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## Residents Workshop Moraga Way Traffic Fix

*By Andrea A. Firth*

About fifty residents joined the members of Orinda's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) on April 26th to discuss what to do about the traffic gridlock along Moraga Way on weekday mornings. Despite the frustrations expressed by those who live by or commute on Moraga Way, calm heads prevailed and several ideas for how to better manage the traffic load were generated during the workshop.

"Traffic, like water, finds its own path," said Steve Schneir, the chair of TSAC, referring to the drivers on Moraga Way—mostly those traveling to Miramonte High School—who use Ivy Drive to bypass the congestion on Moraga Way. Many attendees pointed out that the morning no-left turn restrictions at Ivy Drive, Southwaite Court, and Leslee Lane have led to drivers to using Whitehall Drive as a cut through.

"This stretch of roadway has received a lot of professional and personal attention," said transportation consultant Rob Rees from Fehr & Peers in Walnut Creek. Rees rattled off a list of traffic studies that had been conducted for Moraga Way over the past 15 years and several interventions that had been instituted to mitigate the traffic problems. Rees acknowledged that it is an ongoing challenge stating, "The traffic problem along this stretch of Moraga Way is multifaceted and will require multiple solutions to resolve."

The idea of staggering the start times of Del Rey Elementary and Miramonte High Schools to ease traffic patterns was raised by more than one resident. "We have been working hard to help and to be good neighbors," responded Chris Learned, Assistant Superintendent of the Acalanes Union High District, but he added that changing the bell schedule at Miramonte presents significant logistical issues as it impacts all four high schools in the District and afterschool sports and extracurricular activities.

Having teachers who work at more than one school in the Orinda Union School District (OUSD) complicates altering the start time at Del Rey, stated Jerry Bucci, Director of Business Services for the District. Del Rey is the one school in the District that does not have bus service, because ridership was too low. In contrast, Orinda Intermediate School, which is also in OUSD and accessed from Moraga Way via Ivy drive, has students to fill four buses daily. After working in small groups for about 30 minutes, residents came up with a list of ideas to ameliorate the morning traffic snarls. Their suggestions included casual carpools, the addition of speed bumps, rumble strips, sidewalks, and crosswalks; along with the repeated request to stagger the school start times. As a next step, TSAC will summarize the resident recommendations and present options to the City Council.

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