

# Letters to the Editor

## Sales Tax Fleeces "Sheeple"

Dear Editor,

Richard S. Colman's Letter to the Editor (Aug. 10), misses the main points for opposing the fictitiously named county transportation sales tax.

The board in charge of these funds consists of long term politicians, appointed by politicians, to give themselves and the politicians who appointed them, taxpayer's money, without caring about what citizens want, or don't want. Their goal is to get people out of their motor vehicles, and fund anything but better roads.

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority has funded parking lots that are never used for commuters, roundabouts and endless consultants' plans.

"Sheeple" (people who follow sheep-like) might expect the horrendous, outdated 680/4 interchange to be rebuilt with transportation money. But no! The City of Lafayette has made plans, paid for with grant money, to construct a walkway on the EBMUD aqueduct's right-of-way. This walkway must be handicapped accessible. The right-of-way has hills, valleys and three major street crossings. Plus the freeway noise is deafening. I wonder who thought up this ridiculous waste of money?

Obviously, it was someone who loves to fleece the "sheeple."

Richard S. Colman did bring up all of the points against any sales tax, like the proposed one in Lafayette. It's for funding whatever the politicians in power decide they want, whenever they decide they want whatever it is they want. It's 100 percent certain, it won't be what most of the people want.

Bruce R. Peterson  
Lafayette

## High Density Housing isn't Good for Lamorinda

Dear Editor,

Having been in the home building business in my former professional life, I am essentially pro-development. What is happening across the country, however, is a devious and underhanded "Agenda 21" effort in which municipalities are guilty into adopting the social re-engineering cause, which is — make no mistake — high density housing next to mass transit.

All three Lamorinda city councils have embraced this global agenda in their Master Plans, likely without any consideration as to what it really meant. More likely, it was done under the guise of preventing "manmade global warming." You may find this a noble cause (an argument for another day), but if you really think that high density housing is better for the environment than single family homes...we'll then..... can I interest you in a bridge I'm selling?

I'm sorry, but we most certainly did not move to Moraga for that. And I truly suspect, neither did you. Why, then, are we letting our government officials dictate to us something we know not to be in our best interest?

To add insult, they add the "affordable housing concern" just to get us on the hook. Well, just take a look at how much the government fees are to get a building permit for a residential unit and that myth flies right out the window. It's over 20 percent of the cost of building the home! If they really want developers to build affordable housing, why not waive the permit and development fees? Don't hold your breath.

It's rather simple. When it comes to building residences, the market does not lie. Government mandates will never change basic human nature. I think Ray Davies sang it best, "Give the people what they want".

Doug Home  
Moraga

## PG&E Work During the Fall in Lamorinda

Dear Editor,

This letter is in response to the Aug. 10 article on Lamorinda roads. Here is an update of the utility's activities in the Lamorinda area.

The safety of our customers and employees is PG&E's top priority, and that includes construction sites on busy streets. Many of our projects have flaggers or traffic control professionals on-site, ensuring both drivers and crew members are safe and the flow of traffic is smooth.

### Lafayette:

- Crews are currently working on a gas main and service replacement project in Lafayette. The project is on Los Palos Drive/Glenside Drive between Los Palos Manor and Los Palos Drive. This work is scheduled until November and traffic control will be onsite throughout the duration of the project.

- PG&E will be trimming tree limbs to ensure the safety and reliability of its electric system on Spring Hill Road at Pleasant Hill Road in Lafayette. The project will begin in September and conclude in October. Traffic control will be onsite.

### Moraga:

- Construction has already started for the utility line undergrounding project along Moraga Road between Devin Drive and Corliss Drive in the Town of Moraga. As part of the project, PG&E will remove the top portions of utility poles and associated electric lines. The poles will be removed once all utility companies relocate their facilities underground. The project is expected to continue until early 2017.

### Orinda:

- PG&E is currently in Orinda at the request of the city, lowering gas distribution lines to make way for Orinda's street repaving project. Crews will be on Ramona Drive and will be working on various streets in Orinda through the end of the year.

- PG&E will conduct routine vegetation maintenance at Stein Way and Moraga Way in Orinda. The one-day project will be completed in September.

Tamar Sarkissian  
PG&E Spokesperson

# EBMUD Opening up Watershed Trails

By Nick Marnell



Hikers enjoy the trails at the EBMUD Valle Vista Staging Area earlier this month. Photo Nick Marnell

Mountain bikers will soon be able to share popular East Bay Municipal Utility District trails with hikers and equestrians if a proposed two-year pilot program for equal access is approved as part of the EBMUD Watershed Master Plan. The trial period would begin next summer and will feature four sections of district trails that connect to regional trail systems, including the Bay Area Ridge Trail.

The watershed comprises 28,000 acres of East Bay property that the district manages in order to protect the quality of drinking water for its 1.3 million customers and to promote biological diversity. Sections of the watershed familiar to Lamorindans include the Upper San Leandro Reservoir south of Moraga, the Briones Reservoir and the San Pablo Reservoir Recreation Area near Orinda and the Lafayette Reservoir.

"This issue has received the most attention, more than our historic drought," said EBMUD director Marguerite Young, who told a standing room crowd at district headquarters Aug. 15

that she favored equal trail access. Moraga and Orinda reside in Young's Ward 3.

Concerns for safety and the destruction of the natural environment highlighted the presentations of nearly 60 speakers, whose comments appeared to be fairly balanced between the pro and anti-bicyclists.

"We are forced to ride on unsafe roads because we can't ride on the trails," said Austin McInerney, director of the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council. "But when bikes are ridden appropriately, it's hard to argue that bikes aren't doing less damage to the trails than a horse."

To that point, Ginger Jui of Bike East Bay allowed that her organization runs an education program to teach bicyclists to ride safely and confidently, and to take care of the environment.

Arguments against the bicyclists mostly dealt with their riding on single-track trails — narrow trails that can accommodate a horse and rider or maybe two adults side by side. Many of the trails proposed by EBMUD for equal access are single track

trails.

Margaret Flaherty, a 30-year cyclist who worked as a bike messenger, traveled across country on a bicycle and raced mountain bikes in California, said the proposed single-track trail at Skyline Gardens between Tilden Park and Sibley Reserve was no place for bicycles. "I know that riding a mountain bike on a single track is one of life's pleasures, but we have to realize that the Bay Area is a crowded place and getting more crowded every year, and not everything can be up for grabs," she said.

"Widening the trail for bikes at Skyline Gardens will damage the flora," said Glen Schneider, speaking for many who feared the environmental damage potentially caused by bicyclists. "It would be like allowing bicycles into a botanical garden."

Hikers at the Valle Vista Staging Area seemed to support the equal access proposal. "I would be perfectly happy to share trails with the bicyclists," said hiker Ron Ucovich, but he did agree that riding bicycles on single track trails presents potential for conflict.

EBMUD representative Doug Wallace said that the district was considering opening up approximately 10 miles out of its 82 miles of trails for access to bicyclists in the pilot program.

"We are not a recreational agency," Wallace reminded the audience, and he said that the proposal must first pass a California Environmental Quality Act review and receive final approval by the district board of directors.

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) for submission guidelines. email: [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com); Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570



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## Maria Eberle

Realtor  
Berkshire Hathaway  
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[maria@mariaeberle.com](mailto:maria@mariaeberle.com)  
[www.mariaeberle.com](http://www.mariaeberle.com)  
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