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School safety initiatives move forward

By Jennifer Wake



Lafayette Mayor Susan Candell, left, and Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan hold a giant check for \$238,000 to be used for the Safe Route to Acalanes High School project. Photo provided

looking to the right before turning right, never passing stopped or slowed vehicles at crosswalks and always allowing pedestrians to finish crossing in the crosswalk before proceeding. "What we're seeing on the streets is adults are killing adults, by people driving their cars," Fateman said. "That's one of the critical ways we are failing; in the way cars interact with bicycles and pedestrians."

Fateman also noted that elected officials need to help make the community safer, with safer infrastructure and joining programs like Vision Zero - a strategy to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries among all road users, and to ensure safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all - and other safety initiatives. At the Oct. 12 city council meeting, Tim Haile of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority discussed Vision Zero and noted that CCTA is working with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to collect data and analyze where hot spots are and identify, prioritize, evaluate and implement projects.

In a letter to the city council, Eric Law, who serves as the project lead for the Safe Routes to Acalanes High School project, noted that five out of the last six fatalities were 100% caused by drivers failing to follow the law and be aware of cyclists and pedestrians. "The safety issues on our streets are caused by drivers speeding, failing to yield to pedestrians at cross walks, and failing to share the road with cyclists," he wrote. "We need the literature to focus on distracted drivers as they are the number one killer of pedestrians and cyclists in our community."

The final draft of the pledge was to be presented to council at the Nov. 8 meeting, after press time.

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School safety continues to be a top priority for the city of Lafayette. On Oct. 22 Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan presented Lafayette Mayor Susan Candell with a giant check valued at \$238,000 to be used for the Safe Route to Acalanes High School project which, when constructed, will provide students and families with a safe method to walk or bicycle to and from school, during peak commute times, without having to cross dangerous on and off ramps to California Highway 24. In addition, Lafayette School District Rapport Chair Katy Foreman and Street Smarts Diablo/511 Contra Costa Project Manager with the Contra Costa Transportation Authority Kirsten Riker gave a presentation at the Oct. 25 city council meeting about the Street Smarts Program, funded by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority which focuses on biking, pedestrian and driver safety throughout Lafayette.

The goal of the Street Smarts Program is to create a citywide campaign, Riker said, including all K-8 schools in the Lafayette School District, as well as private schools, and to engage new drivers at the high schools. Students Grace Goldberg, Dylan Andersen, and Will Palmer read the pledge as part of the presentation.

Lafayette resident Abby Fateman, during the public comment portion of the meeting, requested that the main focus of the citywide pledge change to drivers, since she noted that drivers "have the greatest capacity for death and injury." Some of the recommendations in the pledge include putting away cell phones, always