



Published September 2nd, 2020

The vision: students safely biking to school on Pleasant Hill Road

By Pippa Fisher



Cyclists and pedestrians currently have to cross fast-moving traffic on- and off-ramps along Pleasant Hill Road. Photo Pippa Fisher

up the wide cycle lane on Pleasant Hill Road get to Mt. Diablo Boulevard, there is no safe way to continue to the school.

Safe Route to Acalanes High School, now a nonprofit under Sustainable Lafayette, proposes to solve the safety issue by putting a bi-directional bike path down the center of Pleasant Hill Road in place of the existing median. The pathway would be protected from traffic by concrete guard walls, and would be safely accessible from both the Mt. Diablo Boulevard traffic lights and at the Deer Hill Road lights by making them "scramble" lights, stopping traffic in all directions while bikes and pedestrians enter/exit the pathway.

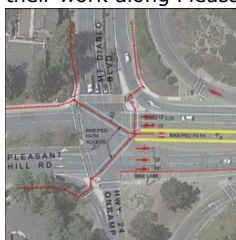
Law noted that no traffic lanes need to be eliminated to make space and that benefits would include potential reduction in traffic congestion around the school. He said the existing sidewalks and bike lanes would remain.

A possible second phase would involve extending the bike path to Springhill School along the western side of Pleasant Hill Road.

Commissioners had concerns about the width of the pathway, possible collisions, and for exactly how the scramble lights would work. When asked about the potential for head-on bike-to-bike collisions, Law pointed out that this had not been a problem on the bi-directional Lafayette-Moraga trail. "And that is packed and I'm not aware of any," he said.

Director of Engineering and Public Works Mike Moran was quick to keep expectations realistic. He said that this was a wonderful introduction to a proposed project but that it's a placeholder at this time. "Drivers won't lose anything and cyclists and pedestrians will be much more protected," he said. But he noted some parking could be lost, and pointed out that issues of design, funding and maintenance, and specifics on changing the function of lights to scramble, need to be in place before taking the idea to the city council.

Currently Law is working on funding, and is exploring designs of similar pathways in other cities. He is planning to make presentations in schools and hopes to gather support for the project as he continues to work with the city. He says that the developer for the Terraces has agreed to accommodate the project in their work along Pleasant Hill Road.



South Termination
(Pleasant Hill Rd / Mt. Diablo Blvd.)



North Termination
(Pleasant Hill Rd / Stanley Blvd.)

Image from Safe Route to Acalanes High School presentation, showing entry and exit from proposed bike path.

While acknowledging there are many more steps to be put in place and that it will take the cooperation of several stakeholders, the Transportation and Circulation Commission seemed enthusiastic during a presentation of a proposed new protected bike path from the Mt. Diablo Boulevard intersection with Pleasant Hill Road as far as Acalanes High School, and perhaps in a future phase, as far as Springhill Elementary.

Lafayette resident Eric Law, founder of Safe Route to Acalanes, explained the goal of the project would be to provide a safe bike and pedestrian path for students to access the high school, where right now they have to cross heavy traffic entering and exiting the four on- and off-ramps from Highway 24 - a dangerous situation that has resulted in serious cyclist-involved accidents.

Law explained that while Lafayette has great bike lanes and paths, especially the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail, once residents wishing to continue from that trail

Reach the reporter at: pippa@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA