

Planned Roadwork May Challenge Lamorinda Drivers

By Sophie Braccini; Wendy Scheck contributed to this article



The East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) plans to replace three miles of aging water pipeline that runs under Moraga Road between the Lafayette Water Treatment Plant and Moraga's Draeger Drive. Work is scheduled to begin in June of 2008, and conclude in the summer of 2009. The project will necessitate the complete closure of Moraga Rd between Old Jonas Hill Road and Sky Hy Drive for 6-8 weeks next summer.

In related news, the City of Orinda has planned improvements to Moraga Way from Ivy Drive to downtown Orinda, which will also take place next summer. EMBUD is working with the City of Orinda on the timing of road closures. Moraga Orinda Fire District Chief Pete Nowicki said at a meeting in Moraga last Friday that the district's ability to respond to emergencies would not be negatively impacted by the overlapping roadwork.

The Pipeline Project :

The replacement of the current 24" wide pipes, which were installed in the 1930's and 1950's, is a project of the EBMUD's Water Treatment and Transmission Improvements Program. EBMUD held an informational meeting at the Lafayette Recreation Center on September 13, during which EBMUD Senior Civil Engineer John Hurlburt presented the plan and took questions from concerned residents.

The first phase of the project will be Old Jonas Hill to Sky Hy. Because Moraga Rd is very narrow and windy in that section, it will have to be completely closed to through traffic during work hours. This will happen during the summer of 2008 when schools are closed. Traffic will be diverted to St. Mary's Road.

Subsequently, trench work will take place from Sky Hy to Draeger Drive; Moraga Rd is wider there and only a partial closure of the road will be required. Residents voiced fears that even a partial closure was likely to create havoc, especially when occurring near schools.

As it stands now, the contractor will be authorized to work weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. An exception to this schedule will occur when trenches will have to be dug at Moraga Rd and Rheem Blvd. In order to minimize the interruption of traffic at this major intersection, the contractors may work up to 24 hours per day with the objective of completing the work within two days.

When asked why all the work wasn't done at night, Hurlburt replied that although EBMUD would love to be able to do that, the noise level would make nighttime work impossible.

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