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May 8, 2013  
Agenda Item 15c

**latimes.com**

## LAFD chief presses ahead with firefighter reassignment plan

Ben Welsh, Robert J. Lopez and Kate Linthicum

2:53 PM PDT, April 25, 2013

Los Angeles Fire Chief Brian Cummings vowed Thursday to press ahead with [a controversial plan](#) to reassign dozens of city firefighters from fire engines to ambulance duty, despite an outcry from groups representing city firefighters and the department's top commanders.

The plan would add 11 new ambulances to the LAFD's fleet by removing one member per shift from 22 firetrucks across the city. The chief said the change is necessary to reshape the department to fulfill its primary task: providing emergency medical care.

Medical calls account for more than 80% of 911 responses, according to department officials and an independent data analysis by The Times. And the chief says that lopsided figure is growing rapidly. In the first two months of this year, medical calls increased 6.2%, compared with the same period last year, Cummings said [in a written report](#).

Cummings' plan drew intense criticism from the firefighters' union and the association of chief officers at a special Fire Commission meeting Thursday on the redeployment. Labor leaders said the chief had failed to convince his rank-and-file force that his plan will work and not compromise the safety of firefighters battling fires.

“If you remove one firefighter, it's like asking the Dodgers to play without a center fielder,” said Andy Fox, president the LAFD Chief Officers Assn. “Yes, they can play the game. Over time, it would prove to be a very bad idea.”

The plan would affect about 60 firefighters assigned to so-called light forces, the combination of a ladder truck and fire engine that jointly responds to emergency incidents. Each light force is currently staffed by six firefighters who perform specialized roles during structure fires and complex rescues, such as removing victims trapped in car wreckage.

The chief's redeployment would leave many of the city's light forces with five firefighters, but allow the addition of 11 ambulances, LAFD officials said.

The ambulances would mainly respond to less serious emergencies that do not require a firetruck or more

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highly trained paramedic. Every LAFD firefighter is an emergency medical technician with some lifesaving skills.

Cummings said the change will take effect May 5 and increase the department's class of non-paramedic ambulances by about one-third, to 45. That will help free up about 90 overtaxed paramedic units to respond to the most life-threatening calls, officials said.

The shift also aims to reduce the responses by heavy firetrucks to less serious medical calls.

"To send an aerial ladder truck, or let alone lights and sirens, to someone with abdominal pains is dangerous and foolish," said Marc Eckstein, the LAFD medical director.

Opponents of the plan agree more ambulances are needed, but say [the chief's plan](#) was hastily drafted and thinly researched.

The department's data analysis has been under increased scrutiny since early last year, when [fire officials admitted](#) to publishing response times that made it appear rescuers arrived at emergencies faster than they actually did.

A task force of experts overseen by Fire Commissioner Alan Skobin found that fire officials responsible for crunching the numbers were poorly qualified and that previous departmental data analysis "should not be relied upon."

[A series of subsequent Times investigations](#) found delays in processing 911 calls and summoning the nearest medical rescuers from other jurisdictions, as well as wide gaps in response times in different parts of the city.

At Thursday's meeting, the chief officers association unsuccessfully urged the Fire Commission to block the change until Cummings prepares a more thorough analysis.

More details will be presented at a May 21 commission meeting, after the plan is in effect, Cummings said.

Given current budget constraints on his department, the chief said he's doing the best that he can.

"After asking for money and not receiving it, I am moving forward," he said. "What we need is additional ambulances."

**ALSO:**

[Document: Draft LAFD ambulance plan](#)

[Full coverage: Life on the line, 911 breakdowns at LAFD](#)

[Map: How fast is LAFD where you live?](#)

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latimes.com/local/lanow/la-lafd-ems-response-20130416,0,5010687.story

**latimes.com**

## LAFD plan to add ambulances opposed by union, chief officers

By Ben Welsh, Robert J. Lopez and Kate Linthicum

2:44 PM PDT, **April 16, 2013**

With the overwhelming share of his agency's 911 calls now requesting emergency medical care, LAFD Chief Brian Cummings is moving forward with a controversial plan to shift more firefighters from engines to ambulances.

The LAFD plans to add 11 new ambulances to its fleet of medical rescuers by transferring in firefighters from other posts, [according to a draft plan](#) circulated at Tuesday's meeting of the city Fire Commission.

Cummings, who has been under pressure to improve response times, said the department must reconfigure its deployment practices to handle current workload demands. But the city's firefighter union and the association representing chief officers [oppose the change](#), saying it will put firefighters at risk.

