



Published May 1st, 2019

## ConnectOrinda Celebration scheduled for May 16 as planning process draws to a close

By Sora O'Doherty

The last step before the unveiling of the final plan for ConnectOrinda will take place in the Theatre District from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Thursday, May 16. The Celebration, the fifth of six planned steps, will be a time for Orindans to view and comment on the work staff and the consultant team have done to date. The project launched last October and held a public workshop in January. In March, the city council reviewed progress of the group, and the suggested projects.

The event will be staged at the intersection of Vashell Way and Moraga Way. Participants will be able to view and comment on the eight projects the Orinda City Council directed to further develop, and the draft companion downtown-wide design guidelines. They'll also be able to experience the potential benefits of one of the proposed projects, a part-time pedestrian alley at Vashell Way. According to Victoria Eisen, partner of Eisen|Letunic, the project consultant, it is hoped that some will stroll over after dining in the Theatre District while others will swing by on their way home from the Village's food trucks.

Since last October, staff and the consultant team have been meeting with and listening to the Orinda community's assessment of what is lacking in downtown Orinda. As a result, ConnectOrinda has been focusing on how to help make the Theatre District and the Village feel more connected and make travel between the two safer and easier. The process started with the Oct. 13 launch, with its walking tours, blank maps, community surveys, and stakeholder interviews. The community provided hundreds of comments at this stage, which were used to develop 19 potential projects, which were presented at a Jan. 29 workshop in conjunction with a city council meeting. The Orinda community submitted over 1,000 project-specific votes/likes and over 1,000 comments about these projects, which were used to distill and reconstitute the projects into eight projects plus the beginnings of a set of design guidelines that can be applied throughout the downtown.

At its March 5 meeting, the council expressed support for most of the projects, asking staff and the consultant team to further assess the feasibility, cost and preliminary design of each. Since then, staff and the consultant team have been working to further develop the other projects and downtown design guidelines, drawing from similar precedents elsewhere and new sketches of what they could look like in downtown Orinda. The analyses that allowed considering various changes to Camino Pablo are also being documented so that, if and when a comprehensive traffic study is pursued, it will be able to benefit from this earlier work.

Community members are invited to provide additional feedback at and following the May 16 event, which will be used to transform the design guidelines and projects into a plan document that the council will consider adopting in the fall.

Reach the reporter at: [sora@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sora@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA