



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Transportation Authority of Marin
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Ross Valley Task Force Meeting Notes April 25, 2012

Present (17)

Wendi Kallins – Program Director for Safe Routes to School; Laura Kelly – Volunteer Liaison for Safe Routes to School; Carey Lando – Senior Transportation Planner, County of Marin; Lori Lopin – San Anselmo Town Council; Laurie O’Hara – Aide to Supervisor Katie Rice; Bret Joyner – Director of Maintenance and Operations for Ross Valley School District; Gerhard Epke – Assistant Public Works Director, San Anselmo; John Reed – Fairfax Town Council; Ted Fehlhaber – Wade Thomas Team Leader; Karl Vavrek – Cascade Canyon Team Leader; Bridget Clark – Brookside Upper Team Leader; Robert Betts – Senior Planner with Marin Transit; William Kate – Fairfax Police Officer; Shelley Flint – San Domenico; Kristy Marksbury – San Domenico; Kevin McGoon – Traffic Supervisor for San Anselmo Police Department; Hadley Dettmer – Ross Valley School Board.

School Updates

Renee shared that Manor is in their second week of the Go Green Spring Challenge. There was a delay in starting the contest this year due to one teacher was short supplies. Bicycle ridership has been strong, but parents seem to be always concerned about the safety of student bicyclists. Renee said the Fairfax Bike Spine project would help to calm parents concerns.

Karl shared that Cascade Canon just finished the first week of the Go Green Spring Challenge. SR2S classes are scheduled for May.

Ted said Wade Thomas finished the contest and hosted a school assembly to celebrate the results. The average percentage of green travel during the contest was 47%, or a total of 3,098 green trips by students. Ted said the San Anselmo police department did an outstanding job helping to encourage parents to stay out of the red zone in the student drop-off area during the contest.

Most classes at Upper Brookside reported results of 40-50% green travel. Wendi said the winning class reported 74% green travel. Bridget shared that the contest is excellent at getting students to take back the message to their parents that they need to set goals of traveling to school a green way.

Wendi shared that the ultimate goal of our program is that every student finds a green route to school every day. Spring travel surveys are slated to be mailed to all schools in early May. Renee expressed concern with overloading the teachers with two surveys – the travel mode surveys and the Spring Challenge daily tallies. Wendi suggested that teacher’s tie-in the two by lumping travel mode questions together when asking students.

Wendi said that every school participating in the SR2S program would be given a report card in August. The report card is a way to measure progress and set goals, and will be given to each school at the end of the academic school year. Each school will be given a “green level” by Safe Routes to Schools based on the schools percentage of green trips.

San Domenico shared that assemblies and SR2S classes are taking place. The school has a very higher bus ridership of 75%. The school’s bike lane is on the wrong side of the entrance road, so this is a problem that needs to be addressed.

Marin Transit Bus Update – Robert Betts

Marin Transit is a local service which contracts with other providers, including Golden Gate Transit, Marin Airporter, MV Transportation and Whistlestop Wheels. The Ross Valley School District embraces a very high level of Marin Transit service. Some of the highest percentages of student participation are at White Hill and Brookside schools. Golden Gate Transit is the primary contract operator hired by Marin Transit to provide the majority of local services in Marin. Dedicated “school trippers” are bus routes that are geared for school needs but can still pick up the general public. School route information is available on the website at **www.marintransit.org**.

San Anselmo has three primary routes. Buses 126 and 127 travel on Butterfield. Marin Transit is very sensitive to school “bell times.” They used to be able to use one bus in the past, but bell times changed at Upper and Lower Brookside when the schools were reconfigured. When the bell time change occurred, they had to adjust and add an additional bus to the route. Bell time will soon be changed back because the cost was 60% higher for Marin Transit to accommodate the change in bell times.

Bridget mentioned that promoting Marin Transit clipper cards at Brookside’s Open House last year was well received by families not needing an annual pass. A clipper card can be used on all routes operated by Golden Gate Transit for youth transit riders. Robert suggested providing information on when Back to School nights are scheduled in September for Ross Valley Schools, and then they can plan on

providing information on the clipper card for those nights, as well as route information. Clipper cards can be purchased at Whistlestop Wheels (970 Tamalpais, San Rafael) or the San Rafael Transit Center Customer Service Office (3rd and Heatherton in San Rafael); youth must show personal identification proof. Robert mentioned that Free Bus Day is another event used to promote bus services to the schools.

Younger elementary school students are sometimes intimidated to take the bus to school, and parents are not comfortable with it. One way to overcome this is to encourage a buddy system, pairing older students with a younger student to make the ride friendly and fun.

