

Gautho, Julia

From: Diane Castle <dianecastle2@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2023 3:25 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Comments for Dec 14th Meeting, Item 8.A.

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Dear Capitola City Council,

(I had planned to attend this meeting but tested positive for Covid this morning.)

A Dec 11th article in the NY Times is very timely given the recent tragedies of one woman's death and another woman's injury from cars driving in Capitola. It addresses the reasons for the uptick in pedestrian deaths by cars after dark, primarily in the U.S. While many factors may come into play, two in particular stand out.

Please see excerpt from the article below (bold type are my highlights):

"...put together, it's clear that there's been a particularly American mix of technological and social changes over the past decade and a half. **And they have all come on top of a road system and an ingrained culture that prioritizes speed over safety.** Whatever has happened over this time has reversed years of progress on daytime pedestrian fatalities, too, leading to a modest increase in deaths. **Nighttime, however, has the potential to amplify so many of these new risks.**

A transportation system that's safer by design — as in many European countries — might better absorb any one of these dangers. Distracted drivers are safer at lower speeds. People out at night are safer with well-lit crosswalks.

Even "monster trucks are safe on safer roads," said Nicholas Ferenchak, a professor at the University of New Mexico and director of the Center for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety. Now imagine distracted drivers in monster trucks on high-speed roads in the dark"

With this information in hand, I am optimistic that Capitola can make changes to help reduce pedestrian fatalities and injuries. A few ideas:

- 1) We can reduce speed limits (and enforce them), and especially on Bay Street, reduce the lanes in each direction from two to one
- 2) Be sure pedestrians in crosswalks are more visible at night by adding lighting and other safety features so even distracted drivers cannot miss a pedestrian.
- 3) Have a city-wide Safe Driving campaign to include watching for pedestrians, attention to speed limits, etc. Advertise using the same across-the-road banners used for events (Surfing Santa, Free Parking).

I hope you will consider these comments. Please take the time to read the full article which has been made available to you, link below.

Thank you,

Diane Castle, 750 47th Avenue Spc 29, Capitola

Full NY Times Article: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/12/11/upshot/nighttime-deaths.html?unlocked_article_code=1.FE0.nbxZ.WN86_NmMA-OQ&smid=url-share