project along Miner Road, the

city of Orinda held a July 26 neigh-

borhood meeting that included rep-

Electric Co., the city and the Mor-

www.lamorindaweekly.com Miner Road closure to end Aug. 10 after problem vegetation removed



PG&E electrical lines along Miner Road are highlighted in yellow. Photo courtesy City of Orinda aga-Orinda Fire District. PG&E and the city explained that 110 trees needed either pruning or removal along the road in order to maintain a safe distance from electrical power lines and to provide adequate clearance for emergency vehicles.

At the meeting, not one neighbor complained about removing the trees, all located on private property. Not one neighbor threatened to sue the utility or the city. Not one neighbor objected that the project out of north Orinda." was approved without an environ-

o outline a vegetation removal mental impact review.

Mainly because not one neighbor showed up.

"We have received very little resentatives from Pacific Gas and negative feedback from the community," said Larry Theis, Orinda director of public works and engineering, noting that the city had done extensive outreach explaining the need for the project through council meetings, signage and social media.

MOFD Fire Chief Dave Winnacker concurred. "People have gone out of their way to assure me that this is a benefit to their community," the chief said. "It's a big help for us to secure these routes

According to PG&E represen- removal.

tative Matthew McLain, a contractor will prune 84 trees along Miner Road and remove 26 of them. The work began Aug. 6 at the top of Miner and required the closure of the road. McLain said the company will finish the job by Aug. 10.

"After this, we will be done in Orinda," McLain said.

Theis said that because the paving of Miner Road will begin in the fall or next spring, the problem vegetation needed to be removed so that the construction work could be safely completed. The city also required that the work end before the start of school.

The city received no compensation from PG&E for the vegetation

Highway 24 gridlock: Why no local notifications or traffic control?

By Nick Marnell



The reason for the major congestion Photo courtesy KTVU single vehicle accident on police officer attempted to con-Highway 24 near the Orinda duct a traffic stop near St. Stephens BART station on July 21 caused a Drive. As the officer approached traffic standstill on the westbound the vehicle, it sped off and entered freeway, with local residents comwestbound Highway 24; the car plaining about two-hour delays to was later found wrecked on the drive between Pleasant Hill and freeway. One occupant died, the other was arrested and is being held Orinda, gridlock on downtown Lafayette streets and no traffic control at the Martinez Detention Facility. on either the highway or the on-off The incident remains under investiramps in each community.

According to the Contra Costa The California Highway Patrol County Sheriff's Office, at 9:02 cited the accident investigation as that Saturday morning an Orinda the main reason for the traffic con-

taken and followed," said CHP officer Brandon Correia. "The Sheriff's Office had to conduct quite a large investigation and collect evidence and photos. In some cases, such as this, we have to shut the freeway down to preserve the scene and all evidence."

The freeway stayed clogged for nearly six hours, with traffic funneled from five lanes to one at the Camino Pablo exit. Orinda and Lafayette residents received no alerts on Nixle, a community notification service provided by public agen-

Correia said the CHP does not use Nixle, but neither did the Orinda or Lafayette police departments. "The city of Orinda or Orinda Police do not do Nixle alerts for the CHP," said Mark Nagel, Orinda chief of police. "This occurred in their jurisdiction. I know it was in Orinda, but all of the traffic matters fell to the CHP."

gestion. "So many steps have to be traffic control on the highway. "For lied on the Sigalert, did not issue freeway control, we don't stand on the road and hand direct traffic," Correia said. "We use our cone patterns, flare patterns, and patrol vehicles' emergency lights to direct traffic." Nagel said that his officers were removed from the scene, per protocol. "CHP was on scene and incident," Nagel said.

> The brunt of the congestion occurred in Lafayette, especially on the downtown streets. The CHP issued a Sigalert, a notification of a major traffic incident, but Correia said that the CHP did not expect the high level of traffic activity in the city or on the on-off ramps to the freeway. "I'm not sure if it was communicated to Lafayette Police how much of a backup from the on-off ramps was created into their city and what they could have possibly done or not done to assist with that," Correia said.

Which explains why Lafayette Nor was there any apparent Police Chief Ben Alldritt, who re-

a local Nixle notification. "But I will next time," Alldritt said. "It was a lesson learned by me about people's expectations."

Orinda officials also pledged to review their incident notification procedures. "We are aware of the issue, and the police chief and I doing traffic control for the entire are working on a way to better notify residents," said City Manager Steve Salomon.

> Fire and medical responses in Lamorinda were not affected that day. The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District had no involvement with the incident, and the traffic had no impact on other responses that day, according to a district spokesman. And the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, the responding agency to the traffic accident, experienced no adverse impacts because of the congestion. "We always have the ability to respond," said MOFD Chief Dave Winnacker.





The 14th Annual Orinda Classic Car Show Weekend

Friday Night Pre-Party, September 7th, 5:30pm

"DANCING WITH THE CARS"

Produced by Orinda Rotary/Presented by

Mechanics Bank

Saturday,

September 8th, 10am-3pm

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Join us as a spectator or to show your car or motorcycle! Register online today!

Enjoy vintage and modern exotic cars and motorcycles, food, music, and more! The show will be held in and around Orinda Motors, 63 Orinda Way.

Cruise in a Classic! Donate \$10 and choose your ride for the Drive.

Enter Your Car and Buy Party Tickets Today at www.OrindaCarShow.com

These events benefit the Seniors Around Town transportation program, Educational Foundation of Orinda and other local charities. We would like to thank our partners for helping make these events happen: Orinda Association, Rotary Club of Orinda, Orinda Historical Society Museum, Orinda Community Foundation, Orinda Chamber of Commerce, EFO, Lamorinda Arts Council and Seniors Around Town.

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