

From: [Nick Waranoff](#)
To: "[Sheri Smith](#)"; [Holbrook, Marcia](#)
Subject: Agenda Orinda-MOFD 2X2 meeting Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2025
Date: Sunday, February 9, 2025 8:08:13 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Please consider this a public comment for the subject meeting and include as such in the agenda packet
Nick Waranoff

From: Nick Waranoff <waranoff@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, February 9, 2025 11:13 AM
To: 'Candell, Susan' <scandell@ci.lafayette.ca.us>; 'Darlene Gee' <Dgee@cityoforinda.org>
Cc: '1207michele@gmail.com' <1207michele@gmail.com>; 'Craig Jorgens' <Craig@TheJorgens.com>; 'Roemer, Mike' <mroemer@mofd.org>; 'Latika Malkani' <lmalkani@cityoforinda.org>; Janet Riley <jriley@cityoforinda.org>; Brandyn Iverson <biverson@cityoforinda.org>; choxie@cityoforinda.org; Linda Smith <lsmith@cityoforinda.org>; Lashun Cross <lcross@cityoforinda.org>; 'Sheri Smith' <ssmith@cityoforinda.org>; 'hghammon3@gmail.com' <hghammon3@gmail.com>; 'jisaacs@mofd.org' <jisaacs@mofd.org>
Subject: RE: CalTrans grant to CCTA regarding emergency evacuation - we need a FOUR agency task force rather than rely on CCTA

You folks may or may not be aware of this: So-called “planning” decisions can cost lives. <https://www.foxnews.com/us/california-wildfire-prompting-new-scrutiny-as-paradise-reduced-main-evacuation-route-from-four-lanes-to-two>

There is also a paywall-blocked similar article in the LA Times.

<https://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-ln-paradise-evacuation-road-20181120-story.html>.

Adopting a “plan” that will actually kill people isn’t a good idea. It is shocking that I even have to say that.

In the recent Pacific Palisades fire, “the few roads leading out of the burning neighborhood were jammed with traffic.”

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/los-angeles-california-wildfires-victims-no-escape-rcna191087> Orinda, Moraga and Lafayette are in a similar situation. As was Maui.

What will you do about this? Add more housing downtown to increase congestion?

After losing the EIR suit, Orinda did a “follow up” evacuation analysis, which was renamed the “supplemental” evacuation analysis because SEA was a better acronym than FU EA. It analyzed access to WB SR 24 by counting the

capacity of the 4 lanes of WB on ramps to SR 24 at the crossroads, ignoring that they narrow to one lane; the “analysis” evaluates capacity based on 4 lanes. And still finds it “severely constrained” under existing conditions which of course will be made worse by additional development. Yet for some reason the Orinda Council supports adding more housing at downtown choke points than is legally required under the state mandate. Why?

And the “analysis” does not provide evac times, because like the classic movie scene in A Few Good Men, when Colonel Jessup, played by Jack Nicholson, says to Lt. Kaffee, played by Tom Cruise: “you can’t handle the truth”. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-KA4ApfHNA> The arrogant young people Darlene and her comrades hired don’t think Orinda residents can handle the truth.

The young consultants did recognize the limits of their “skill sets,” however, and recommended that Orinda hire a traffic engineering firm (as Laf did), but Orinda’s council did not do so. Why not?

The CEQA thresholds for wildfire evac include this threshold: Will the project ... **“5. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.”** Yet Orinda’s draft partially revised EIR expressly states that it does not include this threshold. How can that be? Why would seemingly reasonable people do such a thing?

One of my concerns re the CCTA project under the CalTrans grant is the focus on “equitable priority groups.” Getting info from Hoang at CCTA, who is in charge of this project, has been harder than pulling teeth without anesthesia. I had to reach out to his supervisor, the exec director of CCTA, Haile, to get a response to simple emails. I have resisted thus far the urge to issue a comprehensive PRA request, but my patience is waning. We need to get “equity” out of government; it is unconstitutional. But what will happen is that wildfire evac will yield to emergency evac from “underserved” communities near refineries. Hence we need our own.

You should not be relying on the CCTA to do anything helpful to our community. **What we do need is a sub-regional coordinated plan like at Tahoe.** “The plan is organized so that the evacuation information in the front of the plan is applicable to ALL parts of the Lake Tahoe Basin. Then there are

seven annexes in the back of the plan that allows for more specific information which is only pertinent to the specific areas.”

<https://www.tahoelivingwithfire.com/press-releases/new-lake-tahoe-regional-evacuation-plan-developed-by-regional-fire-law-emergency-management-personnel/> The link is worth reading.

You need a FOUR agency meeting (Laf, Orinda, Moraga, MOFD) and set up a task force to implement. Orinda’s evac plan was supposed to be reviewed annually, but hasn’t since 2018 or so. Orinda just now issued an RFP.

