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Solar-powered streetlights to be installed at two busy Moraga intersections

By Vera Kochan



Black solar-powered lights installed in 2012 at Moraga Road/Woodford Drive intersection Photo Vera Kochan

As work on the intersection improvements at Canyon Road/Camino Pablo continues, the Moraga Town Council approved appropriating \$86,000 from Property Tax Lighting Special District to purchase and install three solar-powered streetlights by Ghilotti Construction Company, the firm currently involved with intersection and road improvements.

Two lights would be incorporated into the upcoming intersection project at the Moraga Road/Alta Mesa crosswalk, and an additional streetlight would be located at the intersection of Canyon Road and Country Club Drive.

During the Sept. 25 town council meeting Public Works Director Edric Kwan explained the monetary advantages of installing solar-powered lighting (\$86,000) over Pacific Gas and Electric Company's conventionally-powered lighting (\$166,000).

Additional points to Kwan's presentation included: pavement preservation by not needing to cut into pavement to access PG&E electricity across the street; an opportunity to "showcase" a green energy/safety improvement; optimizing aesthetics by adhering solar skin technology to the surface of the pole rather than mounting a bulky solar panel to the pole; positive experience with low maintenance effort from installing the same solar-powered streetlights at Moraga Road and Woodford

Drive and Moraga Road/Corliss Drive intersections in 2012; and energy savings would be approximately \$360 per streetlight per year.

"The poles are black and no one has really noticed that they are there," Kwan stated. "They are low maintenance and LED. I will always try to find cost effective improvements for the town."

When asked whether solar-powered lighting can be expected as the wave of the future in Moraga, Kwan replied, "It's really case by case. There's no immediate plan to put them everywhere."

Reach the reporter at: vera@lamorindaweekly.com

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