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## Street lighting assessment to continue at \$58 per single-family unit

By Vera Kochan

Anyone who pays property taxes in Moraga is levied a street lighting assessment on the tax bill. Although the description may read a bit ambiguous; the category is Moraga ST LT.

During the June 12 town council meeting, members unanimously approved to continue levying the \$58 assessment for Fiscal Year 2019-20. The \$58 is not an increase, but a continual assessment that has been levied since 2010.

When breaking down the amount annually per household, it comes to approximately \$1.12 per week which, according to the Engineer's Annual Report, goes toward "The operation, maintenance and servicing of existing and future public lighting facilities, and the installation or construction of public lighting facilities and any facilities appurtenant to them or necessary or convenient for the maintenance or servicing of them, including grading, clearing, removal of debris, and installation or construction of curbs, gutters, walls, sidewalks or paving, or water, irrigation, drainage or electrical facilities."

The bulk of these funds - \$120,000 of the total \$211,350 in expenditures - are used to pay the town's electric bill to Pacific Gas & Electric Co. for street lighting. According to the staff report, the fiscal year 2018-19 budget included \$60,000 for a Commercial Center Street Lighting study to look into increased lighting at Rheem and Moraga Shopping Centers, but the project is being delayed to 2020-21 due to a need to address higher priority projects first.

While Moraga continues to be high on the list of great places to live, the importance of keeping the community well lit at night is not just for aesthetic purposes. Evening safety on public streets for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers comes in the form of a well-maintained lighting infrastructure. To this end, ample street lighting in Moraga neighborhoods adds security for homeowners who are, after all, paying the bill.

Reach the reporter at: [vera@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:vera@lamorindaweekly.com)

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