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Darlene Gee & Inga Miller

for Orinda City Council 2016



We are Orindans for a Better Downtown supporting Darlene Gee and Inga Miller for City Council 2016 FPPC #1390303

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Nov. 8 Election Coverage

BART Ballot Measure RR Evokes Passion on Many Fronts

By Nick Marnell

Lamorinda voters will help decide in November the fate of a bond measure larger than the entire budget of Contra Costa County and one of the largest monetary requests by a local public agency in the state of California.

The Bay Area Rapid Transit system, a critical transportation link connecting the East Bay with San Francisco and the northern Peninsula, seeks authorization through Measure RR to issue \$3.5 billion in general obligation bonds to rebuild much of the system infrastructure, with the bonds to be repaid through property taxes in Contra Costa, Alameda and San Francisco counties. According to BART estimates, the maximum yearly tax rate would be \$17.49 per \$100,000 of assessed value of a parcel. The measure requires a two-thirds vote for passage.

By law, public agencies may not mount campaigns for their own ballot measures, but BART spokesman Taylor Huckaby was able to outline the benefits of Measure RR to Lamorinda residents.

Huckaby explained that the bond funds would go toward replacing miles of badly deteriorated power transmission infrastructure, replacing 90 miles of eroded rail, waterproofing the tunnels in downtown San Francisco, and other

projects designed to bring the 44-year old system up to current standards.

"Two-thirds of Lafayette and Orinda station riders go to the four main downtown San Francisco stations — improvements there and elsewhere in the system benefit Lamorinda riders," he said.

He also noted the planned upgrade to the Berkeley Hills Tunnel where, thanks to the Hayward fault, the tracks are misaligned and trains are creeping ever closer to the tunnel walls.

The Committee to Keep BART Safe and Reliable 2016 lists endorsements from a phalanx of business leaders and public officials who urge a yes vote on Measure RR. Orinda Union School District trustee Sarah Butler, with a UC Davis degree in environmental planning, bases her support on the environmental impacts of maintaining a good transportation infrastructure. She said that by getting more cars off the road, the measure will reduce traffic congestion and help relieve the air pollution caused by automobiles.

"It actually costs us more to do nothing since the cost of traffic congestion impacts us all in lost time and higher fuel costs per trip which has been estimated by transportation experts such as TRIP, a

national transportation research group, to cost significantly more than the cost of Measure RR," Butler said.

Supervisor Candace Andersen also supports Measure RR because it will increase capacity for ridership. "While I continue to have concerns about BART management and especially the handling of strikes, I am hopeful that we will elect new leadership in November...and they will ensure that the funds raised by Measure RR will be used effectively and as promised to the voters," she said.

Andersen's concern is voiced by many, and Huckaby addressed it. "It has been suggested the passage of Measure RR could result in BART curtailing the transfer of operating funds to capital projects for the purpose of inflating salaries and benefits — but such speculation is political innuendo. Unequivocally, Measure RR funds could not be 'backdoored.' Again, per California law, funds can only be used for capital projects," Huckaby said.

Assemblywoman Catharine Baker is not convinced, slamming the measure as an inappropriate method to fund the system, "in no small part because the money that is supposed to be used for capital improvements of the train system

itself can be used to back-fill the very generous labor costs that are unsustainable," Baker said.

Even more direct in his opposition was State Senator Steve Glazer of Orinda. "Lamorinda voters expect more from BART, which has had years to prepare for the day they would need system upgrades but did nothing. Instead, BART gave away big raises to management and union employees, showing no signs that they can be trusted with our tax dollars. I don't think we should reward bad behavior and expect anything to change."

Neither of the three Lamorinda municipalities took an official position on the BART measure, but Moraga's mayor Mike Metcalf, speaking as a private citizen, said he will look past what he termed a flaw in the ballot language which seems to give the board the ability to use some of the bond proceeds for salaries and benefits. He said he would rely on the BART board to ensure that the bond measure does not become a tool for balancing its budget.

"That will depend in large part on the quality of BART board members, which indicates that the election for BART board members in November is critical. Lamorinda needs to have faith that

the BART board moving forward will keep their pledge to the voters to use bond funds for capital improvements, not labor-related purposes," Metcalf said.

Three of the four candidates for the BART board seat in District 3, which includes most of Lamorinda, support Measure RR, with former Moraga mayor Ken Chew opposed. (See <http://bit.ly/2ep7716>)



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FIRE DISTRICT - MOFD



MOFD has complex challenges:

- \$65 million unfunded pension/medical liability
- Severe fire hazard zone in 50% of North Orinda
- Substandard response times in Sleepy Hollow and El Toyonal

Knowledgeable

- Retired executive in Engineering, Finance and Business
 - President – public satellite company
 - Lead merger, acquisition and business development executive for AirTouch (\$60 billion cellular company)
 - Strategy Management Consultant
- BS in Engineering/Business Economics; MBA
- HOA president

I believe MOFD must:

- Manage future pension obligations and improve investment fund performance
- Reduce fire danger using hot spot mapping and more proactive prevention
- Reduce response times by positioning emergency equipment and responders using predictive data

Experienced

- Introduced new repaving method to Orinda, lowering costs 15% while increasing road life by 50%
- Worked with Governments as regulators, partners and investors in emergency communications
- Endorsed by over 250 Orinda voters

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