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## Orinda city council wonders how to translate Safety Element into real safety

By Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda City Council heard a report on July 5 from the Safety Element project team on the draft Safety Element update, which will be submitted to the state of California along with the 6th cycle Housing Element. Both elements are required by state law. The project team includes Planning Director Drummond Buckley and Associate Planner Winnie Mui, along with contractor Placeworks. Eli Krispi of Placeworks gave a presentation to the council.

The safety element is a mandatory part of the city's general plan and identifies hazards, such as fire and smoke

concerns, evacuations, seismic hazards, landslides, flood and other topics of concern. Orinda's current safety element is 35 years old, and needs to be updated to include new standards and to integrate the local hazard mitigation plan, the Contra Costa Countywide Community Wildfire Protection plan and other planning efforts, as well as the efforts of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District to update and build a unified strategy for addressing wildfire hazards and risks.

There have been some significant legislative developments, such as SB 1241, which increased requirements for flood and wildfire protection,

SB 379, which requires a safety element to address climate change and resilience, and SB 99/AB 747, which require the safety element to show and assess evacuation routes and evacuation-constrained areas.

Climate change in Orinda is predicted to result in more frequent and intense wildfires, and more extreme heat events as well as increases in severe weather, including intense rainfall events, and increases in drought conditions. The report to the council noted that households in poverty and low-resourced people of color are the most vulnerable populations to drought, while extreme heat will also affect outdoor

workers, seniors, and people with chronic illness and/or disabilities. Human health hazards will affect major employers, such as the Orinda Union School District, while landslides pose risk to electrical transmission infrastructure, residential structures, major roads and highways, and natural gas pipelines, as well as schools and parks.

Although evacuation analyses will be required in 2023, Orinda is addressing the requirement in advance in response to community feedback and known issues. A study will identify potential evacuation routes based on past work by the city and MOFD, including

Highway 24, major roadways and local roadways of critical importance. The study will evaluate the capacity of evacuation routes as compared to the number of households they serve, and whether evacuation routes are likely to be affected by natural hazards or other emergencies. It will also consider shelter locations, which are safe locations, either within or outside Orinda, where people can safety shelter. Two communities slated to be considered as communities of refuge are Wilder and J&J Ranch.

The city has been seeking public input on the draft safety plan.

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## Election deadlines, some incumbents won't run again

By Sora O'Doherty

The general election on Nov. 8 will fill local seats on city or town councils and school district boards. The nomination period for candidates opened at 8 a.m. on July 18. The deadline for nominations is Aug. 12, but if an incumbent

chooses not to run again, the deadline is extended to Aug. 17 at 5 p.m. for non-incumbent candidates.

In Orinda, there will be three seats up for election on both the city council and the Orinda Union School Board. Mayor Dennis Fay and council members Amy Worth and Nick Kosla are at the end of

their current terms. Kosla has announced that he will not be running for reelection, a decision he says he made when he first ran for the council. "Four years is a long time," he said. Kosla has previously served on the Orinda Planning Commission as well.

OUSD Board Members Carol Brown, Jason Kaune

and Liz Daoust also have terms ending at the end of the year. Brown has stated that she will not be running for reelection. Therefore, both races, Orinda city council and OUSD board, will be subject to the extended deadline of Aug. 17 for non-incumbents to file nomination papers indicating their intentions to run for

those offices.

Candidates for city council are encouraged to contact City Clerk Sheri Smith at ssmith@cityoforinda.org or (925) 253-4221 to schedule an appointment to take out and/or file nomination papers.

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