### [Full coverage: Life on the line, 911 breakdowns at LAFD](#)

Medical calls now account for more than 80% of the agency's 911 responses, according to department officials and an independent data analysis by The Times. Fire officials say the proportion of medical emergency calls is expected to increase.

“This is an EMS provider agency,” Cummings told the commission. “That is our core business.”

When responding to both fires and medical emergencies, the LAFD often sends a ladder truck paired with a fire engine -- a combination known as a light force. The team is staffed by six firefighters, who perform a variety of roles. They are trained to operate heavy power tools that cut holes in roofs during structure fires, for example. They also use specialized equipment such as the Jaws of Life to rescue victims from the twisted wreckage of vehicle accidents.

The draft plan, which the chief said would take effect May 5, would remove a firefighter from 22 light forces across the city and shift them to non-paramedic ambulances that can respond to 911 callers who have less severe medical emergencies. The firefighters are not licensed paramedics with advanced lifesaving skills, but do have basic training as emergency medical technicians. The proposed units would increase the LAFD's non-paramedic ambulances by about one-third, to 45, officials said.

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But Capt. Frank Lima, president of United Firefighters of Los Angeles City, which represents rank-and-file LAFD members, said the chief's proposal will put fire crews at risk by reducing key personnel needed for specialized duties during structure fires.

There will be fewer crew members on scene to do search-and-rescue operations or to hoist heavy ladders onto buildings and cut holes in roofs to release dangerous buildups of heat and toxic smoke, Lima said.

"It sounds good on paper," Lima said of the plan. "But to have one less firefighter, it absolutely puts our firefighters at risk."

Union leaders also expressed skepticism about the data analysis underpinning the chief's plan and called for a more thorough, written report on the issue. Cummings said that would have to wait until next month after the changes are in place.

The chief's sudden push for the changes drew questions from Fire Commissioner Alan Skobin, who suggested the plan might need more scrutiny. But the panel stopped short of blocking the chief, instead calling for a special meeting April 25 to review the proposal.

The department's data analysis has been under increased scrutiny since last March, when fire officials admitted to publishing response times that made it appear rescuers arrived at emergencies faster than they actually did. A task force of experts overseen by Skobin [found that](#) fire officials responsible for crunching the numbers were poorly qualified and that previous departmental data analysis "should not be relied upon."

[A series of subsequent Times investigations](#) found delays in processing 911 calls and summoning the nearest medical rescuers from other jurisdictions, as well as wide gaps in response times in different parts of the city. The problems worsened after cutbacks ordered by the mayor and the City Council during the economic downturn cost the department more than 300 positions.

The plan was also called into question Tuesday by Councilman Mitchell Englander, who chairs the Public Safety Committee. He plans to summon Cummings to the City Council to explain the plan.

"We know that the data has been flawed and has been wrong," he told The Times. "I'd like to see the numbers to back it up."

Marc Eckstein, the fire department's medical director, said the department needs more ambulances, but he declined to endorse the chief's plan.

"The bread and butter of the fire service in 2013 is a routine medical call," he said. "Sending a ladder truck with an engine to a medical call? There has to be a better way."

Cummings previously weighed a plan that would ask the City Council to restore the department cutbacks and add more staff. That plan had been [demanded last year](#) by councilmen Eric Garcetti and Mitchell Englander. But [Cummings withdrew](#) the restoration plan last month, saying it needed more work.

Lima said that the union is not opposed to adding ambulances, but that Cummings needs to approach the City Council and ask for additional funds to pay for ambulance staffing.

"Although the City Council has promised additional revenue, it's not there," Cummings said. "I can't print money."

## Residential frustrations mount over northeast Antioch annexation plans

By Paul Burgarino Contra Costa Times Contra Costa Times

Posted:

Sunday, April 21, 2013

ContraCostaTimes.com

ANTIOCH -- Frustration continues to mount for many who live in the rural area off Viera Avenue over ongoing annexation efforts.

Antioch and Contra Costa County officials are hashing out a complex package for 678 acres to the city's northeast that would bring NRG Energy's 760-megawatt power plant within the city, netting \$1.2 million in new yearly tax revenue and providing other economic opportunities.

A package of documents detailing environmental studies, proposed zoning and infrastructure improvements and a tax-sharing agreement will be brought before the city's Planning Commission next month. If given the go-ahead, it will be considered by the City Council in June followed by the county Board of Supervisors, and then the county's Local Agency Formation Commission in the fall, said Victor Carniglia, a city-hired consultant.

