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## Letters to the editor

Gina Dawson for City Council

I am supporting Gina Dawson for Lafayette City Council as I have great confidence in Gina's abilities, work ethic and collaborative style. She has demonstrated her impressive skills through her work with the City Council and PGE on behalf of Save Lafayette Trees and the Lafayette Gas Safety Alliance. Gina does her homework and shows amazing knowledge of whatever the issue is, and however heated the discussion becomes she remains calm and professional.

I agree with her goals for our City, which I am outlining here. For more details please go to Gina's website [www.GinaDawson2020.com](http://www.GinaDawson2020.com)

Gina will continue to work to hold our public utilities accountable, supports safe bike and pedestrian paths and emergency preparedness.

Gina is an advocate for affordable and inclusive housing opportunities as part of the General Plan update and of monitoring State housing legislation.

Gina will continue to work on protecting our open spaces and tree canopy, and advocates for one or more downtown parks.

Gina will collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce and business community to accelerate business recovery and downtown revitalization.

As a longtime member of Sustainable Lafayette, Gina supports environmental programs and strategies promoting a sustainable community.

Gina Dawson would be a great and hard- working asset to our City as a member of the Lafayette City Council.

Alison Hill

Lafayette resident for 51 years

### Downtown development opportunities

In the 25 years since I first laid eyes on Orinda, not much has changed! When my family moved here and I started attending Glorietta Elementary, Theatre Square was newly redeveloped. The new library and redevelopment of its former site are the only significant changes I have seen since.

There's nothing really wrong with Orinda having stayed so sleepy, except it's a bit out of touch with what's happening in our region. In these last 25 years, the Bay Area has grown by almost 1.5 million residents! Just looking down the road to Lafayette or Walnut Creek, you can see dozens of new shops and apartment buildings have popped up gradually over the years, creating vibrant downtowns.

On the topic of housing in particular, all we know is we have not been building enough! In the past 10 years, you can't get away from headlines about the new extremes of California's housing supply shortage.

With a new study showing 52% of 18- to 29-year-olds are now living with their parents, it couldn't be a better time to update Orinda's zoning plans to allow for more diverse housing options along with commercial development. We need housing for these younger folks and for empty nesters looking to downsize. We should have those options in our downtown close to the BART station and shops. We should also be asking ourselves whether the justifications for not allowing new housing construction downtown are actually based on a legacy of racism that pushes new infill housing development into more disadvantaged communities, causing displacement.

Ultimately, downtown Orinda will not stay sleepy forever. With proposed state legislation such as this year's SB50, it's only a matter of time before BART station neighborhoods are automatically "upzoned." Developers won't have to wait to hear what locals think. If Orinda residents want to take control of how their town will look, they should take the time now to implement thoughtful guidelines for how that denser infill should look and incorporate strategies to meet local needs while also creating a more beautiful, inclusive, and walkable place with new homes and businesses.

Thomas Gonzales  
Orinda

#### A vote for David Stromberg

I support David Stromberg for Moraga Town Council. I have worked with David on the Planning Commission for three years and know he has the necessary governing experience, objectivity, and analytical skills to be an effective Councilmember.

David has impressive experience in public service in Moraga. He served on the Design Review Board; is a Moraga Community Foundation Boardmember; and has been the Planning Commission Chairperson for two years. He provided careful analysis on the Citizens Advisory Committee to finalize the MCSP.

As a business mediator and attorney with expertise in dispute resolution, David approaches contentious issues by carefully listening to and identifying the merits of competing perspectives and then working collaboratively to achieve a consensus. His unique skill will be an invaluable contribution to the Council as he tackles the complicated issues and projects in Moraga.

As a Councilmember, David will devote himself to promoting the core values that we all support: maintaining our beautiful open space; ensuring managed growth; pursuing sound fiscal management policies; and protecting our safety.

I urge all Moragans to visit David's website to learn and appreciate the difference he will make as our Councilmember.

www.stromberg2020.com

Brenda Luster

Planning Commission Vice Chair and Moraga resident

Measure R is NOT a Road Tax

Measure R is a general tax, and by law cannot be specified. The Orinda city council plan and the campaign literature, which by law CAN state the intentions, is to front-load fire prevention for the first five years, with roads/storm drains maintained. As road work needs increase and needs for heavy duty fire prevention decrease, priorities would be rebalanced. Written assurances from Mayor Gee and Councilmember Fay state this. A citizen oversight committee will insure the revenue is spent as intended. Saferorinda.org outlines the plan.

We see, breathe and read every day that wildfires are increasing. As a result the homeowners insurance market is collapsing. Insurance companies now look at whole neighborhoods and towns. AND they are looking at infrastructure to determine the potential for wildfire survival. Measure R is actually an integrated fire prevention plan that will give us some ability to fight back against the insurance companies.

