

# LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Trees damaged by winter storms pose a safety risk at the Orinda Nature Area.

Photo Sora O'Doherty

## Outcry grows as downed trees keep Orinda Nature Area shuttered

By Sora O'Doherty

A group of young volunteers who feel passionately about the Orinda Nature Area attended the Orinda City Council meeting on June 20 looking for help to restore the battered area, that has been completely closed since early March. The effects of several years of drought followed by a winter of strong storms have wreaked havoc on the Nature Area. Some of the huge old oaks have fallen. Some trees are leaning dangerously, many resting on other trees and endangering them as well. While the huge eucalyptus trees appear healthy, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, which does work on the property to reduce the risk of wild fires, would like to see them go. Monterrey pines are beyond their life span and are being removed all over Lamorinda in an effort to improve fire safety.

Speaking for the group of volunteers, Elsa Cooke

said that there are many dedicated volunteers ready to help restore the Nature Area when they are permitted to do so. Over the years, there have been numerous projects constructed within the Nature Area by Eagle Scouts, and the Scouts continue to be interested in helping with future improvements.

Unfortunately, the council told the students that the nature area is not under its jurisdiction, but Vice Mayor Darlene Gee, who was presiding in the excused absence of Mayor Inga Miller, promised to work with the Orinda Union School District in their 2 x 2 subcommittee to see what can be done.

The Nature Area is owned by OUSD, but has been maintained by the Friends of the Nature Area. OUSD Superintendent Aida Glimme says that there is no fund in the OUSD budget for the nature area, and she is loath to take funds from classrooms, teachers, or other school facilities for maintenance of the Nature

Area. However, she says that the district can and will accept any donations, which can be earmarked for the Nature Area.

The volunteers had begun a GoFundMe campaign, but had to take it down as the Nature Area was closed. However, if part of the area is reopened, they do plan to start another GoFundMe campaign. OUSD is also looking at grant possibilities.

Council Member Latika Malkani said she was "really impressed and very happy" to see individuals standing up for what is important to them at the meeting.

Council Member Brandyn Iverson agreed that the matter is on the agenda for the 2 x 2 meeting, adding that while everyone wants to get the nature area reopened, there are great concerns about the safety of people on the property at this time.

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## Updated Traffic Calming Program presented to city council



Photo courtesy City of Lafayette

Speed humps help to reduce speeding on neighborhood streets.

By Jennifer Wake

The City of Lafayette Traffic Calming Program has been designed to help manage speed-related traffic concerns along local and collector streets across the city, according to Patrick Golier, Lafayette's Transportation & Circulation Program Manager. Lafayette's existing Traffic Calming Program, adopted in March 2003, has been paused for approximately a year as the planning process for the City's Local Road Safety Plan (LRSP) has been underway.

Golier on June 26 presented the city council with an updated Traffic Calming Program Guidebook to be utilized by Lafayette residents interested in pursuing traffic calming measures in their neighborhoods. The intent of the updated program is that it be aligned with the di-

rection of the LRSP.

According to the staff report, "The current process is complex, requires significant time of city staff as well as members of the community, results in long time horizons for project delivery, and does not articulate the metrics that are used to evaluate requests for traffic calming intervention in a neighborhood or on a street."

Golier explained that the 2023 City of Lafayette's Traffic Calming Program remains a resident-driven, application-based program that addresses speeding on local (residential) and collector streets in Lafayette. "This is as opposed to more proactive transportation initiatives such as our Safe Routes to School efforts and implementation of projects identified in the City's Bikeways and Walkways Master Plans," he noted.

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