

# LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Diners enjoy the extra al fresco dining space on a stretch of Lafayette Circle, closed to traffic June 19.

Photo Pippa Fisher

## Embracing European-style street dining in COVID era

By Pippa Fisher

The Lafayette City Council unanimously backed plans aimed at helping the city's restaurants stay afloat, with a multi-phase approach to expand outdoor dining options.

Following a site-walk during which City Manager Nirop Srivatsa, Police Chief Ben Alldritt, and Lafayette

Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jay Lifson identified several potential suitable areas, Senior Planner Sarah Allen and Planning Technician Adam Wright presented an update to the council on Lafayette's COVID-19 relief package and asked for direction on working with the Chamber of Commerce to allow outdoor dining in private and public opens spaces and rights of way.

Phase one relaxes restrictions on parking lots and sidewalks, enabling restaurants to add additional tables. Phase two, which began June 19 has Lafayette Circle next to Tutu's closed to traffic for street dining. During a future phase in July a section of Mt. Diablo Boulevard is being considered for closures to allow street dining.

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## New Food Hall approved for downtown Orinda

By Sora O'Doherty



Rendering provided

A market hall along the lines of Oakland's Rockridge or Napa's Oxbow was unanimously approved by the Orinda planning commission June 9. The project for 25A Orinda Way, a vacant lot across the street from the library and the community center, was enthusiastically welcomed by the commissioners who applauded the developer, Paul Ugenti, for listening to the community and refining his project. Over 100 written comments from the public were also mostly favorable.

The 19,300 square-foot project is called "The Station." The property was a gas station long ago, and the land has been remediated and sitting vacant for over 20 years. Ugenti bought the lot and brought a plan for a mixed-use facility, combining retail and office space, to the planning commission, which approved the application that included Chase Bank as an anchor tenant on the ground floor and an Orange Theory gym. On appeal, the city council agreed with Orange Theory, but nixed a bank as an anchor tenant on the grounds that a bank did not bring the kind of traffic to downtown that was consistent with downtown development.

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