There are two opponents to Measure R: the No-tax people and the private roads people. I don't know any of the no-tax folks. I have spoken with the private road people extensively. Their 5-year parcel tax would raise just over \$1 million per year, result in less work in the early years than the sales tax can accomplish and provides no ongoing revenue to maintain the initial fuel reduction. A special election would be required at an extra cost to the city. Because property taxes are collected and distributed periodically, that money won't show up until December 2021 at the earliest. Why go to all this extra trouble when this general tax would be more comprehensive, raise more money and make it available faster?

The private road people have been at all the city council meetings when the general tax was discussed. They know very well it cannot be specified but insist on calling it a road tax. They refuse to acknowledge a citizen oversight committee is part of the tax and say they cannot trust the council despite the current 0.5% general tax having been spent exactly as the city council promised.

Melanie Light

Orinda

Why I'm voting for Measure R

As a member of the Board of Directors of the Contra Costa Taxpayer's Association I pay a lot of attention when a sales tax increase is on the ballot. So when I heard that Orinda wants to increase the City sales tax from half cent to one cent, I did research. I learned that Richmond and Antioch already have a one-cent sales tax. So does Moraga, where many Orinda residents go to

shop at TJ Maxx, and to the nursery and the hardware stores. The Cities that have kept a one half-cent sales tax are the cities with lots of retail shopping centers, unlike Orinda. I learned that Orinda receives the sales tax income when an Orinda resident buys a car even though the car dealership is located outside of Orinda. It only makes sense to keep that sales tax inside Orinda, where it can be put to use improving our storm drains, enhancing fire safety, and keeping our local roads repaired. I think Orindans know best when it comes to tax issues impacting Orinda, and I am voting yes on Measure R for a safer Orinda.

Joe Fitzpatrick  
Orinda

### Measure R & MOFD Election!

I have personally seen the destruction of wildfires in California. The melted pools of metal all that remain of a car, bottles of wine exploded and shattered on a leveled suburban plot in Coffey Park, the remnants of a wedding celebration interrupted by wild fire, the coroner's van parked at a pile of ashes that was once a home and workers sifting through the ashes tragically looking for bone fragments, the remains of a resident who could not flee the advancing wild fires.

I had an awakening as a journalist as I photographed the devastation and it came home to me that these disasters could happen to me and my family. I quickly became active in our neighborhood firewise organization, attended City Council meetings, and became immersed in the world of MOFD when I heard our Fire Chief articulate the issues of wildfire in Orinda. What a rude awakening.

We Orindan's need to choose wisely in this upcoming election, we need to be seriously informed. I am supporting YES on Measure R , and the MOFD incumbents Craig Jorgen and John Jex for the board. John and Craig have fought for the interests of homeowners and residents. They both supported the summer chipper program, while three of the other MOFD board members voted NO, quashing this important program to eradicate dangerous fuel load. These pther board members also voted NO to increasing the fire prevention budget despite a surplus of money. We love our first responders, and we need community members and supporters of wildfire prevention like Craig and John who also have experience reading sophisticated MOFD balance sheets to make sure more funds go to fire prevention NOW! I believe that a Yes vote on Measure R will make funds flow quickly for fuel mitigation in Orinda. A half cent more on a purchase is worth knowing that my family is safer today than I was last week.

This is a critical election for Orinda & Moraga Wildfire safety. Let's keep our community safe and vote as if our lives depend on it.

Ken Light  
Orinda

## Re-Elect John JEX and Craig JORGENS to the Fire District Board

We are fortunate to have great people representing us on the Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board (MOFD) who stand up for our best community interests, not controlled by special interests. John Jex and Craig Jorgens are both strong supporters of wildfire prevention, fiscal prudence, protecting affordable insurance rates and maintaining the safety of our small towns. John and Craig both deserve your vote this November. Join me in supporting Jex and Jorgens for the MOFD Board. For more info and to express your support, go to [VoteJex.com](http://VoteJex.com) and [VoteJorgens.com](http://VoteJorgens.com).

Sue Severson  
Orinda

## Yes on Measure R

I am writing to say that my husband and myself are in favor of Measure R. It is a modest sales tax (1%) that will do so much for Orinda. It renews the expiring sales tax used to repair the roads and adds another 1/2 cent. This sales tax will do many things for Orinda. It will help to maintain the roads now that they are repaired, improve wildfire safety for the first few years by controlling brush and vegetation growth, and also is slated to repair aging storm drains to prevent flooding and sinkholes. The sales tax does not occur on groceries and medicine so it reduces the burden on residents on fixed incomes.

Please join us in supporting Measure R. It will be used for making Orinda safer which is something all of us can get behind.

