 50, which is considered "good." Police cars and fire trucks won't have to slow down for broken pavement and potholes in situations when every second counts. Orinda residents voted for measures in 2012 and 2014 that got the process started to fix our roads. We've seen great progress already this spring and more than 30 additional road segments are scheduled for repaving this summer. For the sake of our own safety, and that of future generations of Orindans, we can't stop now!

Please keep our community on the road to smoother and safer roads. Vote YES on Measure L!

Mark Roberts
Orinda

Good Time to Invest in Roads

Dear Editor,

This is a good time for Orinda to issue bonds for road repairs. Interest rates are still at near-record lows right now. If we wait a few years to issue more bonds, rates will almost certainly be higher, and taxpayers will have to pay a lot more in interest to get the same amount of work done. Financially, it makes much more sense to issue bonds now than to wait. The city council is doing a good job of maximizing the bang for the taxpayers' buck by putting Measure L on the ballot this spring. Let's pass it and take advantage of the low rates!

Linda Landau (CPA, retired)

Realtor Sees Impact of Roads

Dear Editor,

Orinda is a great community. I love living and working here as a realtor, but I no longer love driving the roads. Some have such bad potholes that it is difficult to navigate them. The poor condition of many Orinda roads is negatively impacting the value of our homes.

I am working with clients who were originally looking to purchase in Orinda. They were very surprised by the poor condition of the roads in our city. They ended up buying in an area of Walnut Creek that has well maintained roads instead of buying in Orinda.

We have made a good start and a number of roads have been fixed, but we need to complete all the planned road repairs so that families looking for a new community don't "move on" when they see our roads. Measure L is the third phase of the road and drain repair plan and is key to attaining our goal of good roads throughout the city. I urge you to Vote Yes on Measure L.

Patti Camras

Orinda

What About Other Culverts in Moraga?

Dear Editor,

The official story is that the eight days of rain caused the Moraga sinkhole. Back to reality, the original culvert failed, due I expect to the fact that the thing was a corrugated steel pipe, probably with a zinc coating like most culverts you see along the road.

But the question is why this was used, or rather why it was not inspected to detect the failure of joints, etc? Having a little experience in construction, I wonder about the use of that material, rather than concrete for the initial construction.

The second question is about where else in that drainage area, which is a major conduit of storm water runoff, is this likely to be encountered in the future? I note that from the point of failure to the daylighting of the creek, around the Hacienda, and then back underground to some point around the Country Club, there are buried culverts and wonder about the future of those culverts?

Charles Simkins

Moraga

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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