

City of Piedmont COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: April 4, 2022
TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Sara Lillevand, City Administrator
SUBJECT: Traffic Safety Update

RECOMMENDATION

This report is submitted for information purposes only.

BACKGROUND

On February 22, 2022, Chief of Police, Jeremy Bowers, provided the 2021 year-end report to the City Council. The report included a Traffic Safety Summary where Chief Bowers provided a three-year summary of documented collision data. Traffic safety, as a component of public safety, is a priority for the City Council. Mayor King requested an informational report focused on traffic safety. This report will focus on aspects of traffic safety to include the Piedmont Police Department enforcement strategies and education efforts to the public, a traffic legislation update on Assembly Bill 43, an overview of engineering solutions and/or projects contained within the City's Bike and Pedestrian Plan to mitigate traffic hazards, and mapping of collision locations.

PIEDMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT

Maintaining safe roadways for all who use them is an ongoing area of attention for the Police Department. The Police Department, in partnership with other City staff, takes a three-pronged approach to traffic safety: education, enforcement and engineering.

Currently, there are two patrol officer positions assigned to traffic enforcement. One position remains vacant due to staffing needs elsewhere in the Department and the other position is staffed by Officer Tyler Petit. The remaining officers working patrol assignments are also responsible for assisting with traffic enforcement when time permits. Officer Petit reviews all traffic complaints and collision investigations. This gives him a working knowledge of where traffic violations are occurring, thereby allowing him to focus his efforts on those locations, and enlist the other patrol officers to assist with enforcement in these areas.

Traffic complaints are collected from the community in various formats. To report a traffic complaint, a resident can submit a Traffic Complaint Form via the City's website, call or visit the Department or engage a Department member in the field. Those complaints are then logged and reviewed by the Traffic Safety Team.

The Traffic Safety Team is comprised of the current traffic officer, Operations Captain, the Director of Public Works and City Engineer. This combined effort is designed to coordinate the response to resident concerns about traffic safety combining enforcement and engineering components of our overall strategy.

Education is the third component of our traffic enforcement and safety efforts in our overall goal of changing unsafe driving behavior. Officers have discretion of whether to issue a citation or provide a warning depending on the facts and circumstances of a specific encounter. In either case, officers are required to explain why specific driving behavior was unsafe and educate the driver on legal driving habits in order to change that behavior. In addition, the Department launched “Tyler’s Tips.” “Tyler’s Tips” is a social media series of video clips that discusses different driving habits and the rules of the road to further educate the driving public. The department has also partnered with PUSD and the California Highway Patrol to provide driver training presentations at the high schools. Our past and current Juvenile Officers have provided safe driving presentations over the past two years to address alcohol/drug impairments, rules of the road and topics related to licensing and permit restrictions. The Department will continue to look for educational opportunities to highlight and promote safe driving.

In addition, the Department maintains speed display signs on busier streets. These signs provide for driver awareness related to speed. The Department also maintains two mobile speed display trailers. These trailers have been deployed throughout the 145 streets in the community to alert drivers of their vehicle speeds. Additionally, these signs collect the speeds of the vehicles that pass, the number of vehicles and time of day the vehicles pass. This allows the Department to verify complaint information and tailor enforcement to optimize officer presence. The reports are shared with the complainant so they receive feedback on the data collection.

All new Piedmont police officers attend a 40-hour course to qualify them to use RADAR/LIDAR speed measuring devices. This is part of their basic training matrix. Violations involving speed continue to be a primary reason for collisions. In addition, speeding continues to be the top complaint residents provide to the department.

The table below contains Department collision data related to documented collisions for the last three years. Speed and inattention continue to be the main factors associated with the reported collisions. Maps of these collisions are attached to this report to provide a visual perspective of collision locations over the last three years.

Yearly Comparison	Total Documented Collisions	Injury Collisions	Hit & Run	Property Damage Only
2021	79	11	36	32
2020	49	8	18	23
2019	70	4	32	34

TRAFFIC ENGINEERING PROJECTS AND BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN

During FY21-22 several projects have been initiated or implemented.

