

Ivy Drive Moves to Slow the Speed

By Andrea A. Firth



The site of potential speed cushions to be placed on Ivy Drive

Photo Andrea A. Firth

As many in Lamorinda are looking for ways to move faster amidst the road closures and construction this summer, the residents of Ivy Drive in Orinda are trying to figure out how best to slow down the traffic on their street.

Ivy Drive, which exits at both ends onto Moraga Way, serves as a primary conduit for students driving to Miramonte High School and parents and buses delivering students to Orinda Intermediate and Del Rey Elementary Schools. Speeding by reckless teens and middle-aged moms through this Bermuda Triangle of school routes has driven many Ivy Drive residents to distraction. But like their Camino Pablo-based neighbors in Moraga, they have come to learn that the process to implement traffic calming measures on their street takes time, patience and a lot of work. And even then, the threshold to be met for the installation of speed cushions may not be satisfied.

Speed cushions require approval by 70% of the street residents affected and by 100% of homeowners whose properties directly abut the cushions.

“Speed cushions present a

trade off between the benefit of slowed traffic and the nuisance of the bump for residents who traverse the street most often,” explained Gary Moore, Chair of the Orinda Traffic Safety Advisory Council (TSAC). “Even if we collectively think that this is a good idea, ultimately it is up to the neighbors to decide if this is a trade off that they want to make,” he added.

About fifteen residents of Ivy Drive attended last week’s meeting of Orinda’s TSAC to voice their support for or concerns over the proposed traffic safety recommendations for their street. Members of a neighborhood action team working with Janice Carey, the City Engineer, presented a three-pronged proposal for traffic safety measures on Ivy Drive. Based on studies by and advice from traffic engineers and consultants, the group recommended the installation of a stop sign (on Arroyo at Ivy Drive), additional speed limit signs (no more than three), and four speed cushions at or near 46, 132, 192, and 236 Ivy Drive.

Although examples of children nearly being hit by speeding cars presented a compelling argument for significant measures to be taken to slow the traffic on Ivy Drive, not all residents were con-

vinced that speed cushions were the best solution. “We in this neighborhood will bear the brunt of these bumps,” argued one longtime Ivy Drive dweller. “This problem occurs for an hour and a half a day for the nine months of the school year. What we need is better police enforcement,” she added.

Other residents raised the concern that emergency vehicles would be slowed down by the speed cushions creating a potentially life-threatening situation. In response, a member of the neighborhood action team explained that a speed test had been conducted employing a mid-size fire truck traveling over a speed cushion, and the test found the vehicles’ speed was reduced by only 3.8 seconds. However, he did note that emergency vehicles such as an ambulance might be slowed further.

Following two hours of lively discussion, Orinda’s TSAC approved the action team’s recommendations with only minor modifications. In the next step of the process, residents of Ivy Drive will be surveyed to ascertain their support of the proposed traffic safety measures before the City Council considers the action.