

## Council Smooths Bumps to Soothe Feelings

By Steve Angelides

After hearing an outpouring of views about three large road bumps on Camino Pablo—and the process that created them—the Town Council unanimously voted to smooth the bumps to ease traffic and soothe the feelings of a divided community.

The action was taken in a five hour special meeting attended by nearly 200 residents who were evenly divided between supporters and opponents of the bumps. “You either love them or you hate them,” said Town Engineer Jill Mercurio, who spearheaded the repaving of Camino Pablo during which the bumps were installed last month.

The Town's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) recommended that three “slightly raised” crosswalks be placed in front of the schools on Camino Pablo. The Town mailed the required notice to residents within 300 feet of the paving project and one resident attended the TSAC meeting.

The road designer translated TSAC's recommendation into the three bumps, which technically are called speed tables, which are six inches high with six foot ramps. Mercurio said that according to engineering standards the highest speed table is six inches with six foot ramps, and the lowest is three inches with six foot ramps. She said the crosswalks were raised the maximum of six inches to make the small pedestrians who would be using them more visible.

Since relatively few of the residents who use Camino Pablo were notified of the bumps, and the Council never discussed or approved them, most residents and even some council members were surprised when the bumps suddenly appeared in the road the week before school started. The outcry that followed led to the special meeting.

At the meeting Mercurio recommended lengthening the ramps on the bumps from six to twelve feet, which would make the six inch bumps with twelve foot ramps equivalent to three inch bumps with six foot ramps.

Battalion Chief Brian Collins of the Moraga Orinda Fire District said the District had not been consulted before the bumps were installed and that asking for his opinion afterwards was “a little bit difficult.” Moraga School Superintendent Rick Schafer spoke in favor of the bumps.

Three dozen residents spoke, alternately praising and criticizing the bumps. Supporters, who tended to have school-age children, said the bumps made the road safer. Opponents, many of whom live in Sanders Ranch and do not have children in the schools, said the bumps were safety hazards and increased traffic on Larch Avenue and Rimer Drive which motorists were using to avoid the bumps.

Council member Ken Chew took the lead in crafting the Council action which he hoped would “end the debate” on the issue. The Council unanimously voted to lengthen the ramps on the bumps from six to twelve feet, enhance the signage and advance warning devices, and direct the staff to study the situation, spending up to \$5000 to consult with a traffic engineer, and report back to the Council in three to four months.

In a separate meeting last Friday, Metcalf said one of the speed tables will be modified right away. If it's acceptable, the other two tables will be changed. If not, Metcalf said he expects the Town to return to the drawing board.

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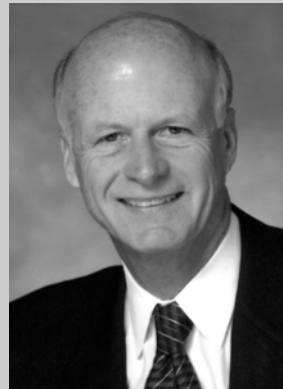
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