Though annexation plans have been divided into three land swaths, focus has centered the past few months on the 103 acres of isolated properties.

"This amounts to nothing more than a land grab," resident Ken Wentworth said last week at a town-hall meeting at Bridgehead Cafe.

About 50 residents attended Wednesday's meeting, many voicing displeasure to city and county officials.

Antioch and the county propose to install about \$8 to \$10 million in water and sewer lines along existing streets, but not change the rural character of the roads, Carniglia said. Further, the city is creating zoning designations that "would be a good fit," said Mindy Gentry, a city planner.

However, concerns remain from residents in the area, which drew international attention in 2009 because of the Jaycee Dugard kidnapping case.

A primary worry is it would cost about \$18,000 to \$20,000 to connect to city water and sewer lines and abandon existing septic tank connections. Residents with properly operating septic systems, however, will not have to hook up to city sewer service, Carniglia said.

The other part that has residents enraged is that the county agency that oversees boundary changes may waive the hearing process for them to vote on the annexation.

Under state law, a county's Local Agency Formation Commission can approve annexation without a vote of property owners or registered voters for unincorporated land surrounded by a city or "land islands." The islands must meet certain conditions, including being smaller than 150 acres and substantially surrounded by a city or adjacent cities.

"We should have that chance to vote. It's feels like they're trying to circumvent that," said Michele McQuaid, a 25-year resident on Bown Lane.

Mary Tarango, who's lived on Viera since 1968, says the "very sizable" amount for water hookups is too much, especially given her fixed income from Social Security.

"If they want us to be annexed in, they should pay for it," she said. Carniglia said one possibility being explored is NRG may put the \$2 million GenOn offered the city and county as incentive to complete annexation toward covering the residents' costs.

Resident John Mitosinka retained legal counsel to dispute the issue, who sent a letter to the city arguing the county's approach is not permitted and entire area should be considered in one annexation, basing the argument on an opinion from the state Attorney General.

Antioch's first annexation proposal in 2007 was only for the 481 industrial acres off Wilbur Avenue, as 75 percent of Viera residents said in a survey they were against becoming part of the city. LAFCO countered by saying land islands cannot be created because it would be tough to provide county services. Antioch resubmitted an application that included the Viera area last June.

Contact Paul Bugarino at 925-779-7164. Follow him at [Twitter.com/paulbugarino](https://twitter.com/paulbugarino).

## Byron Union to keep school resource officer for at least another year

By Paul Bugarino Contra Costa Times San Jose Mercury News

Posted:

Monday, April 22, 2013  
ContraCostaTimes.com

**BYRON** -- Byron Union will have a school resource officer for the upcoming year, as an advisory group that manages local tax money for police protection decided this week the position should be funded.

The recommendation of the Discovery Bay P-6 Zone Citizen Advisory Committee, which still must be approved by the sheriff and county Board of Supervisors, gives the district time to identify ways to pay for the \$180,000 position, which includes the officer's salary, benefits, uniforms, car and more.

"We're grateful to the P-6 committee for supporting safety at our schools," trustee Jill Sprenkel said. "It bought us another year and starts the clock over again."

Until 2011, Byron Union had a five-year, \$500,000 federal grant that paid for the bulk of the cost. After that, the district has turned to local agencies for help.

The P-6, which manages taxes paid by residents in several Discovery Bay neighborhoods, has covered about 90 percent of the cost the past few years, with the rest being covered through groups such as parent-teacher associations and fundraising.

The P-6 is cutting into its reserve funds to pay for the resource officers, according to committee members.

Officials said having sheriff's deputy David Allain dividing time between the far East Contra Costa district's three campuses makes them safer. His presence also helps address response time, its greatest concern in the case of a tragedy such as the one at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Conn., in December.

"That's our greatest vulnerability. It's a school issue and a community issue," Sprenkel said.

Contact Paul Bugarino at 925-779-7164. Follow him at [Twitter.com/paulbugarino](https://twitter.com/paulbugarino).

Monday, April 22, 2013



## Contra Costa Water District is First to Receive New Transparency Certificate of Excellence Recognition

The Contra Costa Water District recently became the first district to complete the Transparency Certificate of Excellence program through the Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF). This program was created in 2013 as an effort to promote transparency in the operations and governance of special districts to the public and to provide special districts with an opportunity to showcase their efforts in transparency.

