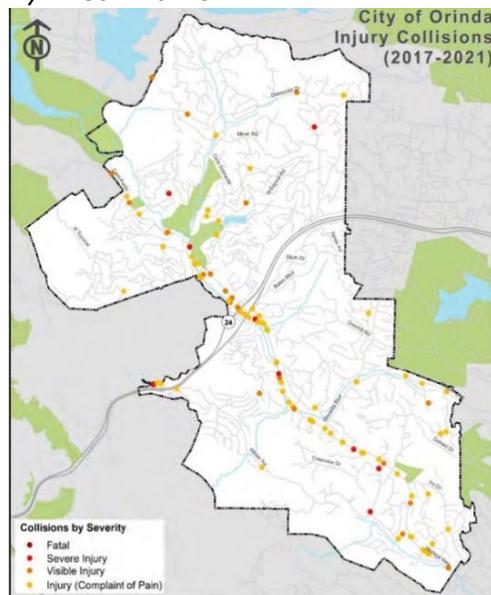


Published August 30th, 2023

Orinda's Local Road Safety Plan addresses greatest concern: speed

By Alison Burns



Injury Collisions in the City of Orinda (2017-2021)

After Orinda residents were invited to report their road safety concerns to TJKN Transportation Consultants last year, it came as no surprise to many to discover that the majority of respondents identified speeding as their greatest concern.

Federal regulations require each state to adopt a strategic highway safety plan, primarily derived from data which is then tailored to the community's specific traffic needs. To this end, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) allocated around \$18 million of funding for local agencies to develop their individual plans.

Orinda's award of \$40,000 was further supplemented by around \$70,000 from the city, which then appointed TJKN Transportation Consultants to identify the problems, and solutions, on Orinda's roads. In April 2022, the consultancy began by distributing comprehensive questionnaires to Orindans, via the city website, monthly e-newsletters and social media.

This public outreach garnered 262 responses. Not surprisingly, the highest traffic concern involved speeding (92 residents), with a separate category - "unsafe speed" - adding a further 20 respondents.

Next came 64 people anxious about Pedestrian Safety, while "visibility and safety at intersections" also showed up as an area of concern.

TJKN's data collection covered the years 2015-2019 and identified five "high injury corridors." Camino Pablo (from Bear Creek Road to Santa Maria Way) accounted for 11 injury collisions, while a further 10 "high injury intersections" (three of which involved Moraga Way) tallied an additional 14 injury collisions. Of the 18 signal upgrades currently being undertaken, 13 are along Camino Pablo.

Analysts found that 25% of all collisions, and 44% of "severe injury collisions," involved hitting an (unnamed) object. The primary factor in 24% of all collisions, and 44% of serious injuries, was categorized as "unsafe speed."

TJKN advocated implementing "the five E's of traffic safety" - namely Engineering, Enforcement, Equity, Education and Emergency Medical Services.

Recommended engineering projects include installing flashing beacons at stop-controlled intersections and elsewhere as an advance warning; installing raised medians on approaches and chevron signs on horizontal curves; installing rectangular rapid flashing beacons, and adding new pedestrian crossings or upgrading existing ones. The installation of dynamic/variable speed warning signs was also suggested.

Non-engineering strategies include a public information campaign to educate motorists about intersection safety laws, unsafe speeds, distracted driving, improper turning and driving under the influence.

Other recommendations include targeted enforcement at high-injury locations, plus an increase in the number of EMS/fire control personnel undertaking Traffic Incident Management Training.

And since Orinda is very much a town of walkers and cyclists, it was recommended that the city should use media outlets and social platforms to raise awareness of bicycle and pedestrian safety needs.

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