

Delight project attracts renewed support at traffic safety meeting

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Supporters of an improvement project along Delight Street North turned out in force at a meeting of the Keizer Traffic Safety, Bikeways and Pedestrian (TBP) Committee Thursday, April 12.

Sensing the project was losing the backing of the committee, members of the West Keizer Neighborhood Association (WKNA) took turns during public testimony vouching for the project's need. Members of the TBP have spent most recent meetings looking for and evaluating projects that might be submitted for the grant funding through a transportation funding package approved by the Oregon Legislature in 2017. While the grant money has not yet been made available, members of the committee would like to have a project worthy of recommendation when the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) opens the gates.

The TBP committee began looking at the need for improvements like sidewalks and bike lanes in the area around Cummings Elementary School north to Chemawa Road North, but a project to add similar features so the area around Kennedy Elementary School has also been a hot topic of discussion.

Carol Doerfler, president of the WKNA, encouraged the committee to pick the Cummings project.

"Cummings is designated as a walking school served by one standard bus and two smaller for special needs students," Doerfler said. "We are here asking and encouraging your support for the kids of west Keizer. They deserve it."

Members of the WKNA board, along with Cummings Principal Martina Mangan, have spoken regularly at city meetings in support of additional safety features along Delight, which also serves as a major walking route to McNary High School.

Doerfler added that Cummings is slated to become a Title 1 school again this September after moving beyond that designation for the 2017-18 year. Title 1 schools are those with high percentages of students coming from low-income families. One of the reasons committee members began taking a harder look at the Kennedy Elementary area was its Title 1 designation.

"I was president of (WKNA) when we started this in 2014. I'm a little surprised that we are starting discussions of another school as a priority," said Rhonda Rich. "We're here to put this at the forefront because we feel like it's getting pushed back in the queue again."

"Both schools have issues and that's why we are discussing them," responded David Dempster, a member of the committee.

Each project has a number of potential benefits. Delight serves two schools, including the largest one in the city, but improving safety in the area around Kennedy could enhance access to the city core and bus routes from east Keizer neighborhoods.

While the committee has not settled on a single project, member Pat Fisher suggested looking into a Project Identification grant administered through ODOT.

"One of the managers said Keizer seemed like a good candidate and that would help us get past the stage of lists and looking at which packages can compete for funding," Fisher said.

As the committee seeks to assist schools in traffic management, Committee Member Mike DeBlasi suggested looking into a pilot program whereby the city would invest in temporary traffic controls such as bolt-in raised curbs, bollards and other devices that could be used direct traffic, and train drivers, around school areas.

"The idea would be to create a cache of traffic calming devices that schools throughout the city can apply to use throughout the system," DeBlasi said.



Not all hot air

Brandon Bueoy, left, and Jesus Martinez, tuba players in McNary's wind ensemble, hold the third place trophy won at the Greater Valley Conference band competition on Friday, April 13 at West Salem High School.

Nine high schools performed. Sprague finished first, followed by West Salem and McNary. The wind ensemble, directed by Jennifer Bell, will perform at the state band competition on Saturday, May 12 at Oregon State University.

Submitted

KPD on the lookout for stoned drivers

If you're planning on celebrating April 20 by lighting up a joint, you should probably hide your car keys first. The Keizer Police Department is deploying extra DUII patrols to look for impaired drivers.

April 20 (aka 420) is known for being the most widely celebrated cannabis holiday and with that, comes a percentage of irresponsible users who choose to drive a vehicle after consuming.

The Keizer Police Department is urging motorists to plan a safe ride home and never get behind the wheel while impaired.

There are four types of drugs; illegal, legal non-medical, prescription medications and over-the-counter. Depending on how the drug is used any drug can increase the risk of an injury crash. If the drug is used in combination with an alcoholic beverage, the risk factors

increase exponentially.

Additional DUII patrols are looking to stop and arrest drivers who are impaired by alcohol or drugs. These DUII patrols are, in addition to regularly scheduled patrol officers, all looking for the tell-tale signs of an impaired driver behind the wheel. During St. Patrick's Day last month, officers stopped and corrected numerous violations and arrested one driver for impaired driving.

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