

Frequently Asked Questions

About Moraga's Fiscal Situation and Urgent Street and Road Repair Needs

As of August 31, 2011

Q: What is the current fiscal situation in Moraga?

A: The Town has worked diligently in recent years to continue providing essential services residents depend on as revenues continue to decrease. Our annual budget is approximately \$6 million dollars. While we have seen slight declines in annual revenue, the costs of providing essential services, like public safety, parks and recreation, and street and road repair, has gone up. We continue to live within our means—never spending more than we have. In fact our fiscal stewardship has allowed us to build a modest reserve fund to ensure the Town is able to manage during an unforeseen emergency.

Q: What are the conditions of local streets and roads?

A: A recently released report of the nine counties in the Bay Area placed Town of Moraga streets and roads in the “At Risk” category—one of the two lowest rankings possible. This means that average Moraga street is on the verge of failure. A failing street is one with large potholes, cracks, and at risk for major breaks and sink holes. Moraga is in the bottom 15% of cities in the Bay Area—only one Contra Costa County City was in the category below Moraga—“Poor” and that is Orinda.

Q: Why doesn't the Town have enough resources to meet these needs?

A: Unfortunately the Town has not had the resources to invest in significant repairs to neighborhood streets and roads since they were originally built over 35 years ago. While major streets in need of repairs are eligible for federal and state monies, neighborhood streets are not. Given our fiscally conservative budget which provides for just essential services, we do not have the resources to meet these major capital costs. Currently the backlog of work that is needed is estimated at \$25 million. Even with the tightening of belts—it's simply not possible to find that money in our annual budget.

Q: What about the Town's emergency reserves?

A: The Town has been able to begin building an emergency reserve. The Council's goal is to have a reserve that is half our annual budget and we are getting close. These funds are intended to be used for one-time emergencies—like a natural disaster, not on-going expenses. Also even if all of these funds were used for street and road repair—it would only make up about 10% of our needs.

Q: What about Federal and State dollars?

A: The Town applies for and receives several grants from the state and federal governments and we will continue to apply for those funds. Unfortunately those funds can only be applied to major roads as determined by the federal government; they are not available for use on neighborhood streets, where our real need is.

Q: What happens if nothing is done?

A: If we do nothing to repair our local streets and roads, they will continue to deteriorate. As they deteriorate, the cost of fixing them dramatically increases. It's estimated that repair costs will increase 300% in the next ten years. In addition the condition of local streets and roads can impact property values. Repairing and improving streets and roads and preventing potholes and cracks will help maintain property values.