



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Kentfield School District
Safe Routes to School Taskforce
ZOOM Meeting Notes
July 28, 2020

Attendance:

Beth Rhodes - College of Marin Communications Director, Anne Petersen- Kenfield Planning Advisory Board, Wendi Kallins- Safe Routes to Schools, Gwen Froh- Program Director- Safe Routes to School, Peggy Clark- Safe Routes to Schools, Sandy Goldman- Friends of Corte Madera Creek Committee, Nancy Vernon- Aide to Kate Rice, John Neville- Traffic Engineer County of Marin, Melanie Wollenweber- Parent Kent Middle School, Bree Eaton- Team Leader Bacich School, Paul Miller - School District Director of Maintenance and Facilities, Carey Lando County of Marin Senior Transportation Planner, Glenn Newcomer- CHP Officer, David Parisi- Parisi Assoc., Allison Crawford - Parent Bacich School, Phillip Buckley- County of Marin Engineer.

Tanya Vernitsky is the SR2S Team Leader for Bachih School. She did not attend this meeting.

This special summer meeting was scheduled before the start of the school year to address issues and plan for if/when schools reopen in the fall of 2020. All the school districts are working very hard to determine how the next school year will be structured. When schools do reopen students will still need to have safe and supported travel options. SR2S is working with each district to prepare for COVID health protocols for walking and biking to school.

The Marin County Office of Education has also been meeting with the bus service. There are many unknowns for how the bus services can resume and maintain physical distancing with the students. The districts are considering staggered start and possibly end times for the schools. Students accessing campus will be taking more time; it will not take as much time at the end of the day

Developing Transportation Plans

Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) team has been working with and attending meetings county wide. Information from NACTO and MTC are resources used to develop guidelines to establish the best protocols.

If the districts' bus service does not resume SR2S will still be planning for a robust walking and biking program. Either way the possibility of more families driving students will have a negative impact on safe transportation options for students. If the number of vehicles increases significantly traffic issues will have a negative impact on the neighborhoods too.

Toolkit presentation

[COVID Back to School Toolkit](#) PowerPoint Presentation

Please view this presentation used during the Zoom meeting. Notes/comments will refer to the powerpoint slide title.

Planning for the Fall - 3 Objectives- slide

A transportation committee needs to be created for each school or district to ensure space and park and walk locations are identified in advance. Volunteer resources are SR2S Team Leaders, community neighbors, district facilities staff, and possibly volunteers with Friend of Corte Madera Creek. SR2S staff will be available to develop an encouragement plan.

Tools to Consider- slide

Street Adaptations are all about finding space on roadway networks that lead to schools to provide additional space for walking and biking while physical distancing.

Sidewalk Extensions- slide

Several of these options are similar; they can support different purposes. Resources such as cones are used to convert space for pedestrians. The preferred roadways are narrow or missing sidewalks. School routes with sidewalks should be prioritized; especially the routes used by Park & Walk families.

Both schools in the Kentfield School District have driveways leading directly to the campus.

Bike and Roll Lanes- slide

These provide dedicated space for students to travel safely on bike routes that are

separated from vehicles. Focus on roadways that have a high volume of students cycling that do not have bike lanes. Temporarily dedicating vehicle parking or a roadway lane for students to ride with space. Sir Frances Drake Blvd is a feeder road and may be a location to consider. Parking spaces were removed during a previous construction project. The multi-use paths currently used by students are a great advantage.

Slow Street- slide

These options may be of interest to the McAllister community. They are used on quiet residential streets that are closed off to through traffic; allowing access for emergency and local vehicles. They are used for students walking and biking and discourage cut through traffic and are used where drivers can find an alternate route.

One-Way Traffic Flow- slide

This type of facility has been a discussion for sometime now for this task force. Traffic would be directed to one direction only; good for roadways leading directly into a school campus. Good options for a street that will also include a bike way or if a school is making use of pick-up/drop-off for drivers.

Additional Engineering Tools-slide

The information on this slide is not: temporary, quick build or used in pop-up scenarios. They are engineering tools that may be considered.

- Pedestrian recall settings eliminate the need at many intersections for the pedestrian to have to push a button to activate the crossing signal. They are now pre-set to display the “walk” symbol.
- Signal timing for active transportation (urban areas) They are used on city corridors with a high volume of cyclists to manage traffic lights so that they change for bicycle speed.
- Speed Management/Traffic Calming
Used to slow traffic to make a roadway safer for all road users including students traveling to school.

Pop-Up Considerations- slide

Traffic separation can help prevent children from spilling into a roadway with vehicles. Nationally agencies are using forgiving resources that are not steel or heavy, yet a barrier that will not damage vehicles and yet protect other users. Resources used to separate traffic from students are: sandwich boards, cones and planters (long term pop-up use).

Predictably is very important. Do not create a bike way going against the flow of road

traffic. Cyclists should ride with the flow of vehicle traffic. Establishing a complete suggested route network that leads directly to the school(s) from the multi-use path is recommended.