Surprise me and make it happen! I don’t know what BS Lafayette is up to, or Moraga, but in Orinda we have Darlene’s and Janet’s vanity project (the Crossroads park under the power lines that the landowner (PGandE) has stated no one should linger at, and new “drive-by” sign ---Janet’s words; she is former pres of Garden Club); we have a proclamation passionately advocated for by Makani, signed by Gee, that declares that residents should report other residents to a private, non-governmental hot line, so that data collection and vigilante action can be taken against anyone exercising his or her first amendment right to whatever the reporting party deems to be hate speech; we have the all important off-leash dog park; and many more things of lower priority than safe emergency evacuation. Long time local infrastructure expert Jud Hammon, who in admirable fashion led the CIOC for years, urged the Council to put aside consideration of merely desirable projects and focus on necessary ones, to no avail. **When I presented Jud’s argument to the Council, Darlene pointedly responded that the city cannot put aside other less important things and focus on emergency evacuation. And there you have it – in a nutshell.**

It is hard to think of a public servant who has fallen further than Darlene, other than Joe Biden. Like the Democrats, Darlene really needs to rethink her priorities.

If I sound angry and bitter, it is because I AM! This is literally life and death stuff. I was one of the first to organize his neighborhood into a Firewise community. I would hate for me and my neighbors to lose it. The opposition by the Orinda City Council to safe emergency evacuation is prideful and contrary to the best interests of the City’s residents – including themselves!

Nick Waranoff

PS: Susan: By the way, the water park has been removed from the Palisades project. <https://www.sierrasun.com/news/supervisors-unanimously-approve-palisades-tahoe-development/> Nevertheless, as a second homeowner in Olympic Valley, I am concerned about evacuation; I think the plan is to shelter in place in what will be left of the massive parking lot after development. I did start the effort to harden my condo association property when I was on its board.

PPS: I am taking the rest of the day off to relax with friends at a Super Bowl party. And lower my blood pressure.

From: Candell, Susan <scandell@ci.lafayette.ca.us>
Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 5:52 AM
To: Nick Waranoff <waranoff@comcast.net>; 'Darlene Gee' <Dgee@cityoforinda.org>
Cc: 1207michele@gmail.com
Subject: Re: CalTrans grant regarding emergency evacuation

Yes we were there and had the same focused questions as you on the Evacuation plans.

Another twist in this is that they are coming up with the Road Safety plan at the same time, and we all pushed back hard at SWAT that these changes MUST be looked at with the lens of evacuation routes so that we don't do things like put in road diets on our evacuation routes.

Both of these documents should come back to us in the next months, and I sure hope they include a bunch of the changes that we asked for.

I too read in horror at the new evac times at Tahoe. And they just approved that massive new development at Palisades, water park and all. Talk about the dumbest idea ever.

-Susan

From: Nick Waranoff <waranoff@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2025 9:17 AM
To: 'Darlene Gee' <Dgee@cityoforinda.org>; Candell, Susan <scandell@ci.lafayette.ca.us>
Cc: 1207michele@gmail.com <1207michele@gmail.com>
Subject: FW: CalTrans grant regarding emergency evacuation

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The minutes of the Dec 2, 2024 meeting indicate that the two of you were present. See p. 22 here. <https://swatcommittee.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/SWAT-BOD-Agenda-Packet-v2-020325.pdf> As my comments below indicate, I don't think we can rely on CCTA.

From: Nick Waranoff <waranoff@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2025 9:13 AM
To: 'John Hoang' <jhoang@ccta.net>
Cc: '1207michele@gmail.com' <1207michele@gmail.com>; 'thaile@ccta.net' <thaile@ccta.net>
Subject: RE: CalTrans grant regarding emergency evacuation

One more question: will you be modeling the spread of wildfire and will you be using AI?

In early September, 2024, an evacuation analysis was done for the North Lake Tahoe Region that included modeling the spread of wildfire and its effect on the limited evacuation routes. See SF Chronicle. “New Tahoe wildfire evacuation study quadruples time estimates”

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/california-wildfires/article/tahoe-fire-evacuation-19723705.php>

<https://nevadacurrent.com/2024/08/28/evacuating-tahoe-could-take-twice-as-long-as-projected-simulations-indicate/>

The article about Tahoe is very relevant to Orinda because, like North Lake Tahoe, much of Orinda is in a Very
Another article reports, “The AI-generated Placer [County] evacuation simulations reveal a nine to fourteen-plus hour evacuation time depending on road closure conditions. This is in stark contrast to the 2016 Placer County Environmental Impact Statement, which estimated evacuation time for the study area at 3.7 hours. Washoe Tahoe AI generated simulations include potential closures of SR28 at Stateline and Sand Harbor resulting in eight and nine hour wait times.” <https://www.sierrasun.com/news/an-independent-wildfire-evacuation-analysis-questions-safe-tahoe-evacuations/>

From: Nick Waranoff <waranoff@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2025 9:09 AM
To: 'John Hoang' <jhoang@ccta.net>

Cc: '1207michele@gmail.com' <1207michele@gmail.com>; 'thaile@ccta.net' <thaile@ccta.net>
Subject: RE: CalTrans grant regarding emergency evacuation

Thank you for your email. Given the several earlier emails I sent to you, including the attached email in which I asked “What notifications should I sign up for to keep informed?”, I am extremely displeased that only now will you include me on the project notification list. I am very disappointed that I was not notified of your presentations, and that you ignored my follow up emails until I appealed to Mr. Haile, which should have been unnecessary. Ms. Jacobson and I have been the two Orinda residents who, by a large margin, have been most involved with this subject.