Projects Implemented:

- Lower Grand Striping – included safety striping for the bicycle lanes on Grand Avenue as it crosses Lower Grand. Also included striping of an island and refreshing the bicycle lanes on Grand Ave. from Lower Grand to Rose.

Project Under Construction:

- Oakland Avenue Pavement Restoration – this project includes installation of enhanced pedestrian crossings at Howard/Oakland, Sunnyside/Oakland and Olive/Oakland. At these locations, RRFB (flashing crossing signs), bulb-outs and refreshed crosswalks are being added. This project is rehabilitating a total of 6 pedestrian ramps.

Project Soon to be Awarded and Under Construction:

- 2021 Pavement Rehabilitation Project –
 - Pedestrian improvements: Rehabilitating a total of 20 pedestrian crossings and adding an enhanced pedestrian safety crossing on Grand Avenue at Fairview Ave which will include a safe refuge island in the middle of Grand Avenue.
 - Bicycle improvements: Adding sharrows on Wildwood Avenue (between Grand and Nova) and adding Class 3 bicycle lanes (including sharrows) on Hampton Road between St. James and Glen Alpine.

Projects In Design:

- Pedestrian Safety Enhancements at Oakland/Jerome and Oakland/El Cerrito – adds enhanced pedestrian crossings at these 2 intersections by adding bulb-outs and RRFB signage. This project will rehabilitate 7 pedestrian ramps. The project will also eliminate the mid-block cross walk just east of Oakland/Latham.
- Striping Project –
 - Moraga/Mesa intersection - enhancing striping and signage at Moraga/Mesa to provide better visibility of pedestrians using this crosswalk.
 - Sheridan/Lincoln – provides enhanced striping to better direct traffic at this intersection
 - Moraga Avenue – adding a Class 2 bike lane in the uphill direction between Red Rock to the easterly city limits and providing edge striping. This project will narrow lanes on Moraga to 10 feet to help lower speeds on this section of Moraga, as well as the addition of the uphill bicycle lane will increase bicycle safety.
 - Nova/Magnolia intersection – striping modifications to the existing traffic island to provide improved sightlines and performance.
 - La Salle – installing better centerline safety striping from Hampton through the “s” curve east of Hampton Park to provide better traffic safety in this location.
 - Greenbank/Oakland Avenue – implementing striping and raised pavement markers to prevent traffic from cutting the corner from Oakland onto Greenbank at high speeds.

TRAFFIC SAFETY LEGISLATION

California Assembly Bill 43 (AB 43) is traffic safety legislation that was signed into law by Governor Newsom on October 8, 2021. AB 43 is intended to provide state and local government with additional authority to decide how speed limits should be set and whether they should be reduced on certain roads and highways. Per the California Vehicle Code, speed limits are set by performing periodic speed surveys and setting the legal speed limit for each street at the 85th percentile. AB 43 authorizes state and local authorities greater flexibility to adjust default speed limits based upon certain findings determined by an engineering and traffic survey. Amongst

other provisions, AB 43 includes:

- Provisions to lower speed limits in areas with high volume pedestrian or bicycle traffic
- Provisions to lower speed limits in areas near vulnerable pedestrian groups such as children, seniors, and people with disabilities
- Lower speed limits below 25 mph if justified by traffic study
- Reduce speed limits in school zones without a traffic study
- Extend the validity of engineering and traffic surveys from 7 years to 14 years

Based on our review of AB 43, the impact of these provisions would likely be limited to the Civic Center area and the commercial area of Grand Avenue. Most of Piedmont, which is largely comprised on low volume residential roadways, would not meet the criteria set forth by AB 43. In all cases, pedestrian and bicycle safety projects that focus on speed reduction remain the optimal avenue for modifying vehicular behavior.

