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# Garbage rates to rise as recyclables market falls

By Sora O'Doherty

Although the news that garbage rates will rise because China and other countries have stopped taking in U.S. materials for recycling might be regarded as bad by some, Orinda Mayor Inga Miller sees a silver lining. She sees it as an opportunity to ask two questions: how can we do our own recycling in the U.S. using clean methods that are allowed? And how can we stop generating so much waste? She explained that it used to be profitable for China to take recycling materials from the U.S. because there were so many shipping containers that return to China empty. But as China has grown economically, the country no longer wanted to take in "dirty" materials. Miller says that Orinda materials are very clean and of good quality. "Let's recycle here, or reuse," she suggests. Miller also pointed to current legis-

lation in Sacramento to make plastic producers more responsible.

According to RecycleSmart, the first rate adjustment related to changes in the recycling markets will take effect in March. There will be a second rate adjustment in March of 2021. No further adjustments related to changes in the markets are anticipated for the remaining term of the agreement with Mt. Diablo Recycling, which runs until 2025, except for cost-of-living adjustments. Rate adjustments are projected to be modest, likely no more than a total of a few dollars a month per household. These estimates are based on a single-family dwelling using a 32-gallon cart and are in line with adjustments other communities are experiencing.

The rate increases come out of a settlement with Mt. Diablo Recycling. RecycleSmart has a franchise agreement with MDR under which

MDR pays for each ton of recyclables. This agreement was unique in how favorable it has been for the community. More than a year ago, MDR explained that it is not viable for the company to fulfill the existing terms of its agreement with RecycleSmart. RecycleSmart's outside independent consultant validated the adverse effects of changes in the recycling market. RecycleSmart – represented by outside special counsel Tamara Galanter at Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger LLP – and MDR engaged in mediation with an outside third party to help come to the settlement.

RecycleSmart believes the settlement is the best outcome because it caps fee increases related to changes in the recycling market at a modest amount for the next five years and avoids the cost and uncertainty of litigation. "The recycling fees we will be paying are much lower than what most other juris-

dictions are paying and less than we would pay if we tried to contract with a new recycling company right now. And the settlement will allow us to continue to comply with state law and its requirement to keep recyclables out of landfills," according to RecycleSmart.

RecycleSmart says that its customers are already doing a great job at recycling and are among the best recyclers in the state. Over 60% of the waste stream is being recycled, but to be better recyclers, it says, customers need to keep their recyclables clean. The company has asked customers to take a few extra steps to keep their recycling clean – a challenge when all materials are going into the same blue cart. An Empty, Clean and Dry campaign is seeking to assist and remind customers that taking those few extra steps will make a huge difference in helping to ensure a longer life cycle for materials.

# Government and private citizens striving for inclusivity in Orinda



By Sora O'Doherty

In recent weeks, in response to a growing number of incidents in the country, as well as in Contra Costa County and the city of Orinda, people are acting to encourage inclusivity and diversity in the community, and to discourage any acts of discrimination or intimidation.

On Sept. 3, the city council

unanimously adopted a proclamation supporting inclusivity and diversity in the city. The proclamation, signed by Mayor Inga Miller, reaffirms that the communities shared values of compassion, inclusion, respect, and dignity, and bolsters its commitment to building an environment, and a community, in which everyone is valued and everyone has the

opportunity to thrive. The proclamation ends with an invitation for citizens to likewise affirm these values of inclusion.

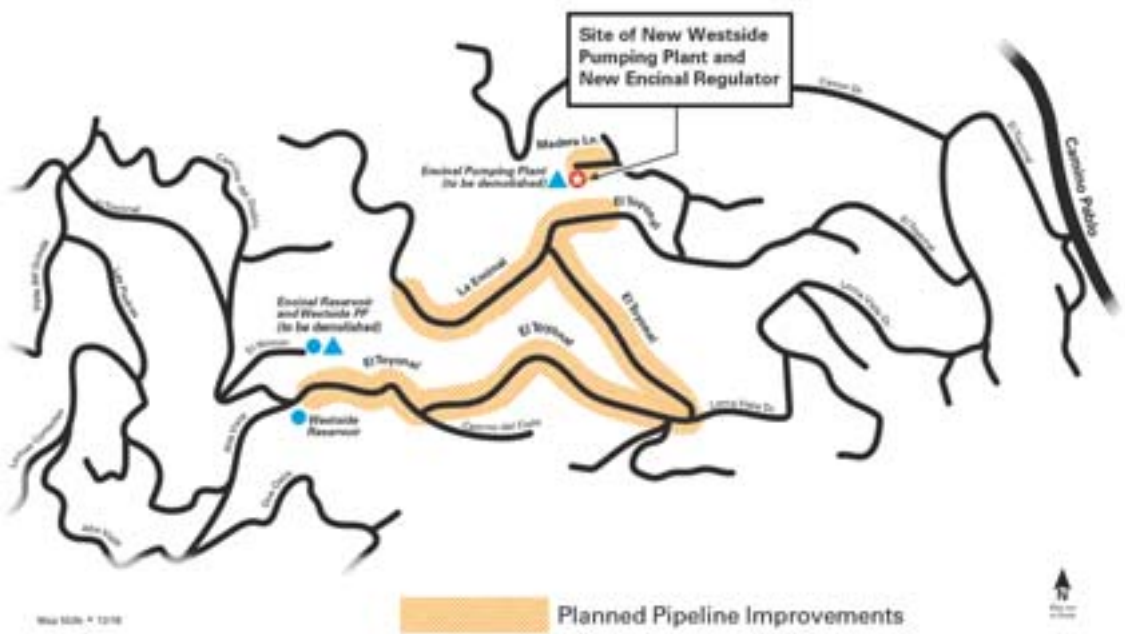
According to Shannon Pedroni, a group of Orinda residents has started a grassroots campaign to promote inclusivity and diversity within the community. The actions taken by the group include asking business owners to display window signs that say "Everyone is welcome here, everyone belongs." Pedroni said that the campaign was set off after a recent incident in which a Muslim Orinda resident and local pediatrician was allegedly pushed and subjected to a hateful exchange by another customer in an Orinda store, in front of her young son. This incident was a culminating event atop other incidents that underrepresented minority groups have experienced, including recent anti-

LGBTQ flyers delivered to local sporting events and schools.

After the Orinda store incident was shared with neighbors and friends, concerned community members pulled together to organize support for making it clear in Orinda that everyone is welcome here and there is no place for hate, Pedroni said. At the same time, Orinda residents Pedroni, Nazia Sheriff, Sharon McGinnis-Girdlestone and Rebecca Verity approached the Orinda City Council to discuss ways in which the city of Orinda could support inclusivity and diversity. Pedroni said that the grassroots group of concerned residents applauds and appreciates the city council for adopting the proclamation and looks forward to collaborating with the city on more ways to promote community, diversity and inclusion.

To read the full proclamation online in the Orinda City Council Sept. 3 agenda packet, visit <http://orindaca.iqm2.com/Citizens/Board/1000-City-Council>

# EBMUD work to bring months of disruption to El Toyonal area



By Sora O'Doherty

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 im-

proved 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 ac-

commodated. 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.