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## Council hears update about 'Slow Down Lafayette' campaign

By Lou Fancher



Image provided

The city council, with Council Member Wei-Tai Kwok participating virtually, received a Nov. 27 update on the city's "Slow Down Lafayette Campaign-Safe Streets for All" from Code Enforcement Officer Andy Comly. Transportation and Circulation Program Manager Patrick Golier and Communications Analyst Suzanne Iarla participated in the presentation.

The program launched in August 2023 and "has been going strongly for the last couple of months," Comly said. As part of Lafayette's Vision Zero initiative, the common

goal of all the programs is to reduce fatal collisions and traffic accidents resulting in serious injuries. The primary tools utilized by the Safe Streets program are technology and education.

Identifying "hot spots" or high-risk areas in town to understand areas that historically and currently have more accidents is made possible by ongoing monitoring of speeds, traffic density, as well as the number of recorded accidents. Areas identified as high-risk in which surges in incidents occur results in immediate mitigation efforts to slow

speeds and outreach to inform the public. "We can't do this on our own," Comly said. "We need community support so we're working with local folks and will be doing more in terms of public education."

According to Comly, reducing speeds is the most critical factor. "It's not (the actual) speeds; it's the energy that gets transferred into a person at the time you have a crash. If you remember high school physics, the energy goes up as the square of the speed. If you double the speed, you end up with a four-fold increase in the energy." Small reductions – even 5 or 10 miles per hour – can make a big difference.

E-bikes travel at far faster rates than conventional bicycles and it is a good thing to be mindful of and to remind young people about, according to Comly.

As one example, he referenced Acalanos Road from Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Hidden Valley Road. The road is zoned as a 25-mph road,

but residents in the neighborhood have voiced concerns about driver speed. Low-profile devices that capture speed and number of cars, but not personal license plate information, were installed on both the north- and south-bound sides of the road to gather a baseline. A display sign was placed on the north-bound side to show a driver's speed, flash if going up to 10-mph over the speed limit, or not flash a number but instead tell a driver to slow down.

The metrics gathered have shown a 13-15% reduction of drivers exceeding the speed limit by 10 or 15+ mph. Law enforcement officers stationed during peak hours and easily visible had most impact on speeders traveling at more than 15 mph over the speed limit. The signs and the enforcement worked when combined to about 25% reduction in speeding.

An accident on Highway 24 or increased density due to other factors not under the city's

control can easily impact the results, he cautioned. The Safe Streets program has covered eight major streets thus far, and areas in which the measurements showed were not of greatest concern caused them to move on to other locations. Cooperation and communication with local residents and with law enforcement have been ongoing and will continue.

The engineering department has contributed data close to Acalanos High School has been added to their knowledge base and understanding of traffic safety in the city. Self-correction is essential and to that point, Comly said interacting and informing the community is vital. Clear and consistent law enforcement marked vehicles, parking officers serving as crossing guards, and visible presence have a positive impact, especially at the start of each school year or semester.

Comly and the rest of the traffic safety team will keep the focus in coming months on high-risk areas where

changes occur and addressing them promptly, including reports from residents about "hot spots" and concerns about specific areas. Approximately 100 signs urging drivers to "Slow Down Lafayette" have been placed on lawns by parent-teacher association members, HOA and neighborhood groups, school principals and others, with another 50 signs available for display.

Social media education, a strong presence at community events, and continuation of public education efforts will make more people aware of the urgency and tools available for mitigating excessive speeds. "If we can have 28,000 people helping us out, we'll get a lot further along," said Comly.

Council accepted the update and thanked the team for work that has made significant initial strides to reduce speeding and improve the safety of residents, business owners, visitors and the general public in the city's downtown.

## 'Downtown Pathways and Schools Safety Project' community meeting, Dec. 7

The community is invited to an Open House from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 7 in the Lafayette Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room to share their input on a project to improve walking and bik-

ing connections between the Lafayette-Moraga Trail and downtown Lafayette.

The city is kicking off its Connecting Lafayette: Downtown Pathways and Schools Safety project, which

will expand the city's "low-stress" network for walking and biking, fill in a key gap in the pedestrian and bicycle network between the Lafayette-Moraga Trail and the First Street pathway, and address

school-related congestion by designing an alternate, formal pick-up and drop-off zone for Stanley Middle School on St. Mary's Road. Attendees will have the opportunity to hear about the goals of the project

and initial design alternatives; talk with Staff about the project; and provide valuable feedback to help shape the direction of this exciting project.

For more information about this work-

shop, visit [www.lovelafayette.org/connectinglafayette](http://www.lovelafayette.org/connectinglafayette) – Submitted by Suzanne Iarla

# Happy Holidays!



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