Bob and Cheri Etheredge  
Orinda

## No on Measure R

Measure R, which, if passed by Orinda's voters on Nov. 3, 2020, is seriously flawed. The measure will, if enacted, raise the Orinda sales tax from 8.75% to 9.25%. Here are the main objections:

- ú No Guarantee: There is no guarantee that the \$2.4 million expected to be raised annually (\$48 million over 20 years) will be spent on wildfire control. A future city council may decide to spend the funds on salaries and pensions. On Sept. 16, 2020, the Lamorinda Weekly reported that Orinda management employees will "receive a 3% cost-of-living salary adjustment ." Measure R should have been drafted so that all funds collected go to wildfire control.

- ú Tax Avoidance: One can avoid the sales-tax increase associated with Measure R by shopping in neighboring Lafayette, where the sales tax is 8.25%. One can also shop online, where sales taxes may be lower. Some online retailers do not charge -- or say they do not charge -- a sales tax. There are an estimated 10,000 sales-tax jurisdictions in the United States. Not every retailer has the ability to keep track of so many sales-tax jurisdictions. In

California's Modoc County, the sales tax is 7.25%.

ú Boycott and Job-Killing: Organized or not organized, certain shoppers will boycott Orinda merchants. If and when sales drop, merchants can and may lay off employees. Currently, unemployment rates are at levels not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930's. Measure R can and will lead to job-killing. The Orinda City Council should never have voted to put Measure R on the November 2020 ballot.

The council should think more carefully about supporting tax plans that may not work and also kill jobs. The council should support a measure that deals strictly with wildfire control and nothing else.

Richard Colman  
Orinda

Measure R is insufficient

Many people who are endorsing Measure R, a sales tax that doubles our present sales tax and will last for 20 years, twice as long as our present sales tax, are very rightly concerned about Orinda's need for fire prevention. But only a small part (\$1.5-\$3 million over the next 3-4 years) of this 60-million-dollar tax will go toward this urgent problem. This amount is insignificant in light of the overwhelming fire season that we have just begun to experience, and these funds will not be available until the 2021 fire season. Orinda needs a small, short-term parcel tax dedicated to fire prevention, not a general tax that the city can use for any purpose it deems necessary. The city tells us that the new revenues will have oversight, but the legal fact is that city cannot be held liable for changing its mind, and in these precarious times, and over the next 20 years, we are certain to have many new City Council members who will face an unknown range of problems requiring funds.

The city's recent poll indicated that a whopping 86% of respondents named fire prevention as our city's greatest need. A small (\$150 annually) parcel tax for 5 years would provide the city with just over \$5 million dollars, significantly more than the city says it will spend out of this new massive tax.

Our present sales tax doesn't expire until 2023, so there is no need for the city to rush into a new tax for roads and drains. It makes more sense for the city to put a parcel tax on the ballot (in March with revenues also available for our 2021 fire season). Then we would have the security of knowing that the funds could go only toward fire prevention. We would also continue to have our present sales tax revenues maintain our roads until 2023, by which time we hope the pandemic will have subsided and the economy stabilized. We can then vote for a new sales tax in 2022.

Fire prevention is too important to rely on a general tax.

Kathleen Finch  
Orinda

Vote for David Stromberg for Moraga Town Council

I have had the opportunity to observe David Stromberg in action in his capacity both as a member of the Moraga Design Review Board (and its Chair) and the Moraga Planning Commission (and as its Chair the past two years) and am impressed by his thorough and fair review of issues.

David is a strong proponent of maintaining open spaces and of working in a collaborative manner with Orinda and Lafayette to assure safe evacuation of our Town. His stance of fiscal responsibility and pro-business approach will serve the town well, as will his forward approach to future development.

David has demonstrated his responsiveness to the input of the community and will be an excellent addition to the Council. I ask you to join me in casting your vote for David Stromberg for Town Council.

Bobbie Preston  
Moraga

Measure R will not make Orinda safe

Orinda's Measure R Sales Tax is being sold as a fire prevention tax. Consumer warning: IT IS NOT. If you are looking for a fire prevention tax, reject Measure R and demand a short term parcel tax dedicated to removing the wildfire fuel load from our hillsides. Measure R is a twenty year tax which will generate \$60 million of revenue over its lifetime. The only part of this tax that the City has suggested will be spent on fire prevention is \$1.5-3 million over the first three to four years.

And will they even spend that? This tax would be a General Tax, meaning that after it is voted in the City Council has the power to spend it in any way it feels is appropriate. Right now, the existing sales tax is generating \$100,000 a month. How much of that is the City spending on fire prevention? None. How long has the City been aware that Orinda is a high fire risk area and part of that risk is excess vegetation? For decades. And how much over that time period has it spent on fire prevention? Virtually nothing.

Now we are to believe that if we increase our sales tax from \$1.2 million per year to \$2.4 million, all of a sudden the City is going to start spending money on fire prevention. Not a lot, but some (about half of what the current tax is bringing in.)

