



Family keeps classic Chevy running fast on drag strip

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Parents fight 'sexist' old dress code

Tahoma Schools approves a new policy focused less on girls' clothing

BY DANIELLE CHASTAINE
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A new dress code is helping Tahoma students decide what to

appropriately wear for class this school year.

After months of discussion, thoughtful adjustments and multiple sit-down meetings, the Tahoma School District Board of Directors unanimously approved the new dress code at its Aug. 27 meeting. The revised code went into effect immediately.

The new dress code, which applies to students at all grade levels, establishes standards that allow for self-expression while preserving school order and safety, the school district said. The new policy limits clothing deemed to be a health or safety hazard, could damage school property, or that creates a "material

or substantial disruption of the educational process."

The dress code prohibits messages on clothing that are lewd, sexual in nature or drug-, tobacco- or alcohol-related. Gang apparel and hate messages also are prohibited.

The change drew support from parents who found the old code

too restrictive and unfair toward girls.

A survey - created by district teachers and staff - was sent to parents in June, asking them how the dress policy affected them and what their thoughts were on the matter.

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New 'Y' readies for grand opening

BY MARK KLAAS
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Heavy-duty cranes have disappeared, giving way to last-minute construction details at the large building overlooking a popular park on East Hill.

Crews were busy installing carpeting, caulking gaps and installing fixtures on the Labor Day holiday.

Deadline for the official grand opening of the \$36.6 million Kent YMCA is Sept. 14, and project leaders vow to meet it. From first shoveled dirt to last troweled brick, construction has spanned nearly 14 months.

"Should be ready to do," an Abbott Construction crew member said as he walked down the ground-floor hallway to his next task.

Having completed a hard-hat tour of the two-story, 50,000-square-foot facility on

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Pedestrians in fear crossing Reith Road

Sister seeks safer intersection



Sarah Kier stands near the intersection of Reith Road and Lake Fenwick Road South where her brother was struck and killed Aug. 23 by a pickup driver. Kier says the city of Kent needs to improve safety at the intersection. STEVE HUNTER, Kent Reporter

BY STEVE HUNTER
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Sarah Kier went to the Kent intersection of Reith Road and Lake Fenwick Road South to find some closure where a pickup driver struck and killed her brother as he walked across the street.

Larry Kier, 37, of Seattle, and Sarah Kier's only sibling, died at the scene of the Aug. 23 collision.

As Sarah Kier stood at the site, she couldn't believe what she saw. She discovered an intersection so dangerous for pedestrians that they crossed the street in fear to get to two nearby bus stops. Kier said her brother had visited his girlfriend's apartment near the intersection that night and left to catch a bus.

"People looked absolutely terrified," Kier said as she watched them cross Reith Road.

"Sometimes they just stand there for a while. One girl kept walking back and forth trying to figure out the best place to cross. People are thinking about it, but there's nothing here."

No traffic light. No flashing light. No marked crosswalks. No streetlights.

"Maybe my brother was stupid for crossing diagonally, but maybe if there was a crosswalk, he wouldn't have," Kier said.

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Safer

From Page 1

Kier, a Normandy Park child and family therapist, has made it her mission to make the intersection safer so others don't have to go through losing a relative or friend struck by a vehicle.

"When I sat here and watched people try to cross the street, that's what made me really mad," she said. "It doesn't need to happen to anyone else, but with no lighting, no crosswalk this isn't OK, it's not safe for people. It's not just about me and my brother and being emotional, this is not OK."

Initial information from the Kent Police indicates that Kier was crossing Reith Road, near Lake Fenwick Road. The driver was traveling eastbound in his pickup truck on Reith Road and struck Kier in the roadway. Kier crossed the roadway just down from the intersection, and was wearing dark clothing at the time of the collision, police said. The location of the collision is on a curve near the base of the steep Reith Road hill.

Kent man arrested

Officers arrested the driver, a 53-year-old Kent man, for investigation of DUI. The driver remained on the scene following the collision and exhibited signs of impairment, according to police.

Kier said the police report makes it sound like the collision occurred because of an alleged drunk driver and her brother wearing dark clothing

and crossing in the middle of the road. But she said pedestrians could easily be hit whether or not a driver is drunk or someone is wearing dark clothing at night.

"Maybe my brother was negligent," she said. "But it's so dangerous. I saw an old man try to run across the street. People are trying to cross the street in fear. It's a half-mile down the road to the nearest crosswalk (at Kent Des Moines Road)."

Kent Police Cmdr. Robert Hollis said Kier appears to be the first pedestrian struck along Reith Road near Lake Fenwick Road South.

"After reviewing the data, we found no other reports of pedestrians being struck in that area," Hollis said in an email. "There was a fatality collision up the hill, but that was car v. car."

Hollis offered safety tips for pedestrians.

"I would recommend that pedestrians cross at an intersection, even if there isn't a marked crosswalk," Hollis said. "It's safer as drivers are more likely to pay more attention at intersections and have better sight lines than say mid-block at a curve. There is usually more light at intersections as well."

Both streetlight poles, however, at the Reith Road/Lake Fenwick intersection have been knocked out by vehicles, according to city Public Works staff.

"There are two street lights at the intersection, one in the northeast corner and one in the southwest corner," said Rob Brown, city Public Works transportation engineering manager, in an email. "The two streetlights at the intersection are not currently working



Larry Kier was struck and killed by a pickup driver Aug. 23 while crossing Reith Road. COURTESY PHOTO, Kier Family

due to foundation damage. The foundations are scheduled to be repaired, and the street lights reinstalled, by the end of this year."