This is an SDLF sponsored program and is free for districts to participate and receive recognition by completing the [checklist of requirements](#).

**Get started on your Transparency Certificate today!**

### Why should your district earn the District Transparency Certificate of Excellence?

- The certificate covers all general, website, and outreach best practices and requirements regarding transparency for special districts.
- Earning the certificate is a tangible acknowledgement of your transparency efforts.
- Demonstrate to your constituents and other stakeholders that your district is committed to being open and accessible to them.
- Earning the certificate demonstrates a commitment to engaging the public and creating greater awareness of your district's activities.

Submit your application for the Transparency Certificate of Excellence program by clicking [here](#) to go to the application, or contact Charlotte Lowe, SDLF program assistant, at (916) 231-2939.

### Next Steps After Receiving Your Transparency Certificate

Completion of the Transparency Certificate is now also a requirement for the District of Distinction (DOD) accreditation program. After completing the Transparency Certificate, your district is well on the way to earning SDLF's top recognition: the District of Distinction Accreditation. Additionally, for any first time district applicants for the DOD program, application fees are waived through the end of 2013!

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## News

### CALAVERAS COUNTY

#### FIRE DISTRICT REPORT SUGGESTS THAT FEWER MIGHT BE BETTER

By **Dana M. Nichols**

April 23, 2013

Record Staff Writer

SAN ANDREAS - Calaveras County's 10 fire districts should consider consolidating into as few as four optimal districts, according to a new report written for the county Local Agency Formation Commission.

The report found that many county fire districts operate on shoestring budgets and don't have the necessary funds to replace aging equipment or make needed repairs to fire stations.

Those districts are still able to respond to about 5,600 calls a year, however, thanks to a large cadre of volunteers who do everything from putting out fires and pulling people out of wrecked cars to repairing fire engines.

The Jenny Lind and Foothill Fire agencies in the Valley Springs area are already moving toward consolidation. The two operate now under a single administration referred to as Calaveras Consolidated.

As a result, two chiefs are now the paid staff in a fire protection region that formerly had five.

John Benoit, the executive officer for the county Local Agency Formation Commission, said that move saves money that can then be spent elsewhere.

"It will be a lot less expensive to administer, for one thing. And everybody seems to be getting along," Benoit said.

That getting along is one of the bright spots in the report issued earlier this month. It notes that the various fire districts already cooperate in many ways.

The San Andreas Fire Protection District station, for example, serves as a training center for the entire region. The Altaville-Melones Fire Protection District keeps one of its engines in a Murphys Fire Protection District station in Vallecito. And all the districts regularly cooperate when responding to incidents.

The report suggests that districts along Highway 4 from Copperopolis to Arnold might be one region suitable for consolidation. Angels Camp Fire Department, which is in relatively strong condition, very compact, and is the only city fire department in the county, was not included in the suggested consolidation.

A second region suitable for consolidation could be the districts in Murphys, West Point, Mountain Ranch and San Andreas. And finally, the third region is the Valley Springs area, which is already on the consolidation path.

"I think if they get together and get a stronger organization they will have a better ability to improve their finances," Benoit said. "I have never seen any of these consolidations that have failed."

Contact reporter Dana M. Nichols at (209) 607-1361 or [dnichols@recordnet.com](mailto:dnichols@recordnet.com). Visit his blog at [recordnet.com/calaverasblog](http://recordnet.com/calaverasblog).

#### More online

View the Calaveras Fire Municipal Service Review draft report at [recordnet.com/calfire](http://recordnet.com/calfire).

## Hercules poised to terminate long-standing police dispatch relationship with Pinole

By Tom Lochner *Contra Costa Times* *Contra Costa Times*

Posted:

Thursday, April 25, 2013  
ContraCostaTimes.com

**HERCULES** -- The city is poised to break up a more than 30-year marriage and replace Pinole as its police dispatch service partner to save money.

Hercules police Chief Bill Goswick, praising Pinole's dispatchers as top-notch, said economy of scale makes it cheaper for Hercules to join a bigger dispatch pool than one consisting of just two small cities, with a combined population of fewer than 50,000. He said Pinole has been an excellent service provider for more than 30 years and that Hercules never had any complaints.

However, Goswick told the City Council on Tuesday that Hercules stands to save as much as \$190,000 a year by contracting with another agency.

Hercules is paying Pinole \$452,651 for dispatch service this fiscal year and is slated to pay slightly more, \$455,285, in 2013-14.

