



Published November 11th, 2020

## Sustainable Moraga - take up the challenge

By Vera Kochan

Accepting a Climate Action Plan in 2014, the town of Moraga committed to do its part to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Land use and transportation projects have seen a Moraga Walk/Bike Plan to address safety and education; participation in the Lamorinda School Bus Program that is geared to transport 1,500 students round-trip from home to school; projects to promote non-vehicular travel such as sidewalks, bike lanes and crosswalks; the installation of Electric Vehicle charging stations; and a 2015 ordinance allowing residents to keep small animals and certain types of livestock for food production.

Another effort, residential and commercial energy use, saw the town adopt CALGreen building standards in 2016, requiring new construction to meet energy efficient standards. In 2017, Moraga enrolled in Marin Clean Energy in order to give residents and businesses an opportunity to select renewable energy options. Solid waste (in the form of food waste) is part of an organics collection program implemented at the town's offices, and recycling receptacles are provided at all events held on town property.

In 2015, the town adopted the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance requiring new developments to conserve water, and as of 2016, all construction projects must treat storm water runoff on site.

Day-to-day town operations have also been affected by the CAP. HVAC upgrades have been made to the town offices; park facilities contain recycled benches and trash cans; water fountains and water bottle refilling stations discourage single-use plastic bottles; an Integrated Pest Management program reduces/eliminates the use of dangerous pesticides while Bay-friendly planting is used on town property; and almost all of the town's streets use energy efficient lighting.

Representatives from Sustainable Contra Costa ([www.sustainablecoco.org](http://www.sustainablecoco.org)) gave the town council a presentation during the Oct. 28 meeting asking Moraga to become a sponsor and issuing a Cleaner Contra Costa Challenge to its residents. The town council agreed to sponsor at the \$1,500 level for the FY 2020-21. The funds will come out of the Planning Department's consulting budget.

Sustainable Contra Costa President/CEO Tina Neuhausel and Community Organizer Colleen Noland encourage residents to join the Cleaner Contra Costa Challenge ([www.cleanercontracosta.org](http://www.cleanercontracosta.org)) in making Moraga even more sustainable for years to come. In order to join the challenge, residents can go to the website and enroll as a household, business or team. SCOCO is currently working on a Moraga landing page, but in the meantime all participant efforts can be seen at the county level. User information is completely private and the best part of all, incentive prizes are rewarded.

The Cleaner Contra Costa Challenge began in 2019, sponsored not only by the county but by the cities of Walnut Creek, San Pablo and Antioch. Neuhausel estimates programs much like this one currently involve approximately 20 cities nationwide. Noland added, "There is the need to create a cleaner, healthier and more resilient community for tomorrow."

SCOCO's goal is to use the challenge to help residents and businesses to realize the many cost-cutting actions to save water and energy. A sampling of several things citizens can do on the challenge include: telecommuting, choosing green electricity, eating lower down the carbon chain, taking shorter showers, recycling, composting, adjusting the thermostat, line drying clothes and turning off lights in an unoccupied room.

Besides giving tips to residents, SCOCO has been involved in numerous presentations to schools and local organizations in an effort to spread the word for a more sustainable planet.

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

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