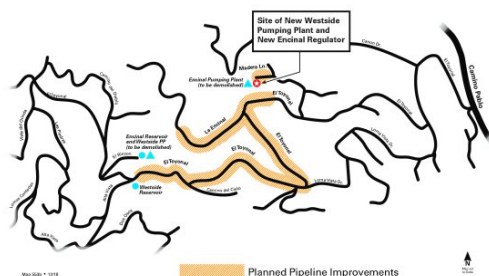




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EBMUD work to bring months of disruption to El Toyonal area

By Sora O'Doherty



Map provided

East Bay Municipal Utility District work in the El Toyonal/La Encinal area of Orinda will require several years to complete, and will cause partial road closures for months at a time. EBMUD Pipeline Engineer Dustin La Valee and Community Affairs officer Kathryn Horn came to the Sept. 3 Orinda City Council meeting to explain the project to the council and the public.

The project is known as the Westside Pumping Plant Replacement Project. It is being undertaken to improve facility reliability and operations efficiency, improve maintenance accessibility, replace pipelines at high risk for failure and to provide improved water flow for community firefighting by upsizing pipelines. EBMUD will replace critical aging water distribution facilities that have reached the end of their useful lives to increase system reliability and operating efficiency, and to improve water quality operations.

According to Horn, construction is scheduled to begin in March, beginning with pipeline construction, which is expected to be completed in March 2021. Construction of the pumping plant replacement is expected to run from 2021 to 2023.

The pipe work will start on La Encinal, which is a private road. Because La Encinal is so narrow, Horn said it makes sense for EBMUD, which is required to pay to repair a road to its existing condition, to do a full repaving at its expense. EBMUD will do a 2-inch grind and full repaving of the road, but residents should note that this may occur 30 days after the completion of the pipe work. Once the work begins, La Encinal will be closed between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Residents will have access during the closure. A designated parking area and pedestrian access will be provided, as well as shuttling for residents. Emergency vehicle access must be accommodated during all road closures.

The pipe work on El Toyonal between Alta Vista and Loma Vista will require road closure to through traffic, although residents will be accommodated. That portion of the work is currently scheduled to begin after school ends on May 30, and EBMUD is hoping to complete the work before school begins again in the fall. If it cannot complete the work, EBMUD will adjust the work schedule to accommodate school hours. Projected closure hours for El Toyonal from May 30 through Aug. 12 will be 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Any work done before May 30 or after Aug. 12 will be limited to between 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The conditions of access for residents and emergency vehicles will be the same as for La Encinal. El Toyonal will also be fully repaved, but EBMUD will share the cost proportionally with the city of Orinda.

The La Encinal and El Toyonal portion of the project includes the installation of 6,800 feet of 12-inch pipes to replace smaller pipes. Approximately 300 feet of new 2-inch pipeline will be installed in Madera Lane from Vallecito Lane to 6 Madera Lane. EBMUD hopes to complete this portion of the project in 2021.

The project also includes replacing the existing 0.5-million-gallon-per-day Encinal Pumping Plant and 0.3-MGD Westside Pumping Plant with a new 0.6-MGD Westside Pumping Plant. According to the EBMUD website, the new Westside Pumping Plant will be constructed at 4 Madera Lane, the site of the existing Encinal Pumping Plant. The Encinal Pumping Plant will be demolished. At 20 El Rincon, both the existing Westside Pumping Plant and the existing 0.2-million-gallon redwood Encinal Reservoir will be demolished. The Encinal Reservoir will be replaced with a new Encinal Regulator, to be housed within the new Westside Pumping Plant.

According to Horn, the existing Westside Reservoir holds enough water to meet the water storage needs of both the Westside and Encinal Pressure Zones, making removal of the Encinal Reservoir possible. Removing excess storage will increase water quality by increasing water turnover and reducing water age.

Construction of replacement pipelines will take place with the existing pipelines still in service. Short shutdowns and minimal interruptions in water service will occur when new pipelines are connected to existing pipelines and when service laterals are transferred from the existing to the new pipelines. Crews will notify residents, in person or with a door hanger, regarding any planned water service interruption.

After a service interruption, there may be air in the pipes that may loosen particles in home plumbing, and

EBMUD will provide residents with specific steps to clear pipes at that time.

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