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Engineering Services Manager returns to council with Pathways Project update

By Lou Fancher

After reviewing staff reports with concept drawings, cost estimates, traffic analysis, design concepts, plans and alternatives, the Lafayette City Council on Oct. 10 heard an update on the proposed Pleasant Hill Road East Side Pathway Project from Engineering Services Manager Matt Luttropp. In June, Luttropp and staff had been directed by council to contact local and regional stakeholders for feedback about the impact a center median or east side pathway design might have on traffic, safety, and their communities.

Luttropp spoke with Acalanes Union High School District Superintendent John Nickerson and Acalanes High School principal Eric Shawn, who said approximately 50 students may ride their bikes to school now, and he was uncertain about how those numbers might change after the pathway is constructed. Shawn said he'd support any measure or project that would improve the safety of bike paths and encourage more students to ride bikes to school.

Information from Streetlight Data showed bidirectional bicycle volumes during the school year on weekdays in 2021 was heavier between 3 and 5 p.m. than between 7 and 9 a.m. and varied along the roadway. "There's something in the neighborhood of 18 cyclists coming from north of Deer Hill, and something like 21 coming from the south," Luttropp said.

Additional data gathered included average trip lengths, with pedestrian trips averaging 2 miles and bicyclists, 6 miles.

Luttropp spoke with Robert Prinz, Advocacy Director for Bike East Bay regarding ramifications to bikers of removing the proposed bike lane on southbound Pleasant Hill Road between the future trap lane to westbound Highway 24 and the through-lane. Prinz voiced concerns about the southbound Pleasant Hill Road bike lane being adjacent to the trap lane because it creates an awkward weaving pattern which could place bicyclists within that vehicle pattern and could cause a safety hazard. Prinz supported an idea to have a protected, dedicated bike way center median or bike lane that would keep bicyclists out of any potential conflict zone. "Sharrows" (bike lane markings indicating cyclists have the option of traveling in the vehicle lane) earned his endorsement. Prinz indicated that if asked, he would write a letter of support for the project.

At Prinz's suggestion, staff reached out to the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District about the potential addition of a buffer that would be constructed along the east side of the road to separate vehicles from pedestrians on the sidewalk.

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Lafayette teachers garner community support for salary increase

By Sharon K. Sobotta

Lafayette School District teachers, who have asked for a 14% raise along with recognition of all of their years of service as educators (regardless which district they've accumulated those years in) crowded into the Oct. 18 school board meeting at Stanley Middle School Library with dozens of teachers and allies from Richmond, Antioch, Moraga, Orinda and Berkeley carrying signs saying, "You can't put students first, if you put teachers last."

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Photo Sharon K. Sobotta

Lafayette School District teachers and allies gather outside the Stanley Middle School library prior to the Oct. 18 board meeting.

On Oct. 13, District Superintendent Brent Stephens sent an email detailing the need for a \$1.8 million budget cut over the next three years in order to accommodate a 12% raise for teachers. Significant efforts are put into raising money for LPIE [Lafayette Parent Instruction Education] to fund state-of-the-art classroom supplies, and art, science and music programs to the extent that there are commercial breaks of sorts embedded in concerts and school activities underscoring the fact that what happens at school is powered by LPIE and inferring that parents should continue giving. LPIE funds are largely used for tools to help with teaching and some part-time positions relating to art, music and science. Teachers say that while those resources are important, so is the district's need to attract and retain excellent teachers.

Scott Moe, a fifth-grade teacher at Lafayette Elementary School who's been in the district for 27 years, says classrooms are powered by teachers and their students. Moe pointed out at least one important cut that was missing or left unacknowledged in the email that the district sent out. "The list the superintendent sent out was very district-sided and it didn't include cuts we've made. [For example] some years ago, we agreed to a cut in our healthcare coverage. Instead of covering whole families, just the teacher themselves was covered. That money adds up over the years." The cuts made on the backs of teachers, he explained, may be rooted in the hope that teachers will join their spouse's plan. Of course, this begs the question - what about people who don't have spouses or are single parents?

Allie Jones, Instructional Support Teacher at Lafayette Elementary School said she wants the 14% raise teachers are asking for and credit for all her years of service counted. "I'm pretty fired up. I wish the superintendent and the board would understand that what we're asking for is just what's due. We're trying to get a fair wage," Jones says. "I've been in the district more than 20 years and this is the worst it's ever been in terms of feeling undervalued."

Jones gets credit in the district for 12 years of service to the profession, in spite of having over 20. Even if the recognition of those other years doesn't necessarily bump her pay schedule, she says having all of her years of service recognized is an important level of validation. That being said, Jones was heartened by the overwhelming support from fellow teachers.

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Housing & Safety Concerns in Lafayette

Thursday, October 26, 7 p.m.
Town Hall on ZOOM

Hosted by Lafayette Homeowners Council (LHC)

Guest speakers:

- Mayor Carl Anduri
- City Manager Niroop Srivatsa

Update and Q & A

LHC welcomes all Lafayette residents to attend our Annual Meeting.

More info and zoom link at <https://lafayettehomeownerscouncil.org/>



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2024 CALIFORNIA HOUSING MARKET OUTLOOK

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023p	2024f
SFH Sales, % Chg	1.70%	-5.20%	-1.20%	3.50%	7.90%	-23.10%	-22.20%	22.90%
Median Price, % Chg	7.10%	5.90%	4.00%	11.30%	19.30%	4.50%	-1.50%	6.20%
Affordability Index	29%	28%	31%	32%	29%	19%	17%	17%
30-yr FRM	4.00%	4.50%	3.90%	3.10%	3.00%	5.30%	6.70%	6.00%

p = projected
f = forecast
SFH = single family home
Source = California Association of Realtors

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