Carrie suggested another way to inspire the bus system is if there were parent chaperones on the bus that wore visible vests. This would help parents' comfort zone with sending their child on the bus.

It was mentioned that due to the major road construction currently in the Alameda neighborhood (and then the construction moves to Butterfield) that promoting alternate bus routes during the construction might be a way to avoid traffic backup.

SchoolPool Update

Wendi shared that the SchoolPool program is progressing. Neighborhood maps for Brookside schools will be completed by June. Families sign up by their neighborhood designated for their schools. This will make it much easier to find matches. Team leaders will be asked to help recruit captains for each neighborhood to help people match up.

Bike to School Day - May 9, 2012

Posters and stickers were distributed to Team Leaders. This national event represents an opportunity to promote biking, but the event also welcomes walkers. Bike to Work Day is May 10. Some schools have opted to schedule their Bike to School Day on May 10th to take advantage of the energizer stations being set-up throughout Marin County in celebration of Bike to Work Day.

White Hill School Student Safety and Travel Committee Update

Bret shared that the 3^{rs} safety committee met on March 28th to discuss traffic disruption issues and recommend strategies to assist the community in coping with the anticipated major construction of the school over the next year. Elevating green travel is the goal during construction. A decomposed granite pathway for students to use for bikes and walking will be installed alongside the field to allow students to bypass Glen Drive. Construction is anticipated to be completed in June. This will

alleviate the mud factor for the next school year, which occurs in the winter months making the pathway undesirable to use because it's very messy.

It was suggested that White Hill School tours are a great opportunity to provide route information to incoming students and encourage green travel to school.

The most recent meeting continued the discussion of a Glen Drive turn around and design ideas for the new parking and bus loop for White Hill School. Bus timing will be very important. The main concern is making Glen Drive safer.

Marin Transit Buses: Parking Concerns on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard

Karl asked if we can create a no bus parking zone on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard in front of Cascade Canyon School. Or why can't we install signage for the bus drivers regarding parking restrictions? The concern is that the buses obscure the vision of Cascade Canyon walkers and bikers. Karl said that they have been communicating with the drivers all year, but it's just not working. The bus staging area is a serious danger zone.

John said it's not that simple to put up signs. Wendi said no such signage exists and it's illegal to put up non conforming signs. 'No parking' signs refer to cars, not buses. The best way is to go through Marin Transit and inform them the best places for the bus drivers to park, and the danger issues if they do not adhere.

Bret said that pruning the trees is the best course of action now to get the buses to move up when waiting to proceed to the White Hill parking lot. The low branches prevent Marin Transit buses from lining up closer to Glen Drive before proceeding to pick up students at the parking lot school loop. There are several untrimmed trees blocking the ability for buses to pull forward in the staging area. The limbs limit how the buses park and wait. This is why they park all the way back to Cascade Canyon School. Michael Rock of Fairfax Public Works will ask Fairfax town public works to work with Cascade Canyon Tennis association to trim limbs and prune the trees up higher.

The police department can't enforce not parking where the buses stage. However, if the buses do infringe upon the Sir Francis Drake crosswalk area, then they can talk with the bus drivers regarding safety issues.

Fairfax Bike Spine

John said funding has been approved. A third alternative route is being explored and they are waiting for engineering results. Routes include a route from downtown all the way to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and then Glen Drive. Markings are the first stage. A name and logo contest for the Fairfax Bike Spine is also being planned.

San Anselmo Public Works

Gerhard shared that they are moving forward and preparing for construction on Butterfield Road for a bike lane in the Woodside area where there is no sidewalk.

There is also paving and striping work underway in the Greenfield Avenue area. They are trying to increase parking in the Élan Fitness Club area. However, there was a recent public meeting to express concerns with the project. MCBC was present for the meeting.

Police Updates

Kevin shared that the San Anselmo police department is conducting bicyclist enforcement in May and issuing citations to cyclists that do not follow the rules of the road. Schools need to remind kids and parents, that you must obey the rules of the road, just like cars. Safety of bicyclists is the main concern. Bridget said riding bikes in a crosswalk is a problem.

The police department will be giving away free bike helmets and toys in Corte Madera at its town celebration on the 4th of July. They asked the group to help spread the word. They have hundreds of helmets thanks to an OTS grant. They will also be hosting a bicycle rodeo. Wendi suggested they work with SR2S on bike rodeos

Bridget thanked the police department for the Distracted Drivers campaign in April and said it was effective.

Our next meeting is scheduled for September 7 at 10:00 a.m. in Room #2 at the Ross Valley School District Office.