The High Price of Housing in Lamorinda

By Cathy Tyson

"It is unlawful for a person to maintain any vehicle in Moraga or Orinda. Moraga's Municipal Code is very clear, "No person shall use any vehicle for living or sleeping purposes." Vehicles shouldn't be confused with the smattering of guest cottages and in-law units in Lamorinda that can be found on small parcels of land. There is, however, a new gray area that Lafayette is grappling with—tiny houses, small, narrow houses, around 200 square feet of usable space on wheels that can be self-built or delivered, ranging from 18 to 24 feet long. It's an interesting new type of dwelling for people who want to simplify and downsize, or perhaps for boomerang kids who have recently returned to the nest. Lafayette city will be working on guidelines in the near future.

Don't even think about renting out a recreational vehicle in Moraga or Orinda. Moraga's Municipal Code is straightforward. "It is unlawful for a person to maintain any vehicle or travel trailer on public or private property in the town."

Lafayette also has rules on parked dwellings. "A vehicle or trailer may not be used for habitation, for keeping animals, or for any residential use," according to their Municipal Code.

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Don’t expect the situation to improve anytime soon. According to Okamura, the prediction from the National Association of Realtors is flat prices will remain far below market values for the foreseeable future. "It's very difficult for young famil-