



Hathaway Park Neighborhood Wins Appeal!

Congratulations, to the Hathaway Park Neighborhood Association for winning their petition to install a stop sign at the intersection of Southwood Drive and Los Felice Drive. Rick Wardell of the Hathaway Park Neighborhood Association filed the application with support from Councilmember Pete Constant's office. It started with concerned residents of the Hathaway Park Neighborhood meeting with Councilmember Constant and Department of Transportation (DOT) staff in May of 2007. Residents were very concerned about speeding along Southwood Drive and requested that something be done to address the dangerous situation.

DOT staff decided that the stop sign was not necessary. Mr. Wardell, along with neighbors and members of the newly formed Hathaway Park Neighborhood Association talked with Councilmember Constant about their options. Councilmember Constant suggested that they appeal the DOT staff decision and told them how to do it. The neighbors filed an appeal for the intersection of Southwood Drive and Los Felice Drive with the Traffic Appeals Commission. This an example of what can be accomplished when neighbors come together and work with their City Council office on issues affecting their community. This collective show of support makes an impact on the decision making process. During the appeals meeting, the Traffic Appeals Commission also recommended that DOT work with neighbors on additional traffic calming measures in order to help mitigate the traffic issues in the Hathaway Park area.

The Hathaway Park Neighborhood concern of excessive speeding is unfortunately not unique to that neighborhood. The problem of excessive speeding has reached almost epidemic proportions in school zones. Sadly, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), 50% of children hit by cars near a school are hit by the parents of other students. Also, according to the CDC, 2/3 of drivers in school zones exceeded the posted speed limit and a national observational survey found that many motorists at intersections in school zones and residential neighborhoods violated stop signs.

In response to speeding in school zones, a bill was signed by Governor Schwarzenegger on October 10, 2007 (California Assembly Bill 321) allowing cities to reassess residential-area school zones enabling them to decrease speed limits from 25 to 15 or 20 mph. To view the full text of the bill click here:

http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/media/file/ab_321_bill_20071010_chaptered.pdf.

Traffic calming does not always mean getting a new stop sign or installing speed bumps although in some areas these measures are necessary. The City of San José operates the Street Smarts Program which works to combat a growing problem of speeding in residential and school zones. Specific driving behaviors that the City of San José has chosen to target are red light running, stop sign violations, speeding, school zone compliance, and crosswalk safety and compliance. We are addressing these problems with tougher enforcement on the streets.

As the old adage an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. In that vein the City of San José and developed pedestrian safety tips as part of the Street Smarts Program. For example, when crossing in front of a stopped car, making eye contact with the driver is very important and may save your life. If you're a parent and you're looking for the safest route for your child to walk to school in San Jose, go to the safe route map link to area schools: http://www.sanjoseca.gov/transporation/school_route_maps.htm. As the Street Smarts Web site reminds us, "Drive like you would like people to drive in your own neighborhood."