I used the link you provided and scrolled down to the Dec 2 presentation. The last page of the presentation is entitled “Equity Priority Communities” but I cannot understand how this relates to the Countywide Emergency Evacuation Plan, which is the subject of the presentation. Could you please explain? And specifically address what “equity” means; what communities are “equity priority communities”; how the notion of “equity priority communities” relates to communities in the WUI or VHFHSZs; how special treatment of “equity priority communities” is consistent with the federal and state constitutions; and whether Orinda and Lafayette are considered by you to be “equity priorities communities”.

Nick Waranoff

From: John Hoang <jhoang@ccta.net>
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2025 8:43 AM
To: Nick Waranoff <waranoff@comcast.net>; Tim Haile <thaile@ccta.net>
Cc: 1207michele@gmail.com
Subject: RE: CalTrans grant regarding emergency evacuation

Mr. Waranoff,

Thank you for the follow up email. I also received an e-mail from Ms. Jacobson on Saturday. CCTA is still waiting on the final agreement with Caltrans for the grant and once that is ready then we will bring that agreement to our Board for approval and then the project can officially begin. I already have your contact information and will include you on a project notification list. Over the past several months, I have been presenting the project to the various Regional Transportation Planning Committees in the county, including the SWAT

(Southwest Area Transportation) Committee, which represents Lafayette, Orinda, Moraga and other cities in the area. You can see the agenda and presentation for the December 2, 2024 meeting [Committee Meetings – Southwest Area Transportation Committee](#)

Thank you for your patience. Please call me anytime to discuss.

John

John Hoang

Director, Planning

[Contra Costa Transportation Authority](#)

2999 Oak Road, Suite 100

Walnut Creek, CA 94597

Phone: 925.256.4729

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From: Nick Waranoff <waranoff@comcast.net>
Sent: Saturday, February 1, 2025 10:51 AM
To: Tim Haile <thaile@ccta.net>
Cc: John Hoang <jhoang@ccta.net>; 1207michele@gmail.com
Subject: FW: CalTrans grant regarding emergency evacuation

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Good morning. I am writing to you because Mr. Hoang has not been responsive to my emails on this critical subject.

Nick Waranoff

From: Nick Waranoff <waranoff@comcast.net>
Sent: Saturday, January 18, 2025 10:57 AM
To: 'John Hoang' <jhoang@ccta.net>
Cc: 1207michele@gmail.com
Subject: RE: CalTrans grant regarding emergency evacuation

Hi. I am following up. I have copied Michele Jacobson, another Orinda resident who has been active in addressing this subject. What department's agenda should be on the lookout for.

Nick Waranoff
510-334-0729

From: John Hoang <jhoang@ccta.net>
Sent: Wednesday, September 25, 2024 9:56 AM
To: Nick Waranoff <waranoff@comcast.net>
Subject: RE: CalTrans grant regarding emergency evacuation

There's nothing to sign up for at this time to receive info for the project. We will look into establishing a notification process for updates.

John Hoang

Director, Planning

[Contra Costa Transportation Authority](#)

2999 Oak Road, Suite 100

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From: Nick Waranoff <waranoff@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, September 23, 2024 12:59 PM
To: John Hoang <jhoang@ccta.net>
Subject: RE: CalTrans grant regarding emergency evacuation

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What notifications should I sign up for to keep informed?

From: John Hoang <jhoang@ccta.net>
Sent: Monday, September 23, 2024 12:06 PM

To: waranoff@comcast.net

Subject: RE: CalTrans grant regarding emergency evacuation

Hi Mr. Waranoff,

Thank you for your interest in this project. I will be managing this grant and project. Feel free to reach out to me directly if you have any specific questions. We plan to kick off the project late this year or early next year.

Regards,

John Hoang

Director, Planning

[Contra Costa Transportation Authority](#)

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E-mail: jhoang@ccta.net



From: Nick Waranoff <waranoff@comcast.net>

Sent: Friday, September 20, 2024 12:12 PM

To: info <info@ccta.net>

Subject: CalTrans grant regarding emergency evacuation

You don't often get email from waranoff@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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How do I keep up with this? Who is actually managing the grant?

Nick Waranoff

Orinda