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More EBMUD Work Downtown

By Cathy Tyson



Brook Street is closed near Moraga Road for EBMUD, where workers are replacing over 500 feet of pipe that was installed in 1933.

Photo Cathy Tyson

Lafayette senior engineer Matt Luttrupp, acknowledging that the city has very little leverage over the utility company. Affected locals weren't shy about calling the city to voice their complaints.

According to EBMUD community affairs representative Michelle Blackwell, the utility was trying to be sensitive to restaurants and business; water was cut off in the area for eight hours from 10 p. m. to 6 a.m. on a Monday to be minimally impactful - usually a restaurant's least busy day. Residents who were thinking about a bath or perhaps flushing the toilet were out of luck that particular night.

Crews are working on nearby Brook Street and the 510 feet of pipe installed in 1933. Construction, which is slated to continue until the end of July, will impact the usually busy intersection of Moraga Road and Brook Street at Lafayette Elementary School, said Blackwell.

Two other major projects are coming to Lafayette, including the long-awaited Diablo Vista Pumping Plant replacement project that will connect a 30-inch diameter water pipeline installed along the freeway side of Mt. Diablo Boulevard to a new modern, efficient pumping plant farther down Mt. Diablo Boulevard near the cemetery. The old original pumping plant wedged into a tight space near Ace Hardware first started moving water to serve the area back in 1954. Construction should start in the late summer or early fall, says Blackwell.

Also breaking up the asphalt and usually peaceful ambiance of Las Huertas will be 1,600 feet of relocated pipeline and water main replacement under the street, which is being relocated due to age and its fragile state that would not tolerate expected road reconstruction, planned for the near future.

Managing water infrastructure is not easy, and it's no secret that aging pipes are more susceptible to cracking, corroding and bursting, especially vintage pipes that date back to the Depression, when Herbert Hoover was president.

Businesses and residents of the usually congested Lafayette Circle area were concerned about the lack of water, traffic gridlock, cones and flaggers on the narrow street, as 700 feet of pipe, dating back to 1931, was replaced. Starbucks, Roam Burger, The Cooperage and Chow all had their normal business interrupted, along with neighbors who call the area home. Although there are temporary patches on the roadway now, final paving is targeted for mid-July. Half of the pipe on Lafayette Circle has been replaced, but the other half of the street that ends at the Mercantile Building is on hold until the East Bay Municipal Utility District determines the best construction process.

"We can only do so much," said City of

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