

## New Developments in Orinda

By Wendy Scheck and Cathy Tyson



Artist's rendering of an Orinda Grove street scene

Provided by Pulte Homes

More than 80 attendees, many of them real estate professionals, joined the Orinda Chamber of Commerce Luncheon held recently to hear details about two residential projects that are finally coming to fruition, Orinda Grove by Pulte Homes and the Wilder development.

Orinda Grove, on Altarinda Road, is heading down the final path of the Design Review process and, providing things go smoothly once the project is presented to the City Council, demolition will begin in the late summer or early fall and home construction will begin in early 2009.

A total of 73 units up to three stories high and 2,600 square feet in size will be built. Of those, 68 units will be 1-3 story single family detached homes and eight of the units will be duplexes that will be considered affordable housing. A murmur of surprise passed through the crowd when a price range of the mid \$300K's was mentioned for the duplexes.

A city owned tot-lot and ball field as well as a new School District building are being designed and constructed by the developer as part of the project. The complex

will be pedestrian oriented and residents will have just a ten minute walk to downtown or BART.

"We've been working on this project for a little over four years, obviously it's been challenging at times. There has been a lot of input from neighbors, the City and the community. That input was important to the success of the plan we have today," said Kim Diamond, Senior Manager with Pulte Homes.

Mike Olson, the tenacious Wilder Project Manger since 1997, was pleased to finally announce that home sites are now available for sale and construction of homes can begin this fall.

The 1,600 acres of land will have just 200 acres developed with 245 homes and buildings; the remaining 1,400 acres are set aside as open space. Some of the highlights of the project for the community include: four public ball fields with 300 parking places; a public Art and Garden complex with four structures totaling 6,000 square feet and 50 parking places that can be utilized for meetings, shows and events. Finally meandering paths throughout the project will connect to miles of

Regional Park and EBMUD trails with spectacular views from Tilden to the San Leandro Reservoir.

A private swim club just for Wilder residents will feature an Olympic size swimming pool with automatic timers for swim meets.

Audience members were concerned about potential parking, shopping and school busing problems that may ensue when over 200 additional families live in Orinda. Olson deferred these questions to the City Council and other developers.