We need to vote in a tax with teeth. A tax that the City HAS TO spend on fire prevention. Not one that they can spend on fire prevention if they feel like it and for as long as they feel like it. Again, it is important to note that General Tax money can be spent any way the City deems appropriate. Should some other financial crisis come up, this sales tax money can be diverted from fire prevention to whatever is the immediate need that the then current City Council members deem important.

Please join me and others in rejecting Measure R. If this 20-year tax passes, we may never see a dedicated sum of money that is specially set aside for fire prevention only. We citizens of Orinda do

not need a promise. We need a guarantee that fire prevention will be taken seriously, with no chance that the money can be used for something else not as important.

Thank you,  
Bob Daoro  
Orinda

### A Moraga Champion in David Stromberg

For four years, I have worked with David on the Moraga Design Review Board and Planning Commission. During this time, David has shown a genuine interest in the values of our community, in quality construction within our community, and the safety and happiness of our community members.

David has already served our town well in these two capacities: I strongly recommend that we allow him to continue serving our town well as a Council Member. His positions on Open Space, Public Safety, Downtown Success, and Fiscal Management are clear, compatible, and well aligned with the stated values and goals of our Town.

Karl Davis  
Moraga

### No on R

The city is asking to raise the current half-cent sales tax to 1 cent for 20 years without telling me how this money will be spent. It is not sufficient to say it will be used for "essential services" without committing specified amounts and providing a, year by year, 20 year, detailed plan for expenditures and the expected results. It feels to me that we are simply being asked to sign a blank check. If the city plans are inadequate or poorly executed I expect they will return, asking me for yet more money. Surely this increased tax will hurt struggling businesses and residents.

I will vote no on this tax as the city already has my half-cent sales tax money for "essential services" till 2023 when the current tax expires. These most unusual times are not conducive to a 20-year tax.

Heather Allen  
Orinda resident and teacher

### Private road bailout?

So some Orinda residents want the government to bail them out from the costs of maintaining their multi-million dollar homes? Every homeowner on private streets signed legally binding agreements acknowledging their liability for maintaining the private streets.

But now it is too expensive and they want a government bail-out? I think the money would be better spent to improve education in low income communities in our state.



Don Mahoney  
Moraga

## A Time to Refrain From Taxation

If the City truly is serious about protecting us from deadly wildfires, it should not have been waiting for a new tax. It needs to be removing fuel right now, by redirecting existing incoming tax money and postponing some non-essential ongoing projects. Instead, the Council is baiting us with Measure R - a 20-year general tax largely intended for road and drainage infrastructure (based on a poorly researched, incomplete, study) with an insufficient and tiny proportion planned for fire. Please don't fall for this deceptively promoted measure. Instead, we need a 5-year \$150 fire-fuel specific parcel tax on the earliest possible ballot, and postpone any general sales tax increase until we see if and how the local economy recovers. Based on recent survey responses, augmented by terrifying current experiences, a fire parcel tax will easily garner the 2/3 vote. It will also produce more fire-specific revenue. On the other hand, if Measure R passes, those of us who truly care about fire safety and infrastructure will likely be disappointed.

The measure R increase combined with County Measure X sales tax would bring Orinda's already high rate to 9.75%, and hurt our local businesses as some try to survive. While not necessarily driving patrons away, higher sales tax more heavily impacts businesses in a different way. While inventory for resale is not taxable, fixtures and equipment and even many business supplies are taxable. Physical components of most home, building and vehicle repairs are also taxable. A company or unemployed resident needing a repair or replacement will pay higher sales tax on most or all of the transaction.

While many residents are surviving economically, at least for now, I refuse to vote away the money of those who aren't, to a 20-year uncommitted tax that the City will often spend inefficiently, based on my 26 years in Orinda. Let's let those of our residents and businesses who are struggling, recover. Please vote NO on R.

Joel Libove  
Orinda

## Yes on Measure R

Orinda residents should vote yes on Measure R. My young family lives in the Orinda hills and each morning that I drive these windy roads with my two preschool aged children, I am reminded what dire need we are of increased fire mitigation to keep all of our families safe.

Wildfire prevention is urgently needed now more than ever because of years of growth buildup and Orinda's all-time high risk of fire danger. Measure R will devote the needed funds to fire fuel reduction including an expanded chipper program and cleanup of

overhanging branches and trees that endanger evacuation routes. All Orinda residents will benefit from the funds, including those on private roads. I've seen the terrifying pictures of other fires where trees fell and blocked roads and with these needed upgrades to keep our roads clear from unnecessary brush, we can avoid that disaster in our community.

For our families, for our young children, for the future of Orinda, let's vote yes on Measure R, providing badly-needed funding for fuel reduction along roads and other measures to improve our chances of surviving a wildfire. Please, vote yes to help keep Orinda safe!