Goswick said he has held exploratory talks with Richmond and Contra Costa County and is preparing to talk to Martinez soon.

Richmond dispatches for El Cerrito, Kensington and San Pablo police in addition to its own police. Goswick suggested that Pinole might want to consider moving to Richmond also, if Hercules does. He said he has broached the subject of a move with Pinole police Chief John Hardester and will continue to talk to Pinole.

Pinole Mayor Debbie Long said Wednesday she understands Hercules' desire to save money but that she is disappointed Hercules did not hold discussions with her city before going forward.

"I understand the need for confidentiality, but we are partners," Long said. "I'm disappointed that they didn't respect our city and our employees enough to approach us to see if, as a unit, we could get a better deal."

The dispatch operation, which serves both cities but is run by Pinole, involves seven employees, Long said.

The Hercules council on Tuesday authorized City Manager Steve Duran to give Pinole a six-month termination notice, as mandated in the contract between the two cities, and to submit to the Hercules council a new negotiated police dispatch services contract as soon as practical after the June 4 election, once Hercules gains some clarity about its financial picture.

On that date, Hercules voters will decide whether to increase the city's utility user tax by 2 percentage points, to 8 percent, which would pour about an additional \$1 million a year into the general fund. The tax would sunset in five years.

Mayor John Delgado, citing Hercules' long police dispatching relationship with Pinole as well as other joint ventures such as the Pinole/Hercules wastewater treatment plant, recommended postponing a vote for two weeks to give the two cities time to talk about the matter.

"I'd like it to be done together, rather than unilaterally," Delgado said.

But Councilman Bill Kelly, saying he has to look out for Hercules' interests first, pushed for an immediate

vote in view of the six-month termination period. In the end, Delgado joined fellow council members Kelly, Sherry McCoy and Dan Romero in a 4-0 vote. Councilwoman Myrna de Vera was absent.

Goswick said a switch to Richmond would involve one-time costs of about \$50,000, whereas switching to Contra Costa County could entail a one-time cost of more than \$100,000. The reason for the difference is consolidation of record-management systems, which would be more expensive in a move to the county for reasons related to compatibility of the various agencies' current systems, Goswick explained.

Contact Tom Lochner at 510-262-2760 or [tlochner@bayareanewsgroup.com](mailto:tlochner@bayareanewsgroup.com). Follow him at [twitter.com/tomlochner](https://twitter.com/tomlochner).

## Joint Lafayette-Orinda fire station plan still alive

By Jennifer Modenessi Contra Costa Times Contra Costa Times

Posted:

Friday, April 26, 2013

ContraCostaTimes.com

ORINDA -- Plans for a new Lafayette fire station to be operated by the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and the struggling Contra Costa County Fire Protection District are still moving forward despite the threat of more county fire station closures and the impending retirement of Contra Costa Fire Chief Daryl Louder, who initiated the station consolidation.

A majority of Moraga-Orinda Fire District board members on Wednesday authorized Fire Chief Randy Bradley to pay the second half of a \$15,000 deposit for land on which the districts hope to build a new fire station to replace the Lafayette station the county fire district closed in January. A nearby fire station in Orinda slated for reconstruction will close if the new station is built.

The approval signals that MOFD directors Steve Anderson, Alex Evans and John Wyro remain in favor of a partnership with the county to construct the facility on the Lafayette-Orinda border in the hopes of saving their district an estimated \$1 million annually to address pension debt. Directors Frank Sperling and Fred Weil continue to oppose the idea.

The district has until May 25 to complete the purchase of the \$1.2 million property. The fire district wants to divide the cost equally with the county. The directors also greenlighted "deal points" they would like included in a legal agreement being negotiated between the chiefs.

The agreement will outline station operation, funding and staffing. County supervisors, who oversee ConFire and haven't yet authorized any spending on the project, will consider those points and whether to fund half of the deposit and environmental review costs at a board meeting May 7.

The county supervisors are also scheduled to vote on a budget proposal next month that includes the closure of two more stations -- one on July 1 and another Jan. 1, due to financial problems.

Chief Louder has said there is \$3.1 million in available capital outlay funds that can be used for land acquisition and construction, but not for station operations.

Should supervisors decide to proceed, they and the Moraga-Orinda fire board will need to enter into a joint powers agreement to purchase the property by the May 25 deadline. Under the 40-year contract, the districts would purchase the site as tenants in common. Construction, maintenance, use and other costs would be split by the districts.

