



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Transportation Authority of Marin
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Kentfield Task Force

Meeting Notes

June 1, 2011

Present (7)

Wendi Kallins – Program Director for Safe Routes to School; Laura Kelly –Volunteer Liaison for Safe Routes to School; Billy Cameron – Vice Principal at Bacich Elementary School; Amy Jones – Team Leader at Bacich; Paul Miller – Facilities Manager for Kentfield Schools; David Chellson – Deputy Sheriff for Marin County; Marnie Ganong – Bacich School parent volunteer; Heather McPhail –Bacich School parent.

Report back from neighborhood Captain progress

Six maps were created for the six neighborhoods surrounding Bacich with suggested routes for walkers/bikers. A neighborhood kickoff meeting for each neighborhood is being planned. Activities at the neighborhood gatherings will include identifying key issues for each neighborhood, informal neighbor surveys of current travel habits and how to best utilize Safe Routes to Schools' program offerings.

Fostering open conversations about green travel and safety issues is a primary goal of the gathering(s). The neighborhood captain will obtain e-mail contact as a way of primary communications between neighborhood families. The goal is to start and embed a neighborhood network for the long-term with families traveling the same routes to school.

Information packets for all families in the same neighborhood will be customized and developed. Additionally, a general packet for Back to School night with contact

information for the six neighborhoods will also be distributed. Wendi suggested creating a large map of the entire Bacich School district as well to include in the main packet. The master map would define district boundaries, with each of the six neighborhoods outlined, named and clearly shaded so a parent can easily identify their neighborhood.

All neighborhood maps will be published in the 2011-12-school directory. Getting parents to sign up for SchoolPoolMarin will also be part of the Back to School night outreach effort. Billy is working on a form for parents to approve to “opts in” to SchoolPool. This will allow the school to enter family addresses into the SchoolPool database and clearly identify neighborhoods.

It was shared that a parent who lives on Manor Road (located across Sir Francis Drake Boulevard from the Bacich entrance) recently submitted a complaint letter to Bacich School. The letter stated that the parent does not allow their child to walk to and from school due to dangerous crosswalk situation in front of the preschool parking lot. The preschool is located on the left side of the driveway to Bacich. The plaintive said she has witnessed multiple “near misses” of a car almost hitting a child due to poor driver behavior near the crosswalk.

Cars often turn around in the preschool parking lot if there is a long traffic line to the student drop-off section at the front of Bacich. Bacich drivers don't want to wait in a traffic jam line, so they instead turn around in the preschool parking lot to save time. The dangerous part is when drivers turn around in the crosswalk when young kids are trying to walk to school.

Paul said that better education is key. Large orange cones have been placed in the crosswalk area in the past to discourage drivers from turning around in this area. Dave mentioned that discouraging drivers from turning around may cause a further back up of cars on to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, which may be an even greater danger to the school community.

Paul suggested that enforcement at the crosswalk is needed and that having a crossing guard present is one solution. Amy agreed enforcement is needed. Wendi suggested a pull out fence to setup at peak drop-off and pick-up times. Cones are placed near the crosswalk sometimes, but only on high traffic days (e.g. Heritage Days). Amy said it would be interesting to see if having cones (and flags) out at the crosswalk every day would help raise the safety level for students on foot or bike.

Wendi said that the main goal is to slow down drivers. The other issue is who will put out the cones every morning ... the preschool or Bacich? Wendi also suggested creating

a 5th grade Safety Patrol to stand present at drop-off and pick-up peak times so parents get the message to slow down. The 5th graders could be enticed to be enforcers by making the safety job/patrol a position of authority.

Billy said that the parking lot is owned by the preschool and likes the idea of having cones every morning. He thinks it would be the responsibility of the preschool. Marnie also suggested getting a CHP officer assigned to the crosswalk. Dave will mention it to Chris. Paul cautioned that the CHP cannot be a designated crossing guard. Dave will mention it to Chris and talk with Chris about the dangerous crosswalk zone. It was noted that Chris has been doing an outstanding job of discouraging bad driver behavior in the Bacich school area. (Chris was not present for today's Task Force meeting.)

Amy offered to talk to the preschool about putting out the cones more frequently. There is no signage in the crosswalk area. That might be another addition in the future.

Marnie asked if we can eliminate the crosswalk? Billy said students will cross the street even if we do remove the crosswalk. Billy believes the cones will help direct the drivers/walkers. It might be even more dangerous not to have a crosswalk. It is the shortest route possible to school, so kids want to cross. Billy said that he will be present at the start of the school year to reinforce to parents to drive slow and not turn around in the crosswalk zone. Marnie asked why the preschool students can't use the path for a safer route? They can't due to the fact the gates are locked.

Green Ways to School and SchoolPool outreach materials

Wendi shared with the Task Force that SchoolPool database does have the capability for a parent to plug in their address, and then receive a list of the families in their neighborhood distance range but can't keep it within the neighborhood boundaries unless we can put in a drop down menu. Marnie summarized four crucial steps: Step 1 – Who is open to participating in SchoolPool? Step 2 – Identify which neighborhood zone you live in; Step 3 – Fine-tune the grey areas of the zone; Step 4 – Encourage SchoolPool registering.

Billy shared that Bacich School administration does not allow Bacich family names to be input into SchoolPool without getting approval from the family. Thus, the school is planning to send out an opt in or opt out form for SchoolPool. Heather said SchoolPoolMarin doesn't seem helpful if not all Bacich families are in the database. It was suggested that Bacich create a customized database of the six neighborhoods and include all families in the school. Wendi said that which database system is used doesn't matter, it's the fact that Bacich is tangibly identifying and grouping neighborhoods, which is important.

Marnie shared that in the short term and long term, neighborhood communications is key. The Captain is the communicator about establishing green travel options to and from school. Furthermore, the neighborhood captain is on the forefront in terms of encouraging sign-ups for SchoolPool.

Wendi added that SchoolPool is not just carpooling. It's about choosing a green way to school together with members of your neighborhood – bike, walk, carpool or bus. 'SchoolPooling' is taking a way to school with other people.

Dave suggested that with high gas prices, promoting how much money is being saved in gas per year is another way to promote green travel. Wendi shared information about Save-A-Gallon technology being implemented in one of our public schools.

Next Steps

Wendi will investigate the costs of SchoolPool identifying your neighborhood once you register. A drop down of neighborhoods for every school was mentioned as an ideal situation.

Wendi will customize the SchoolPoolMarin.org marketing flyer for Bacich.

Wendi will see if possibly the MTC grant can be used for enhancing the SchoolPool website.

Our next Task Force Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 20th at 10:00 am at the Bacich Library.