Betsy Ream  
Orinda

#### Anduri and Dawson endorsements

Carl Anduri possesses deep planning and city council experience that is much needed after Mike Anderson's departure. He is a thoughtful problem solver with an experienced legal mind who can provide guidance on tricky issues. As a city, we face unprecedented legislation that has and can continue to limit our ability as citizens to control our zoning and development. Carl will provide strong leadership that encourages working together over expensive litigation.

Gina Dawson is a successful and results oriented community organizer who brought attention to the PG&E gas pipeline neglect that resulted in actions to improve pipeline and community safety. I met Gina many years ago as part of Sustainable Lafayette and have admired her dedication to our community and high regard for safety and sustainability. Climate change, fire, air quality and safety are challenges that face our state and beyond. We need knowledgeable and dedicated people on city council with proven success in navigating these challenges. Gina gets things done. Please join me in voting for Carl Anduri and Gina Dawson for Lafayette City Council

Karen J. Maggio  
Planning Commissioner  
Former Sustainable Lafayette Board  
Member

#### New taxes in the time of pandemic

Measure R on the November ballot in Orinda is a proposed doubling and extension of the sales tax in Orinda, supposedly to provide additional funds for fire mitigation and maintenance of the roads and infrastructure in the town. Since it is a general tax, the town cannot designate how the funds will be used because that would require that it become a specific tax which, as I now understand, would require that the measure be passed by 2/3 of the voters. Last evening I had the opportunity to participate in an open forum with several of the candidates running for the City Council in

Orinda, two of whom are incumbents and strongly support Measure R. Their defense of the measure was disappointing. While they say that the proceeds of this new tax will largely be used for fire mitigation, there is no way for them to assure that either in the short term, or certainly in the long term, that this will be the case. The composition of the Council will certainly change over time as will the fiscal pressures on the City. As such, we can have no assurance that there will be increased expenditures to protect us in the event of wildfires. The Council has not evidenced any urgency in expending funds on fire mitigation in the last several years even though the threat is real and present. Instead we will be saddled with a new tax for the next 20 years. I also question whether this time, at the height of the pandemic and the worst economic crisis that we have ever faced, is the right time to increase taxes. This is a tax that hits hardest on those with fixed incomes and those at the lower end of the earnings scale. This is the wrong time to increase taxes. And Measure R is the wrong tax. Most of us strongly favor improved fire mitigation actions and better emergency preparedness. This is just the wrong way to accomplish that end. Use the existing funds from the sales tax to start the effort and demonstrate a serious commitment. Over time, if additional funds are needed, propose taxes that will assure that the funds will have to be used for these purposes. I urge the voters in Orinda to reject this ill-conceived new tax and vote NO on Measure R.

Art Goldberg  
Orinda

### Help plan and protect Lafayette

Lafayette City Council Members, you serve our city during challenging times. We are beset by financial, health and social concerns, seemingly at every corner. Yet it is the environmental threat posed by climate exacerbated wildfires that may determine your legacy. We have been relatively lucky in that significant wildfires have not yet consumed much of our city, but make no mistake that Lafayette is NOT safe from this threat. I serve as the Fletcher Jones Professor of Ecology at St Marys College and am a resident and homeowner within Lafayette. I have over 30 years' experience studying the ecology of California and can say with certainty that at some point in the future the open lands and forests that surround and enrich Lafayette will catch on fire and burn. This is inherent in the very nature of these ecosystems, as fire is a natural element that shapes and structures the oak woodlands, chaparral and riparian forests we enjoy. These future fires threaten the lives, livelihood and property of Lafayette City residents.

You stand on a precipice in your service to the city. Now is time for bold proactive action not passive laissez-faire politics. The city needs to work with landowners, especially those living at the wildland interface to create defensible spaces, it needs to proactively remove vegetation (including some of our beloved

trees) and create buffers on city owned spaces, it needs to work closely with landowners and managers of the large tracks of open space surrounding Lafayette (East Bay Regional Parks, Land trusts, EBMUD etc.) to create fire boundaries around our city. Many of these actions will not be fully popular and they will be difficult to enact, but that does not mean they are not the right thing to do. The time is now to be bold in your actions and get ahead of the curve so we can protect the lives and city that we love. Please do not be complacent as we are counting on you to help us prevent the incredible fire tragedies we are witnessing in communities around us. You cannot stop fires from happening, but you can help us plan and protect the city of Lafayette. Isn't that what we all want?

Dr. Michael P. Marchetti  
Lafayette

### Orinda Fire Prevention: Where's The Plan?

Orinda plans for everything, except fire prevention. Yet, it wants us to commit to a 20-year, \$60 million tax (the largest in the City's history) in the hopes that it may come up with a plan and spend that money prudently. And it is asking us to do this in the middle of the worst pandemic in a century when we have no idea what the economy might be like, for residents and local businesses, when this new tax kicks in.

