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Left on Southwaite No Longer

By Andrea A. Firth



New sign on Moraga Way Photo Ohlen Alexander

Severson requested that staff investigate the viability of a traffic light at Ivy Drive and revisit the idea of staggering the school start times with the Orinda Union School District and Miramonte High School.

Residents will no longer be able to make a left-turn or U-turn going southbound on Moraga Way at Southwaite Court. The turning restriction is confined to weekdays between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. during the school year. Left-turns and U-turns are also prohibited southbound during that timeframe on Moraga Way at Ivy Drive.

Expanding the left turn moratorium on commuters heading south on Moraga Way in the morning was recommended by the City's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee to stop drivers from using Southwaite Court as a pivot point to turn and head north to make a right on Ivy Drive.

Southbound Moraga Way is congested with traffic on weekdays as parents and students make their way to Del Rey Elementary and Miramonte High Schools. Many high-school bound commuters use Ivy Drive to bypass the backlog near Del Rey as an alternate route to the entrance of Miramonte High School. With the southbound left-turn at Ivy Drive already prohibited, drivers have used Southwaite to turn the illegal left into a legal right.

Sun Yoon, a soft spoken, even tempered man who lives at the corner of Southwaite Court and Moraga Way, has been driven to distraction by the many high-school bound drivers that use his driveway for a three-point turn on school mornings. He's counted up to 150 cars entering the court between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and implored the Council to vote yes on no left. Marilyn Raia was also among the several Southwaite residents who requested the City Council approve the no-left turn signage. The previous day, Raia had been rear-ended in front of Mr. Yoon's house by a teen driver who was late for school.

The City Council unanimously approved the new signage with a vote of 4-0; Council Member Steve Glazer was not present. The Orinda Police Department will be monitoring the intersection and issuing tickets starting January 24th. The effectiveness of the signage will be evaluated for a one-year period.

"It's really timely to do a study of the overall traffic patterns on Moraga Way," said City Manager Janet Keeter. Council Member Sue

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