Brown said the city received two requests from residents in 2016 to add a marked crosswalk at Reith Road and Lake Fenwick Road. He said the intersection didn't meet the crosswalk criteria (based on federal guidelines) adopted by the City Council, to get a marked crosswalk.

"This location was evaluated in 2016 when the crosswalk policy was being developed," Brown said when asked for specifics about why it didn't qualify. "I see it on the list, but I cannot find the backing data."

The criteria to establish a marked crosswalk includes a certain number of pedestrians using an intersection per hour as well as traffic volume and speed limits. Reith Road has a posted

speed of 35 mph and a sign coming down hill and around a curve that recommends a speed of 25 mph just prior to Lake Fenwick Road because of limited sight distance.

"It's a danger for the drivers coming down the hill because there's no lights, there's no crosswalk, there's nothing," Kier said.

She would like to see a crosswalk or traffic signal because of the nearby apartment complexes (Apex West Hill Apartments and Westridge Townhomes are right near the intersection) and the two bus stops on each side of Reith Road.

"You are dropping pedestrians off in an unsafe situation," she said. "There's too much going on in a tiny area. And hundreds of people live here."

Federal Way roots

Sarah and Larry Kier grew up in Federal Way. Larry Kier graduated from Decatur High School. In addition to his sister, mother and father, Larry Kier leaves behind a 12-year-old son.

"My brother had his own struggles," Kier said. "But he was extremely well loved and was doing really well."

Kier pondered what her brother would want.

"I don't know if my brother would want forgiveness or what," said Kier, who found out about her brother's death with a call from the King County Medical Examiner's Office the morning after the collision. "I'm upset that what my brother did was negligent, but if the road was safer he would not be in that position."

Several people who posted

comments on the Kent Police Facebook page about the collision, agreed the city needs to improve the intersection.

"I've lived on Lake Fenwick Road since 1990 and turning right onto Reith Road has always been a crap shoot," said Reese Dengler. "Almost nobody goes down that hill at 35 mph, let alone 25 mph."

Lauren Johnson said it's a challenge for pedestrians to cross the road.

"This is terrible," Johnson said. "I drive up that road multiple times a day and I would never try and cross there in the daytime, let alone in the dark. Even if a car was going 25 mph, it would be incredibly hard to see anyone walking, and most people go quite a bit faster. It's a shame and I feel bad for all involved."

When Kier visited the intersection, the street still had the painted markings that showed where her brother's left shoe and right shoe ended up. He was knocked out of his shoes from the impact of the collision with the pickup.

"The officer told me where he landed, the driver probably was not speeding because the body didn't fly real far," Kier said.

Kier plans to stay on a mission to see what charges the driver faces, and what the city can do about adding a traffic light or marked crosswalk.

"At first I just wanted to see where he was," Kier said about visiting the site. "When I saw all of it, it's not about my brother, but ways to make this safer. ... Unfortunately, there's not change until someone gets hurt."

"I want to bring attention to this. I want to make sure nobody else gets hurt."

YMCA

From Page 1

Monday, U.S. Congresswoman Kim Schrier, D-Issaquah, came away impressed.

Building a "Y" is one thing, but constructing one tailored to meet the community's specific needs is significant, responsible and impactful, she said. Schrier, a pediatrician, understands the importance of such a healthy hamlet.

"It's an incredible asset for the whole community," Schrier said after joining a small group of people, including Y project leaders and staff, on a preview of the multi-purpose center.

"They've taken everything into account, everything from income levels to the needs of students, chronic disease prevention to even details that reflect the cultural needs of the population. It's going to be a gem for the city.

"They really thoughtfully integrated the notion



U.S. Rep. Kim Schrier, D-Issaquah, right, shares a moment with Yvette Tolson while walking a lap around the second-floor track at the new Kent Y on Monday. MARK KLAAS, Reporter

of a park, outdoor space, indoor space and what the community wants and needs," she said. "And this is just a jewel."

On the Y's ground floor, the group toured community gathering spaces, a play zone for kids, a gym, and a state-of-the-art aquatic center

that featured a six-lane, 25-meter-long pool and another pool designed for family activity, play and leisure. Upstairs, there were group fitness rooms, a running track that hovers and circles the gym and a premium cardio and free-weight fitness area.

The new Y will bring

expanded school, child care and enrichment programs for children and youth. The Y also will provide mental health and counseling services.

Moreover, the Y's indoor facilities will embrace and share outdoor recreation with an expanded Morrill Meadows Park.

More information

Learn more at seattleyymca.org.

Coming together

The "Y" is a success story, a collaborative effort led by the YMCA, the city of Kent and many partners, said Nathan Phillips, vice president of public policy and community relations for the YMCA of Greater Seattle.

"It's been a long road to get here but the community set us up right," said Phillips, who has been with the project from start to finish, nearly a six-year effort. "We feel pretty good. We're doing what the community has asked of us to do."

So far, so good, Phillips said. An early membership drive has attracted about 1,200 households, he said, with hopes of that number growing in the months ahead as the

community discovers the facility at 10828 SE 248th St., Kent.

Phillips said the YMCA expects to have 11,000 members at the facility, with another 11,000 people to be served by programs that reach out to the community, including services accessible to people regardless of income.

The city of Kent is paying about \$11 million toward the project.

Nearly \$1 million is left to raise to completely cover the project's bill, Y officials said.

Major contributors include about \$5 million in state grants; a \$2 million anonymous donation through the YMCA of Greater Seattle Board; \$1 million from the Morford family; \$1 million from the King County Council; \$500,000 from the Employees Community Fund of Boeing; and \$250,000 from the Delta Air Lines Foundation.

Learn more at seattleyymca.org.