The City has spent years, and tens (hundreds?) of thousands of dollars on downtown plans. The City has detailed road improvement plans, starting in 2012 with major rewrites in 2014, 2016 and 2019, overseen by a standing 7-person commission. It now (finally) has a major storm drain maintenance plan (although it has omitted accounting for how to deal with the water the City dumps from its streets onto private properties).

But the City has no plan on what it will take to minimize the threat of a devastating wildfire. This is despite the fact that it has had three decades since the Oakland Hills Firestorm to think about it. The only "plan" is a few words in a needs report to the Council in July saying the City should spend \$500-750,000 a year for 3-4 years on fire prevention, and a reduced amount thereafter. Where these numbers came from is unexplained.

Will the City, which has never spent anything on fire prevention in the past, actually spend this money in the future? It has been taking in over \$1 million a year in sales tax for 8 years and has spent nothing on fire prevention. Are there any guarantees that, if we double the tax amount, the City will start spending appropriate amounts on what is the community's greatest concern? No. This is a general tax meaning that there are no guarantees.

As the signs say: Wrong Tax; Wrong Time.

Charles Brotman  
Orinda

Vote for Miller and Gee

I am writing to endorse both Darlene Gee and Inga Miller for the Orinda City Council. As a citizen of Orinda and as a member first of the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee and now of the Citizens Infrastructure Oversight Commission, I have worked with both Darlene and Inga for a number of years. Both have shown a real dedication to the city of Orinda.

Serving as a member of the City Council is an incredibly challenging job, with so much to study, consider, and evaluate. Both have shown a remarkable ability to absorb, assess, and intelligently discuss the complex issues that the City faces. Even more important, Darlene and Inga have also shown exceptional ability to work effectively with the City's staff, committees, commissions, and other members of the Council, to recommend actions that they think will best serve the majority of the city's citizens.

I strongly recommend voting for both Darlene and Inga as members of the Orinda City Council.

Jud Hammon  
Orinda

### Why I oppose Measure R

I oppose Measure R for many reasons but foremost is my distrust of our city government. I have observed our councils for nearly 30 years. I have the following observations.

- The councils always use "spin" to influence voting. A transparent government should not use marketing techniques. Using our fear of wildfire should not be the means to pass a general tax that will be used predominantly on public storm drains.
- The council does not ask the citizen's preference. Although the polling did consider extending the current « cent tax for only ten years, someone decided to double it to one cent for twenty years with no explanation.
- The council does not hold meetings where dialog is allowed, to hear the citizens desires and explain the issues. Democracy requires all voices to be heard. Instead, the citizens are limited to a 3 minute speech and questions raised are not answered. They thank you and move on.
- There is usually no discussion or objections to flawed or questionable assertions in a staff report. Staff is always commended for their excellent work.
- Even when citizens make reasonable alternative suggestions these are not discussed. They are simply ignored as though never made.

Despite current "assurances" future councils over the next 20 years may choose to spend measure R funds in ways we do not want. Past councils have spent our money on a variety of non-essential expensive projects. Future ones will too, unless we prevent them. The current « cent sales tax does not expire till 2023 and the city could use these funds to provide fuel reduction and necessary infrastructure repairs for the next two years. The reserve fund has

\$10 million and has increased by \$1 million for the last four years. I am unwilling to make a twenty year commitment during a pandemic whose economic consequences are not yet known. Had the council proposed shorter taxes that could only be spent for specific purposes I would have supported them. I summarize with "it's the WRONG TAX at the WRONG TIME".

Charles Porges  
Orinda

#### Protect our homes with Measure R

In the fall of 1984, I stood in my driveway and watched a grass fire, started by a tossed cigarette, burn less than 200 feet away. When the fire reached a Monterey pine tree, it looked as though the tree had been napalmed. With an audible "WHOOOMP" it burst into flames-an exploding tree.

It was a hot dry day, but fortunately, not windy. Still, I climbed on my roof with a garden hose and wetted down our wood-shake roof. Times have changed a bit. We've had an asphalt shingle roof since 1994. We removed 13 Monterey pines, and we've changed our landscaping to reflect a hotter, drier climate. But climate change has lengthened the fire season and made us all less safe.

We have a chance to make serious progress on the vegetative fuel load that has grown in Orinda since the 1940s, when it was grass and native oak trees. Measure R on the November ballot will increase Orinda's sales tax by half a cent. The city council has stated that the first years of the tax will be used primarily to tackle the long-overdue project of removing brush and overhanging trees to reduce fire hazards and keep evacuation routes open. We need to do this. The cost of this measure is far less than the insurance premium increases many of us are paying. Let's get to work!