But director Weil took issue with proposed staffing costs. He also wants to wait until the county votes on May 7.

"How many dollars are we going to commit directly or otherwise to pay for services, to pay for studies, to purchase the property without having a commitment from the county that they are in fact going to share any of this?" he asked.

In addition to the \$15,000 deposit, the district has spent \$6,800 of an estimated \$27,580 cost for environmental reports and studies.

Residents continue to raise concerns about issues including a ConFire suggestion to reduce service to another Lafayette station near St. Mary's College. They also question the fairness of ConFire building a new station

in Lafayette and Orinda when other cities have seen their fire stations close -- and more station closures loom.

"It just seems like if I lived in Martinez or somewhere out there that doesn't have as (many) services, I would feel like why are they building this new station when they've already got a station?" said Orinda resident Marie Gee. "It just doesn't feel right."

## Long-awaited Pittsburg road extension project plans roll forward

By Paul Burgarino Contra Costa Times Contra Costa Times

Posted:

Saturday, April 27, 2013

ContraCostaTimes.com

PITTSBURG -- Environmental studies are rolling forward for a long-sought expressway that would cut through steep terrain south of the city while alleviating local traffic bottlenecks.

The public is invited to vet documents for the James Donlon Extension, a 1.7-mile road that would run from the western edge of Discovery Builders' planned Sky Ranch II subdivision to Kirker Pass Road. James Donlon Boulevard dead-ends at Antioch's western border, the road built as part of a housing development by the Seeno company.

Pittsburg released a draft version of an environmental impact report earlier this month. Comments on the plan will be accepted until May 29.

Originally added to Pittsburg's General Plan in 1980, the estimated \$50 million, two-lane road is viewed as a key route to take commuters to central Contra Costa from Antioch and farther east, pulling them off of Buchanan Road.

"They would be the primary beneficiaries," Mayor Nancy Parent said. "I think if you asked drivers from Antioch if they would prefer to go that way and never have to go down Buchanan, they would say yes."

Local drivers say Buchanan traffic constantly backs up during commute hours because of its tight intersections and the steady flow of merging cars from schools and neighborhoods onto the already-cramped road.

A study on the extension was completed in 1993, but details of the road's alignment were not explored, according to city engineers. Pittsburg conducted a more thorough initial environmental look in 2007.

In addition to identifying a definite road path, the latest draft adds a median, curbs and sidewalks to a near half-mile stretch of Kirker Pass from Nortonville Road to the Pittsburg city line. A free right turn lane from Kirker Pass onto James Donlon would be added, along with an approach on the west side of Kirker Pass for the future Montreaux Drive.

Documents identify several "potentially significant" effects, including aesthetics, biological resources, geology and soils, noise and air quality. The study also addresses landslide prevention, crossing seasonal stream beds and the likely relocation and raising of PG&E transmission lines.

Alternatives such as widening Buchanan and creating a James Donlon road alignment farther north were considered in the study. However, widening Buchanan would require right-of-way acquisition of 66 properties, while the north alignment would increase effects on noise, geology and air quality, according to the plan.

The regional environmental group Save Mount Diablo is among those that plan to submit comments outlining concerns.

Seth Adams, the group's land program director, said construction would require drastic "cuts and fills" and extensive grading for the sloping hills and half-dozen canyons in the vicinity, destroying some of the most pristine land in the region.

Approximately 2.1 million cubic yards of grading would be required for the roadway, according to city documents. Adams said Pittsburg is underestimating the scope and cost of the project.

The project's path would also bisect the Thomas Ranch property, where the pioneering Contra Costa family has raised cattle since the 1860s -- long before Pittsburg became a city. Pittsburg would likely have to use eminent domain to acquire right-of-way.

After assessing the environmental challenges, Pittsburg will have to figure out how to pay for the project and work with the county's Local Agency Formation Commission on annexation.

Contact Paul Bugarino at 925-779-7164. Follow him at [Twitter.com/paulbugarino](https://twitter.com/paulbugarino).

#### IF YOU GO

What: Public workshop on James Donlon Extension

When: 5:30 to 7 p.m. May 22.

Where: Pittsburg City Hall, 65 Civic Ave.

Information: The environmental report is available on the city's website, [www.ci.pittsburg.ca.us](http://www.ci.pittsburg.ca.us). Written comments can be sent to city planner Leigha Schmidt or emailed to her at [lschmidt@ci.pittsburg.ca.us](mailto:lschmidt@ci.pittsburg.ca.us).