

# LAMORINDA WEEKLY



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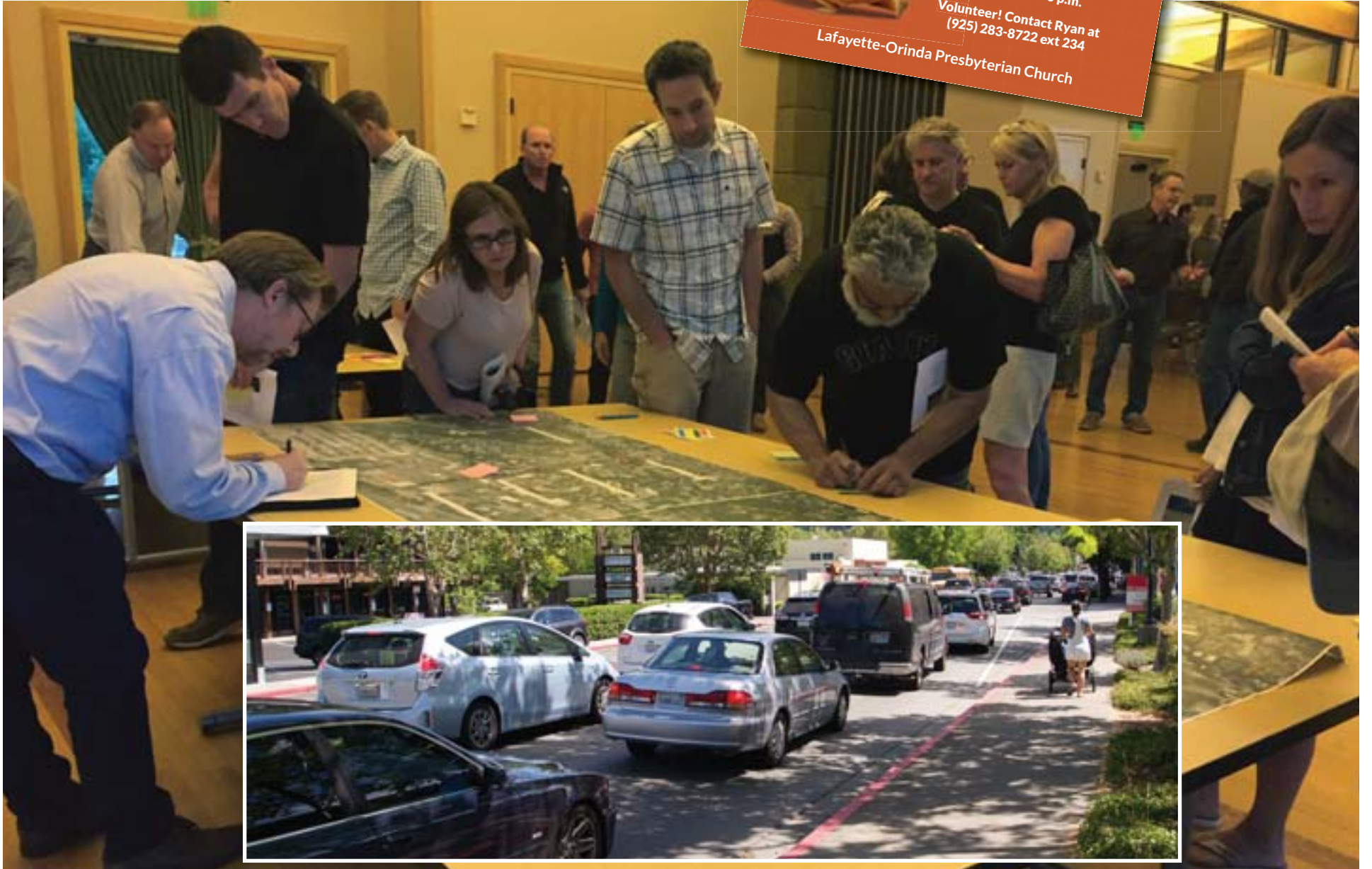
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Residents place stickers on a large map with ideas on how to help alleviate traffic in Lafayette, especially during school drop-offs and pick-ups.

