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## No Left on Ivy-Unintended Consequences

By Andrea A. Firth

It's a 30-minute headache for the multitude of drivers who make the trek south on Moraga Way each weekday morning throughout the school year. Between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., dozens of mothers in vans on the way to Del Rey Elementary School are co-mingled with hundreds of parents and teens driving to Miramonte High School. With so many cars traversing the same two-lane road at the same time, traffic is congested; not surprisingly, some drivers look for an alternate route-and that route is Ivy Drive.

Drivers heading south on weekdays can not legally turn left at Ivy Drive between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. which cuts off their access to taking the Ivy Drive loop to cross Moraga Way further south at the entrance of the high school. To circumvent the no-left turn restriction, many drivers heading to Miramonte now turn right on Ivy Drive by making a U-turn, often illegally, across from Southwaite Court or Leslee Lane, or by turning onto these streets, making a T-turn in a nearby driveway, to then head north a short distance on Moraga Way in order to turn right onto Ivy Drive.

"The law of unintended consequences, that's what we have here," said Southwaite Court resident Chris Holton as he addressed the members of Orinda's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) about his concerns over the unsafe conditions posed by the traffic situation. "The problem has been around for about five years," said Holton of the ripple effect caused by the no-left turn sign at Ivy Drive.

According to City Engineer Janice Carey, the no left turn on Ivy Drive was established in 2000 and renewed in 2002, which preceded both her tenure and the formation of the TSAC.

"We have as many as 150 cars turn around at our corner on school mornings," said Holton. Although he conceded that further restricting left turns off Moraga Way is not the ideal solution, he implored the TSAC members to add no-left turn signs at Southwaite Court and Leslee Lane to provide his neighborhood some immediate relief. "The real problem is too much traffic on Moraga Way at that time of day," said Holton, "It's unsafe."

While they acknowledged it is a band-aid fix versus a solution to a much bigger traffic issue, the members of the TSAC voted unanimously to support the additional signage. As proposed, the no-left turn restriction will be confined to the hours of 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. on weekdays. TSAC member Gary Moore added that the committee needed to evaluate the bigger picture and explore alternatives, such as taking down the no left turn sign at Ivy Drive, adding a traffic signal at that spot, or staggering school start times.

According to Carey, the City will now poll the residents of Southwaite Court and Leslee Lane by mail to see if they support the signage. At least 60% of the neighborhood residents must be in support for request to move forward. Subsequently, TSAC will review the poll results and potentially make a recommendation to City Council early in 2010. It is unlikely that signs would be up before April, noted Carey.

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

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