

# MORRO BAY MATTERS

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## **OVERNIGHT CAMPING ON THE EMBARCADERO REJECTED**

Citizens successfully gathered enough signatures to put a Measure on the ballot to prohibit overnight camping in parking lots on Embarcadero Road and Coleman Drive.

Signature gathering was in response to City Council's direction to allow trial overnight camping in the heart of the City's tourist area regardless of 100 public comments against it.

A year later, City Council directed Staff to apply for a permanent permit from the Coastal Commission.

Rather than put the Measure on the ballot for voters to decide, the City Council adopted the proposed ban. Revenue was designated for the Harbor infrastructure, but went to its operating budget instead.

## **SHIFT IN USE AND TIMING OF WRF INJECTED WATER**

The City Council's message was: 80% of Morro Bay's potable/drinking water will come from recycling water produced by the new sewer plant, the WRF, (Water Reclamation Facility).

Now that is a distant dream.

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## **PARCEL TAX INCREASE ON NOVEMBER BALLOT**

Normally, an addition to property tax or a special parcel tax is proposed by a city council, county, school district. It requires a **2/3 supermajority** by registered voters.

In our case, residents gathered signatures to impose a tax increase on themselves and all Morro Bay property owners. As a citizen initiative, only a **simply majority** is required for passage. Property owners **not** registered to vote in Morro Bay are **not** allowed to vote.

The 1<sup>st</sup> year's charge is \$120. Each year is "adjusted for inflation" with **no ending date**. Assuming this year's cost of living increase remains steady at 6%, the 2<sup>nd</sup> year's tax will be \$127. As it continues to climb, the 5th year will be \$161; the 10th year will be \$215, etc.

What's the money for?

Harbor infrastructure, capital projects. These are big ticket items typically paid for through grants, not borne by residents. There is no guarantee how the money will be spent because there is no specific plan for the money.

**MORRO BAY MATTERS** is brought to you by Citizens For Affordable Living (CAL) to inform Morro Bay citizens regarding current City issues. For contributions, contact us at: <https://calmorrobay.wordpress.com>

## **INJECTED WATER**

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Instead, the cleaned water will be dumped into the ocean unless needed to prevent salt water intrusion or to supply water during State Water shutdowns in November. Annual State Water shutdowns are for maintenance and last 2-4 weeks. That's when tap water tastes and smells nasty, even though treated, because it is pumped from our polluted groundwater. Read more:

<https://www.morrobay.ca.us/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/5952> (page 448)

## **WHAT'S IN THE CITY BUDGET?**

No refunds or reduced fees for you or me. Most items in the Master Fee Schedule, what the City charges for its services, went up 6%, as did wages and salaries. The City Manager makes \$214,000/yr plus benefits. Rather than also going up by 6%, City Council doubled their monthly stipend from \$500 to \$1000/mo, and the mayor's increased from \$700 to \$1430/mo.

The median for SLO County cities is \$648/mo for council members and \$798/mo for mayors. The Morro Bay mayor stipend is second only to SLO City (\$1803/mo), though Morro Bay has ¼ the population.

The possible reduction of the \$41 sewer/water surcharge promoted by the City Council in 2018 is now a dream as change orders continue to escalate. The guaranteed not to exceed price for the WRF was originally \$126 million. It is now \$160 million...and rising?.

## **SCOPING COMMENTS ON LITHIUM BATTERY STORAGE IS CLOSED**

Scoping comments, a time for the public and other agencies to identify areas of concern, is over.

The next opportunity for the public to comment on the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) will be near the end of 2022.

The City's consultant, Rincon, will write a DEIR (Draft Environmental Impact Report) based on the City's General Plan Final EIR.

Then, if procedure is followed, a public hearing will take place for the public to comment on the DEIR. Both oral and written comments are accepted. These comments will receive a response in the Final or FEIR.

Comments from the public during the recent scoping meeting included air pollution, the Bay, cultural resources, drilling vibration, fire, hazards, night lighting, noise, visual resources, and zoning change.

For more details, use this link.

<http://www.morrobayca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16812/EIR-Scoping-Presentation?bidId=>

## **3 STACKS**

City Council gave Vistra, the owner, "permission" to take down the stacks without a yes or no vote from the residents. Removal is subject to an EIR, which will be done simultaneously with the BESS. The General Plan lists the stacks as a Visual Resource.