Photos Pippa Fisher

## A drive to solve Lafayette's traffic woes

By Pippa Fisher

Is there a “silver bullet” to solve congestion in Lafayette? Could it be coordinating traffic signals along Mount Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road? Realigning the Brook Street-School Street traffic lights, creating one intersection by removing the Masonic Lodge? Maybe the answer is adding additional school pick-up and drop-off zones, or more school busing. Or extending

Moraga Road directly to Highway 24 through the retail center between Safeway and McCaulou’s? The search for the best solution to Lafayette’s worsening traffic woes continues as the city reached out for public input and feedback at a recent Downtown Congestion Reduction Plan workshop. Those residents who turned out for the evening workshop

heard a presentation from Mike Iswalt of ARUP, the consulting company employed by the city to conduct the downtown congestion reduction study and City Transportation Planner James Hinkamp. They explained the goal of the evening was to seek public input for consideration to be combined with the results from the survey on the city’s website. The survey remains open through May 31. ... continued on page A12

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### EXQUISITE HAPPY VALLEY GATED ESTATE 1259 Redwood Lane, Lafayette

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## El Toyonal to lose school bus service

By Sora O'Doherty



School bus on El Toyonal. Photo A. Scheck  
 The Lamorinda School Bus Program is planning to drop all school bus stops on the narrow, twisty El Toyonal Drive because the stops have been deemed unsafe and in violation of the California Vehicle Code.

Following the release of a safety study of all LSBP routes, patrons of the school buses that serve Wagner Ranch Elementary School and Orinda Intermediate School were called to a meeting where plans to eliminate the El Toyonal route were disclosed. Stunned, the families asked the LSBP to delay the decision, so the LSBP has agreed to a second meeting to be held at 7:30 p.m. June 8.

Many residents, like Christina Loughran and Michelle Swaney, are upset with the decision and said would be willing to sign a waiver not to sue based on any violation of Vehicle Code Section 22504 regarding the placement of bus stops.

Juliet Hansen, LSBP program manager, says she thinks that such a waiver will make no difference in the decision to close the route, although she did say that she would consult legal counsel on the question. Hansen said that First Student, the school bus operator, has had to tow buses out of a ditch on El Toyonal a number of times. Other incidents include hitting mail boxes and a 2014 sideswipe incident that resulted in the bus driver being cited and a driver’s license suspension of 30 days. Not all incidents are reported, Hansen added.

Both a hired consultant and the California Highway Patrol reviewed a number of routes in Lamorinda. LSBP put together a list for the CHP to review and asked for “bus stop ahead” signs in several places.

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## MOFD's new drone to help with emergencies, search and rescue

By Cathy Dausman



MOFD's new drone. Photo C. Dausman  
 With its agile new helper, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District now has an extra set of eyes in the sky – a six pound Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, or drone.

Its uses include search and rescue, medical emergencies and aerial photography in addition to fire service training.

The UAV, an Inspire 1 model manufac-

tured by SZ DJI Technology Company was purchased with a recent \$10,000 gift from RESCUE ONE Foundation. The drone was outfitted with two swap-out upgrades: a high-resolution camera and a FLIR infrared camera. The drone can carry a payload of two pounds, making it capable of ferrying a small first aid kit or portable radio to a victim who can't be reached from the ground.

“We are pleased to be using this technology to help support our mission of all-risk emergency service and community risk reduction,” said Fire Chief Stephen Healy.

Commercial small drone operators are now licensed by the Federal Aviation Administration and only one MOFD employee — Capt. Michael Marquardt — is currently permitted to fly it. Marquardt has flown drones for the past 10 years, first as a hobby and now for MOFD.

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 MOFD fills big boots for muscular dystrophy – page A8.

An ‘Ideal’ show for Town Hall Theatre – page B1.



Campo boys and girls lacrosse are champs -- page B1.



Boarding animals is a pet project for these businesses – page D1.