Bike Parking- slide

Schools are looking at using multiple entrances to reduce the number of students at any one particular entrance. Some schools are getting additional racks or spreading out the ones they have on campus. The town may be a resource for additional temporary racks. If racks are not available, consider letting students lock bikes to campus fences.

Also consider how students will park bikes; distancing and orderly and when/how the racks will be sanitized. Using signs directing students to the racks. Plan for bike rack locations to be health check locations too if the school is conducting them on campus.

Park and Walk- slide (Park & Drop for upper grade level students)

During this particular time Safe Routes to Schools is focused on encouraging students to walk and bike when they can. Transportation equity is a concern to be addressed. Students that rely on bus service, may be able to make use of other transportation modes such as walking or biking. Park and walk locations could be an option for families with young children and cohort carpools that live a good distance from a school.

Park & Walk- Location Ideas (advance permission is required from property owners)

- Link to [Kentfield Schools Suggested Route Maps](#). Some locations have been identified.
- Libraries
- Businesses/ shopping centers that may not be open during school hours or during COVID protocols.
- Neighborhoods where only safe and legal driving and parking is available.

Loma Verde Elementary School piloted a Park and Walk campaign last year. School bound traffic was diverted away from the campus drop-off zones. This reduced the number of vehicles that were back-up into the roadway to the school.

The program was a huge success On average 160 vehicles were driven onto campus during drop off; this was reduced to 80 vehicles during and after the campaign. Lawn signs were used to identify suggested parking locations in neighborhoods. The Department of Public works supported SR2S by making sure there were no unintended consequences for the locations that were identified for parking.

A number of years ago Mill Valley Middle School parent volunteers identified a number of “drop & walk” locations. This school has hundreds of students walking and rolling to school annually. This practice has changed behaviors.

The Office of Education is stating they do not want vehicle traffic and students gathering at the front of a school during COVID 19. Most physical activities during school and after will be limited. Walking, biking and scooter /rolling are forms of exercise/transportation that are beneficial to promoting good health. If the classroom settings are more structured, walking and rolling will also help the students in this new classroom environment.

The Office of Education has not determined the process for student health screenings as of this meeting. It is to be determined if they will be conducted on campus or before students leave for school each day. If they are to be conducted in person, Park & Walk locations could be evaluation areas if resources were available.

PedPods and Pedal Pods- slide

These are alternatives to a “walking school bus”. If/when schools identify cohorts for classroom needs; these cohorts could also meet up to walk/roll to school while maintaining physical distance. These could be 2-3 families not to exceed groups of 6 students/adults traveling to school together. Pod options: small social bubbles some families are forming outside of school or classroom cohorts.

A recommendation was made for families that use “Pods” to obtain permission in advance if a student arrives at school and is determined to be ill that a non-family member can take the student home.

Encouragement for Active Travel- slide

Safe Routes staff are here to support efforts to maintain active travel to school. A [Social Distancing Tips for Walking and Rolling](#) is available in English and Spanish. Cycling has increased nationally during this time. SR2S on-line education curriculum is a resource to continue these healthy practices. Health professionals have stated COVID is less dangerous outdoors while physically distancing.

Safe Routes Education and Encouragement Programs

SR2S staff are looking at encouragement programs/challenges without campus welcome tables; this does not mean walking and rolling will not be promoted. Contest cards will be handed out to students in participating schools to track how they get to school. This will be available when campuses reopen.

Safe Routes to Schools now has [Remote Learning](#) resources for all “classroom” curriculum on-line for grades 1-8th grades in English and Spanish. These lessons were distributed to all the schools in the county this past spring. These will be prompted in the fall too.

[Savvy Family Cycling with Youth](#) is a resource for parents to use when teaching their children. The lesson provides tools to evaluate when a child is ready and how to ride on the roadway together. An example is parents/adults are suggested to ride behind students to keep an eye out vs. in front of them where they cannot see behaviors.

Summer Bike Week During the spring SR2S hosted a Bike Week for middle school students. Over 500 students participated. Now there are two Summer Bike Weeks contests for elementary and middle school age students.; 5 days of fun and education activities; participants can win ice cream for their family.

[Family Bike Week](#)- elementary age

[Bike Week](#) - middle school age Volunteers were asked to share these resources on their local NextDoor network. SR2S would also welcome support to continue promoting these resources at the schools.

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Traffic Committee - Steps to Take- slide

SR2S will be developing a Traffic Committee Guide in the fall.

Thank you to the following people willing to volunteer: Nancy Vernon- offered to convey the volunteers, Melanie Wollenweber, Bree Eaton, Anne Petersen, Allison Crawford and Paul Miller. Beth Rhodes can be a resource.

Safe Routes to Schools does not have the resources to work with every school in the county. We are asking volunteers to create a temporary committee to take the necessary steps. Volunteers are needed to start planning even without having all the information from the county/school district. Advance communications with the DPW will help to identify what could or cannot work for a pop-up.

Pop-up locations must be approved by the County Dept of Public Works (DPW) in advance. The DPW must sign-off and potentially issue an encroachment permit. [The County of Marin Encroachment application process.](#) Communicate with neighbors of the school; learn if there are objections in advance to avoid challenges.

