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Orindas newest housing development - Wilder

Photo by Tod Fierner

Grading is underway and relatively soon, late in 2007, sales will begin on the 245 lots available for the developer constructed residences and custom homes sites that make up Wilder, located just south of Highway 24 at the Gateway exit. It has been approximately 20 years since Pacific New Wave purchased what was once known as Orinda Gateway, and Montanera, but has been renamed Wilder, one of the last large available parcels of developable land close to San Francisco. This project has certainly seen its ups and downs over the years. It was given the go ahead, had the go-ahead rescinded, sued the City of Orinda in state and federal court, had lengthy settlement negotiations, a golf course was at one point approved, then taken off the table, numerous public hearings were held, and in 2001 an additional parcel, part of the McCosker Ranch, was purchased to bring the project up to the current 1,600 acres.

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Changing the Shape of Orinda

By Cathy Tyson

Highway 24 Rehab

Your tax dollars at work
By Cathy Tyson and Lee Borrowman

Strange plants have started cropping up in the vicinity of Highway 24 and are already spreading to local streets as well. They are generically called "Ramp Closed" and "Detour."

Caltrans has begun the huge rehabilitation project of Highway 24 from the Caldecott tunnel to the western edge of Walnut Creek. This \$41.5 million dollar project, funded by the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) is expected to be completed in mid 2009. Work on the fourth bore of the tunnel will start upon completion of this project. Not only did this section badly need improvement, but this work will extend the life of the freeway for all 160,000 daily motorists for the next 20 years. At the moment, they are working on the Fish Ranch and Gateway area.

When complete, the highway will have approximately 3 inches of new asphalt on the 8 miles of roadway, rehabilitated lanes, shoulders, on and off ramps, guardrails, and improved drainage.

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Eastbound Gateway off-ramp; hmmm...

Whole Foods is Coming to Town

By Lee Borrowman

After serving as tantalizing grist for the rumor mill over the past few months, Whole Foods Markets announced on May 9 that it has signed a lease for the space formerly occupied by Albertson's in Lafayette. Although city officials said Friday that they have not been contacted regarding this incoming business, so it's a bit premature to throw away those Safeway Club Cards, local consumers who prefer organic foods and natural products are already rejoicing.

The first Whole Foods Market opened in 1980 in Austin, Texas. The Fortune 500 company now boasts 194 store locations in North America and the United

Kingdom, with 9 distribution centers and 7 regional bake houses in the US. Whole Foods Markets is ranked #5 on Fortune Magazine's 2007 list of the 100 Best Companies to Work For.

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What Were They Thinking? Slow Down, Lamorinda!

By Lee Borrowman

Although many believe the risk of getting caught to be a strong deterrent against breaking the law, it seems that more than a few drivers out there don't agree. Despite a massive effort to notify the public of the enforcement efforts, and speed trailers strategically positioned in advance, 50 speeding tickets were issued in the Pleasant Hill Rd. crackdown during the first week of the "Slow Down Lamorinda!" public awareness, education and enforcement campaign, and 28 tickets were issued (after 39 stops) on St. Mary's Rd. in Moraga last week. Evidently, not everyone has signed the Safe Driving Pledge that the Mayors, Police Chiefs and City Managers of our three communities all signed publicly on May 1.

"Slow Down Lamorinda!" is intended to make drivers more cognizant of their travel speeds and improve driving behavior through non-traditional education and enforcement efforts, and was developed in response to the fatal accidents earlier this year. The campaign partners, our local governments and police departments, spent much time last week engaging in getting the word out

in addition to dispatching several police cars to wait for speeders in the target areas. The school districts are supporting the campaign and parents' clubs have organized Slow Down rallies and events this week.

Moraga Mayor Mike Metcalf said, "Our problem is that some people just don't have it high enough in their consciousness that there's a real problem in our communities with speeding and driving under the influence. We've lost sight of the ball, and we need to raise awareness by continuing to place an emphasis on this issue."

We all remember those accidents. We all drove a little bit more slowly for a few days after each one. Slow Down, Lamorinda! is about the need to drive more slowly all the time. Consider this: If you drive five miles, which is roughly the distance from downtown Orinda to the Moraga Center, or from the Moraga Center to Lafayette, at 45mph rather than 35mph, you save less than two minutes of driving time. And the same car that was behind you when you passed through the last intersection will still come up behind you when you stop at the next red light.

According to Detective Nate McCormack of the Orinda Police Dept., when you are pulled over

you will spend 10-20 minutes waiting for that personalized speeding ticket, assuming you have all of the required documents with you. Then there's the price tag on the ticket, which varies widely depending on your speed and driving history, and if you factor in the time and money for court costs or maybe traffic school, the cost of a speeding ticket may not be negligible.

So you're two minutes late to that meeting; chances are, you still won't be the last one through the door. The last-minute item you need at the store will still be there two minutes later, as will

your teacher. You can flash your 'Slow Down Lamorinda!' bumper sticker at her—it might even work, once, before she tells you to get out of bed two minutes earlier. And it's a dirty job, but someone has to be last in line at the carpool pick-up after school, despite the protestations of your children.

The Lamorinda Weekly endorses this campaign. Safety is no accident.

Slow Down, Lamorinda!



Carol Federighi addresses the audience on May 1st, including Leah Greenblat, Mike Metcalf, Steve Falk, Mike Hubbard, Steve Glazer, Mark Ruppenthal, Phil Vince and Bill French (not pictured, Janet Keeter)

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