Linda Landau  
Orinda

#### Re-Elect Jex and Jorgens for MOFD

Being a long-time resident of Moraga, I have followed with interest the progress that the Moraga Orinda Fire District board has made since Directors Jex and Jorgens joined the board. They have identified critical needs and provided solutions to address those needs.

Their background and experience have been crucial to the progress that MOFD has made financially and operationally in addressing fire prevention at a critical time for our communities. Two key things they have done have been hiring new creative and effective leadership, and developing policies to improve the financial ability of MOFD to redirect and expand fire prevention programs such as the development of fire safe neighborhoods, and the chipper program to support these efforts.

We need their continued effort and leadership now more than ever to ensure MOFD remains a strong community resource as we face

the challenges of becoming fire safe. Re-Elect Jex and Jorgens to MOFD.

Charles R. Larsen  
Moraga

Please vote for Carl Anduri for Lafayette City Council

These are challenging times for our City, making the need for councilmembers with experience, skill, and proven leadership essential to implementing initiatives that will truly benefit our community. Carl has made complex land use decisions for us for sixteen years, championed the development of a 100% affordable housing project, led us through a recession, showed the way to improving our deteriorated residential roads, launched the City's response to climate change, drafted the ordinance that made it easier for our houses of worship to assist homeless families and led the City's effort that added ridgeline open space.

I am confident that Carl will continue to inspire and implement what is best for the City, and that he is the right person for Lafayette's future. I served with Carl on the Planning Commission for two years and on then on the City Council for eight, and the qualities I observed first hand -- his collaborative style of leadership, careful listening, analytical abilities, respect for all and competence to get things done -- are what we need now. For Lafayette's future: Experience, leadership and civility are essential. Please join me in voting for Carl Anduri for Lafayette City Council.

Mike Anderson  
Mayor, City of Lafayette

John Jex for MOFD Board for Fiscal Responsibility

I write to enthusiastically endorse and encourage my fellow citizens to re-elect John Jex as a Director of the MOFD Board. MOFD was established 23 years ago with a Board of Directors to be made up of community citizens; the very individuals that finance, through their tax dollars, the MOFD. From personal acquaintance and from observation of John's actions as a Board Member, it is clear that he is a judicious trustee of the community's funds allocated to the MOFD. John spent his entire professional career at the accounting firm of Deloitte, retiring as a Partner. That deep experience has already paid dividends to the community as he was instrumental in uncovering a \$23 million accounting error on the MOFD books. We have an excellent Fire Chief to ensure our MOFD firefighters are well trained and that fire-wise strategies are being deployed. We already have three former firefighters or fire department employees on the Board. We need a voice expert in speaking to the financial interests of the District that will allow MOFD to complete its mission of fire responsiveness, fire prevention, and responsible management of the firefighters' pensions and other ancillary benefits. John has been and will continue to be a wise trustee of

MOFD's resources.  
Red Smith  
Orinda

Re-Elect Darlene and Inga

Darlene Gee and Inga Miller should be re-elected to the Orinda City Council. They are endorsed by many present and former Orinda officials and volunteers. Their opponent is endorsed by outsiders such as disgraced SF Asm. Phil Ting.

Darlene and Inga have spent four years participating in council meetings and know the issues. Their opponent has attended very few meetings and offers few details about her plans.

Darlene and Inga have participated in the public, open budget process, which includes several public meetings over many months with detailed documentation. Their opponent falsely claims that the budget process is not open and transparent.

Darlene and Inga have caused staff to aggressively pursue grants. Their opponent falsely claims that they have not.

Darlene and Inga have an excellent plan for wildfire prevention, fuel reduction, and evacuation, and placed Measure R on the ballot to fund those activities. There have been actual and virtual evacuation exercises. Their opponent is supported by people who voted against continuing the free chipper service over the summer. Their opponent also wants greater collaboration between Orinda and MOFD, without apparently knowing that the Council already formed a coordination subcommittee that includes Darlene.

Nick Waranoff  
Orinda

Vote Yes on Measure R!

Please join me in supporting this essential ballot measure and proving for a safer Orinda. Just eight years ago, Orinda voters approved a modest increase in the sales tax rate to fund repairs to Orinda's deteriorating roads. This critical funding source has helped complete road improvements on time and on budget but is set to expire. Measure R renews the expiring voter-approved sales tax and increases the rate by 50% on a \$100 purchase) to provide locally-controlled funding for local needs, including: Improving wildfire safety by controlling hazardous brush and vegetation throughout Orinda Protecting neighborhoods, schools, fire stations, roads and bridges from wildfire by maintaining defensible space Repairing aging and collapsing storm drains to prevent flooding, sinkholes, and maintain safe evacuation routes Improving disaster preparedness by enhancing emergency communications, early alerts and evacuation planning Maintaining roads to minimize future costly repair This very modest tax is incredibly valuable in ensuring the safety of our community. Please vote YES on Measure R!

