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## More Moraga Way Prohibitions Ahead for Lamorinda Drivers

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In response to a November 2011 Traffic Calming Request from Whitehall Drive residents, the Orinda City Council recently adopted a resolution that will alter the driving habits of some area residents on Moraga Way for at least the next year.

According to a letter to the City from "Concerned Residents of Whitehall Drive," speeds and traffic volume in their area have "increased substantially since the installation of 'no left turn' signs on Moraga Way at Ivy Drive and, most recently, Southwaite Court." Drivers en route to Orinda Intermediate and Miramonte High School (MHS) have been using Whitehall as a bypass "to avoid commute traffic, traffic control lights and signs limiting access" to Ivy and Southwaite, resulting in "a hazardous and potentially fatal situation."

A near collision, speeding vehicles, and other Whitehall traffic problems were captured on video by residents from mid- to late-April. The footage and eight recommendations for improvement were presented to Orinda's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC). TSAC discussed the problems at its December and January meetings, heard from residents in a formal presentation in February, and then authorized a poll of those living in the affected neighborhood regarding proposed solutions, including the installation of sidewalks, restriction of left turns onto Whitehall from Moraga to reduce cut-through traffic, and addition of speed cushions.

The poll revealed that the majority of nearby residents were in favor of a 'No Left Turn' sign. TSAC then requested an evaluation of the proposed signage by the City's traffic consultant Fehr & Peers, which recommended against installing left-turn prohibitions on Moraga Way at Whitehall Drive.

In May TSAC weighed that recommendation against the concerns of Whitehall Drive residents and support from the police chief for a No Left Turn sign before voting unanimously to ask the City Council to direct staff to install signage at Whitehall and Moraga Way for pedestrian safety and to mitigate local speeding.

Several residents spoke in favor of the proposed turn prohibitions at the Council's most recent meeting. "They'll do anything to get to school," said one. Another described the behavior of students heading to MHS as "erratic." Council Member Sue Severson worried about unintended negative impacts to Moraga Way, and urged that the changes be studied on a temporary basis before taking any permanent action.

The Council agreed, voting unanimously to add the signage and directing TSAC to report back in a year with an evaluation. Beginning at the start of the new school year, U-turns and left turns onto Whitehall from Moraga Way will be prohibited on school days from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Drivers should start seeing the new signage August 22.

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[back](#)

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