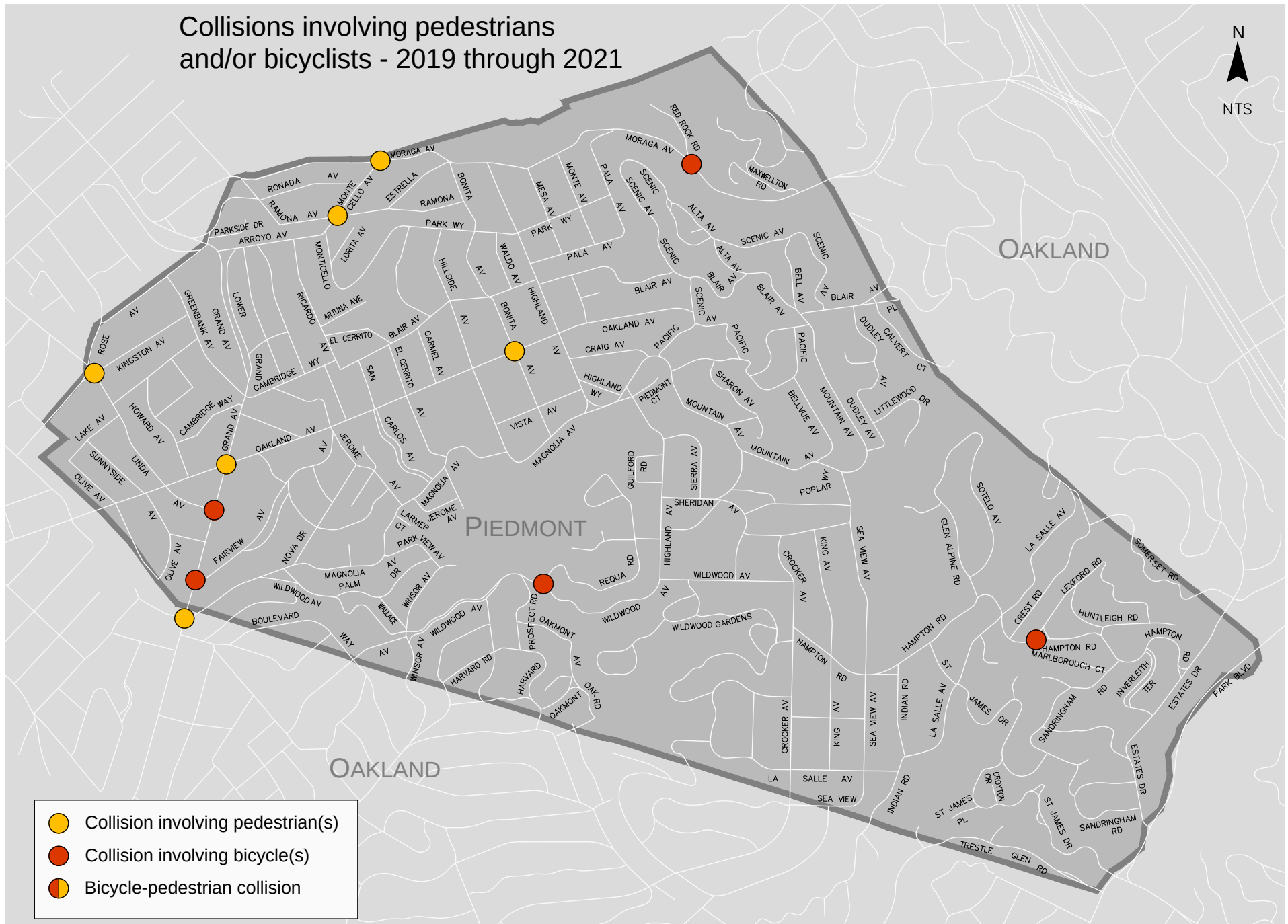
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Three-year (2019,2020,2021) Traffic Collision Maps for Vehicle vs. Ped, Vehicle vs. Bicyclist, and Bicyclist vs. Ped.

Attachment 2: Three-year (2019, 2020, 2021) Traffic Collision Maps for Vehicle vs. other Vehicles, parked vehicles and fixed objects.

By: Jeremy Bowers, Chief of Police
 Daniel Gonzales, Public Works Director
 John Wanger, Civil Engineer
 Chris Monahan, Police Captain

Collisions involving pedestrians and/or bicyclists - 2019 through 2021



Collisions involving motor vehicles but
not pedestrians and/or bicyclists
2019 through 2021

