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Moraga Road fatality underscores the importance of pursuing solutions to Lafayette's traffic woes

By Pippa Fisher



The crosswalk on which a pedestrian was struck and killed July 24. Photo Pippa Fisher

his injuries.

Mitchell said that the council members are all deeply saddened by the tragic accident. He added that council members, city staff and the police continue their efforts every day to make the streets safer by focusing on the three areas of engineering, education and enforcement.

Within the area of engineering, the Public Works Department maintains and repairs roads, Transportation Planner James Hinkamp works with the circulation committee to address concerns and implement solutions and City Engineer Tony Coe works to design and implement traffic and safety improvements. The Downtown Congestion Study goals include increased safety for cars, pedestrians and bicycles.

Lafayette Circulation Committee Chair Kristina Sturm said that following the second round of public outreach in May, which involved a month-long online survey and a community workshop with over 600 participants, city staff and the consultancy firm Arup are now analyzing the results. The draft Downtown Congestion Reduction Plan will be presented to the city council in the fall for final review and adoption. A number of improvements are proposed on Moraga Road.

Regarding areas in which education is offered, Mitchell pointed to the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee that hosts safety fairs at schools and looks for street and crosswalk improvements, and the multiple meetings each year of the school board and city council subcommittee which address issues around each of the Lafayette schools as well as the Circulation Commission which provides a forum for direct public input on problems and provides public review of city proposals.

A large component in public safety is enforcement and Mitchell said that Police Chief Eric Christensen deploys additional police cars where requested, performs accident analysis including accident history and works with the engineering department and the city council when appropriate.

Additionally Christensen always supplements enforcement activities at all of the schools when summer ends, said Mitchell, but added, "The council has not, as of yet, been asked by the chief for changes or more monitoring on Moraga Road, above and beyond the extensive measurements performed in the Downtown Congestion Study.

"The city and the school district continue to work on circulation issues at Lafayette Elementary. As the school district modifies Lafayette Elementary, the city continues to work cooperatively, share data and ideas with the district on our common goals of safety and efficiency. The joint subcommittee continues to address safety and circulation issues at all of the schools."

Ultimately, most agree safety is a shared responsibility and drivers, pedestrians and cyclists all need to stay alert and focused.

With the start of a new school year right around the corner, drivers are urged to pay extra attention when traveling along busy Lafayette streets.

Lafayette City Council Member and primary council liaison to the Downtown Congestion Reduction Plan Steering Committee Mark Mitchell commented that while traffic increases and the city makes improvements, "One of the biggest problems is out of our direct control. Drivers are distracted, and pedestrians and cyclists are not paying enough attention."

The comments follow the July 24 tragic death of 60-year-old Lafayette resident Sui Yuen, who was struck by a Ford F150 pickup truck while walking in the crosswalk across Moraga Road. The truck was making a left turn onto Moraga Road from Moraga Boulevard. The driver remained on scene and Yuen was taken to John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek where he later died of

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