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## Moraga wins Lamorinda Zero Waste Challenge

By Vera Kochan

During the March 15 Lamorinda Councils' annual meeting, the city of Lafayette issued a Sustainability Challenge to the town of Moraga and the city of Orinda.

The challenge letter involved two competitions. The Sustainability Challenge will determine which city's residents take more actions to save carbon dioxide and water and therefore have a higher cumulative score on the Cleaner Contra Costa Challenge dashboard by Dec. 31. The Lamorinda Zero Waste Challenge would determine which city's residents reduced waste more between April 3 and May 14.

According to the Sustainable Contra Costa website, "It's been a very exciting 6 weeks of the Lamorinda Zero Waste Challenge! In an exciting turn of events, we are happy to announce 2 winners: Congratulations to Moraga for earning the most points overall! Congratulations to Lafayette for winning four of the six weeks and for having the highest % growth in points!"

? The final statistics at the end of the 6-week period show Moraga with 99,880 points (and 9% growth); Lafayette with 70,970 points (and 17% growth); and Orinda with 16,090 points (and 3% growth). However, Moraga was already considerably in the lead at the start of the challenge (prior to April 3) with 1,083,660 points. Orinda's point total was 572,900, and Lafayette's was 403,570. Cumulative point totals at the conclusion of the Zero Waste Challenge (May 14) were: Moraga 1,183,540; Orinda 588,990; and Lafayette 474,540.

Of the 28 cities participating in Contra Costa County, Moraga leads the way with Orinda coming in second and Lafayette in fourth place behind Walnut Creek. Given the size of the Lamorinda municipalities compared to many in the county, the rankings are very impressive. Also, winning the top spot on the county's Community Leaderboard is Moraga's Campolindo High School with 397,110 points.

During the May 24 Town Council meeting Mayor Renata Sos announced the news that Moraga had won the first phase of the challenge. "This is a friendly competition between Orinda, Lafayette and Moraga to see which municipality could get more residents to participate in the Contra Costa Zero Waste Challenge. The idea was to get more households in our community to take small steps that can add up to be very large steps in the big impact in reducing our carbon footprint." Sos noted that 131 new Lamorinda households signed up once the challenge began and helped to reduce the CO2 impact by 186,940 pounds.

Sustainable Contra Costa presented various actions that residents committed to in order to reduce waste: recycling; using reusable bottles, bags and straws; buying local and organic; participating in a circular economy; going paperless; shopping smart/buying less; skipping the packaging; bringing your own mug/container; making things last; growing your own food; and sharing resources.

"Just because the challenge is over doesn't mean we should stop our efforts at reducing each of our household's carbon footprint," added Sos. "Those who are enrolled, please keep doing what you're doing, and thank you for the difference you're making; and those who haven't enrolled yet, there's no time like the present. Just go to [sustainablecoco.org](https://sustainablecoco.org) and follow the easy steps to enroll, and see how you can help."

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