One option is to install a pop-up that would remain in place throughout the school year; this would be managed by the DPW. Focus should be on locations immediately adjacent to the entrance to the school.

Most pop-up resources (sandwich boards and cones) are very temporary; they are set up before the start/end of a school day. These types of pop-ups are not managed by the DPW.

Volunteers could also put out supplies if approved through an encroachment permit and instructed by public works in advance. One school district suggested reaching out to the school principals, asking them to inquire with the PTA to take the lead. BPAC volunteers may also be available. All school districts have limited resources especially during this time; community support is needed. Planning will require site specific needs be identified as the neighborhoods have different challenges to consider.

Discussion

The County of Marin with the efforts of John Neville obtained a Transportation Authority of Marin grant to be used for schools in the county jurisdiction specifically for “pop-up” facilities. The \$20,000 grant funds will be used for low cost treatments (simple) to help fund all the county schools that request support. If traffic patterns or ADA issues are involved at pop-up may not be funded due to the complexity and cost.

County traffic engineers are attending all the summer SR2S Task Force meetings to get an understanding for what the communities need. Then they can plan ahead and evaluate their resources and needs for cones, signs, display boards etc. A suggestion was made to ask for supplies from construction companies or rental companies.

Sir Frances Drake Project

The project started several weeks before this meeting date. The information website is [UpGrade The Drake](#). Currently the Marin Municipal Water District work is underway; this was scheduled in partnership with the Drake project. The work will be moving west and is scheduled 3:00pm to midnight when there is less traffic. They do recognize this can be disruptive to neighbors. The staging area is the gravel lot at COM. The project is expected to go for 1.5 years.

The County is staying in touch with school administrators; when on campus classes resume the county will be providing more specific updates. The timing of the work in front of Bacich was not available during this meeting. A request was made on the status of the crosswalks at Wolfgrade and Laurel Grove and will they be painted before school

resumes (temporarily until final paving is scheduled). The website does provide a project schedule.

A recommendation was made for the Kentfield Traffic Committee to be briefed on this project and others that are underway near the schools. The construction will be moving up and down the corridor. During normal times the county would be providing extensive messaging regarding the status of the project. It will be very important to keep up on this project and the project at College of Marin.

College of Marin Update (COM)

Construction is underway and trucks are moving in/out of the area daily. The pedestrian signals are very important and need to stay in use. The option to make them automatic or pedestrian activated (push at button) still needs to be evaluated.

There are “flaggers” warning people and drivers as trucks move about. It has been observed that cyclists are moving faster than advised. COM’s fall semester is online with the exception of a few classes meeting in person. They are trying to limit any activity on campus; they would consider talking about using specific parking areas for “park & walk” locations. Parking lot #7 is being used for construction staging until the end of September. Parking lot #13 is also being used with trucks coming and going.

Concern was expressed for the pedestrian activated light at the multi-use path. Years ago when the light was installed the community was told a red stop light vs the existing flashing yellow light on College Ave. was not permitted given the proximity to Drake Blvd.

The County of Marin has discussed conducting a study of College Ave once the Drake Blvd project is completed. This will be added to an issues list for the future review.

COM’s Director of Operations is meeting with the school district to discuss the possibility of Kent Middle School students using classrooms at COM if they resume classes before COM students/facility return. Nothing has been finalized as of this meeting date.

[Safe Routes to Schools- Social Distancing](#) flyer is a resource for schools and families to use to practice distancing when traveling to/from school. It is an on-line tool and will be updated regularly. SR2S is considering options for rewarding (encouraging) students that travel in small groups “pods” and practice all the protocols required by their school.

Crossing Guards

The program managers are tracking announcements made by the school districts. Currently guards are scheduled for 2 hour days (1hr in the morning and 1 hr in the afternoon). They are aware of the proposed staggered schedules. An additional half hour may be available for each shift. If more time is needed for guards, this could influence the number of guard positions county wide. The more unified planning county wide will help the crossing guard program plan. Guards are needed on Drake Blvd.

A recommendation was made for a Park and Walk location for Bacich School. Limit the number of families using the east end of McAllister. Suggest they use the west end and make a loop around Berens Drive; dropping off on Berens and not even get close to the school. This could minimize congestion around Acacia and McAllister. Kent students do walk in this area; drivers would need to be very aware if changes are approved.

[Central Marin Neighborhood Response Group \(NRG\) Program.](#) (Link to informational hand out)

Please contact Nancy Vernon, Aide to District 2 Supervisor Katie Rice for more information: nvernon@marincounty.org

Nancy was approached by the Director of this group to see if there was interest in Kentfield forming a group. The NRGs are volunteer, grassroots-led neighborhood groups in Larkspur, Corte Madera and Greenbrae that prepare as a community for three disaster scenarios (major earthquake/flood, wildfire evacuation, PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoffs). They are focused, organized at getting their neighborhood ready for emergencies.

During emergencies First Responders cannot get to every area immediately. The purpose behind an NRG is to be self-sufficient. They are structured very much like Safe Routes to School Block Captains. Wendi is an NRG leader in her community.

Next Zoom meeting

Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 9:00am