Dean Orr  
Orinda



### Please vote for Carl Anduri for Lafayette City Council

We are in difficult times and I am afraid this will probably continue. I would feel much better if we elect a councilmember who has demonstrated he can solve problems and provide leadership. Carl's problem solving and proven leadership abilities will be supported by his unmatched knowledge of our community-from the neighborhoods to our downtown. By his work with the City Council, Carl demonstrated his ability to get things done! I feel fortunate that Carl wants to bring this knowledge back to the Council and put it to work for us. Carl will also add another critical dimension to the Council. Perhaps I am biased because I am an attorney, but I believe Carl's legal skills and judgment were a great benefit in the past and will be again. Experience brings knowledge. Please vote for Carl Anduri for City Council-a proven leader.  
Susan Price Callister  
Lafayette

### David Stromberg for Town Council

Several years ago, as a Planning Commissioner, I met David Stromberg when he was on Moraga's Design Review Board. He was serious, thoughtful and well prepared on the projects that came before the Board. When appointed to the Moraga Planning Commission, he has continued to work with a deep understanding and commitment to the principles of our Town: open space, citizen input, our ordinances, smarter development, and a serious awareness of how Planning will affect the future of our semi-rural Town. As a new Town Council member I am sure he will continue to demonstrate these qualities, values and skills to better our town. I support David Stromberg for Town Council.  
Suzanne D'Arcy  
Planning Commissioner, Moraga

### Onoda for Moraga Town Council

We urge Moraga voters to return Teresa Onoda to the Town Council.  
From her 39 years as a resident and her service on both the Planning Commission and the Town Council, she brings an energetic, informed and disciplined approach to Town governance. With her understanding of the values and priorities of the community, she collects the relevant information, listens to those who come forward to speak and then acts in the best interest of the community. While demonstrating a strong commitment to the protection of ridge lines and open space in land use matters, she supports managed growth consistent with the Town's semi-rural character.  
A tireless advocate for the arts, she led the establishment of and has provided leadership to Moraga's Art in Public Places Committee,

which has added color and vibrancy to the Town.

In both her public and private life, she is an avid practitioner of inclusiveness, encouraging involvement by all segments of the community. She supports expansion of retail businesses and common-sense steps to implement the Town's Climate Action Plan. Teresa's experience, knowledge, core values and disposition make her an ideal candidate for the Moraga Town Council.

Sam and Susan Sperry  
Moraga

#### A vote for Renata Sos

I am urging Moragans to re-elect Renata Sos to the Town Council. She has a long record of serving our community. As a coach and volunteer, as a Planning Commissioner and as a Council member, Renata's experience is unmatched. She also combines intelligence and patience with passion and commitment. One of those area of commitment is to defending our General Plan and our open space. The financial pressure to "bend the rules" regarding open space preservation is strong. We need Council members with the knowledge and courage to enforce the Town's policies, laws and regulations. Furthermore, due to the epidemic and its economic impact, local governments will be facing unprecedented financial and resource challenges. Renata's legal and business experience will be critical for Moraga to survive these difficult times.

Please join me in voting for Renata Sos for Moraga Town Council.  
Bill Vaughn  
Former Mayor  
Moraga

#### Re-Elect John Jex and Craig Jorgens for MOFD Board

Four years ago, Craig and John ran on a platform of Fire Prevention, long before prevention was even a topic of discussion and before the Napa, Santa Rosa and Paradise fires. Craig and John, using intellect and innovation, put prevention into action on the MOFD Board. Craig identified the need for a chipper program to reduce fuel load in our communities and voted for funds to start it. Only John and Craig voted to continue this program over this summer. The chipper program has already removed 190 tons of fuel from Moraga and Orinda in 2020. In 2016, Craig worked with UC Professor John Radke and his grad students, using drone and satellite technology, to identify hot spots via computer burn simulations to guide fuel mitigation and evacuation plans. In their first year on the board, John and Craig uncovered a \$23M double-accounting error and fought the entrenched system for months to correct it.

I am so impressed with the depth of sophistication Craig and John have demonstrated. They are looking out for the citizens of Moraga and Orinda and need to be re-elected.  
Lucy Talbot

Orinda

Gina Dawson for City Council

We are supporting Gina Dawson for a seat on the Lafayette City Council. We have known Gina for about four years and knew of her work on environmental issues including gas safety and fund raising for Lafayette Partners in Education.

We know her best for her work with the Lafayette Hillside Memorial (formerly known as The Crosses of Lafayette) where her organizational skills and sharply focussed suggestions in meetings have been a real help in guiding our group. The creation of the LHM website is an example of her enormous contribution. We are sure anyone who has worked with her will echo our opinion of how valuable her input has been for us and so many in our Lafayette community.

Gina Dawson will be a great asset on the City Council..  
Lynn MacMichael and Howard Weamer  
Lafayette

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

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