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Letters to the Editor

Share your thoughts with our community!

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only).

Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis.

email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com;
Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

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Editor:

The City of Orinda has continued its workshops this fall designed to invite comment on what we would like to see in the future of our downtown. The planning staff is commended for its efforts to solicit our thoughts as the community formulates its vision.

The issue with respect to downtown is, unfortunately, that its commercial core is deteriorating before our eyes. Many of our commercial structures were built in the 1940s and 1950s to a relatively low design standard. Many are not well maintained. Many would not withstand the severe earthquake that is likely to occur in the next thirty years.

Orinda residents are disappointed by what we see - an environment which becomes more unattractive with each passing year. We see merchants leaving and not being replaced. We shop and dine elsewhere. We ask ourselves how to restore vitality. The answers, unfortunately, do not lie in promotional programs by the City, in creating associations of merchants or in volunteer beautification efforts. These efforts would be helpful, but they are insufficient.

We now face a choice in Orinda. The choice is not between growth and no-growth. Simply maintaining what we have in downtown is no longer an option. The decline is accelerating to the point that significant change is bound to occur over the next 10-20 years. The real choice we face is between unplanned growth, as we see in much of suburban America, and planned growth which is shaped by a community vision and guided by independent professional planning talent. Some of the nation's best and brightest urban planners are available nearby.

We can do a lot better than the status quo. We can fashion a plan for downtown Orinda that preserves its village character, but which also updates its environment to state of the art in the 21st century. Downtown should be a place where Orindans want to be.

Those of us who were not able to attend a City-sponsored workshop this fall can still respond to the City's survey on its website. We should let the Planning Department know we favor professional planning for the future of downtown.

Tom Trowbridge
Orinda

Join our Public Forum

If you have significant knowledge about an issue facing Lamorinda, or one of its communities, that requires more than the 350 words to which we must limit Letters to the Editor, don't despair! You can submit your letter to our Public Forum section. Just send your letter to letters@lamorindaweekly.com and let us know you'd like to be considered for the Public Forum. We will not accept Public Forum submissions regarding a current ballot measure or candidate for public office. Opinions expressed in Public Forum are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.

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