

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

Kentfield Task Force Meeting Notes- Jan. 15, 2014

Attendees: Wendi Kallins- Director Safe Routes to School, Peggy Clark- Safe Routes to Schools, Marnie Ganong- Neighborhood Captain, Carey Lando-County DPW, Heather McPhail Sridhran- Team Leader, Dan Ruiz- CHP, Glenn Newcomer- Police Officer, Nancy Vernon Aide/Katie Rice, Domenick Yazzolino- MC Sheriff, Katie Ward- Acting VP Bacich

School Updates

Bacich School- Heather reported that the school's SR2S programs are going well. Bacich conducted IWalk Day in October and a Holiday Green Day on Dec 20th. There is a great rhythm at the school for traveling green. Both events were well supported due to the support of local business providing wonderful treats for the students. It was very effective having the requested donations confirmed in the summer. The quality of the items was superior and abundant with delicious coco, fresh fruits and pastries provided by Woodlands Market. Law Enforcement supported both events, with officers and the Captain attending.

Parents had expressed concern for students using the crosswalk near the Ross Valley Preschool- a big sandwich board posting "no parking" and directional arrows indicating the safe route to cross the parking lot have been very useful.

The Student Green Team is conducting the scanning every Wednesday. Kent is also conducting the scanning, at least once a month with possible random days. There is a consistent 100 students that participate each scan day. The wrist bands were a hit with students; some collecting as many as they can. The 5th and 6th graders are on board; the green approach is still "cool" with this grade level. The older students are not consistently engaged. SR2S is seeking ways to get the 7th and 8th grade students more engaged.

There are currently 20 Neighborhood Captains including a new parent from the Greenbrae apartments. English is her 2nd language; therefore her support in reaching the Hispanic community is very beneficial. The captains are looking at the area by Bon Aire, near the hospital. There are several tricky crossings that need to be on the committee's radar.

Marnie- the Neighborhood Captains communications are great; the school is consistent with posting updates. They are utilizing Next Door and the school bulletin to get the word out.

Kent Middle School Wendi reported at Kent 30 students signed up for the green team program. The teacher at Kent said there will be a focus on transportation this school year. These middle school students presented an assembly at the Youth Summit this past fall. The performance was very well presented and received. The summit was primarily attended by high schools students. [ACE Assembly](#) is an organization that presents assemblies to high schools. They had a representative at the Summit. He was so impressed he inquired with Gwen if the Kent students could present for ACE in the future.

Report on Surveys

Bacich Survey- Since the Fall of 2009 there has been a 6% shift/increase in the number of students cycling to school with a reduction of 13 metric tons of CO₂. Between the fall and spring surveys each year the numbers tend to fall off. The theory is students' start the school year off walking and biking because they are coming off the summer break; once winter sets in fewer students are engaged. Bike to School Day (May 8, 2014) offers a good opportunity to make a push back to bicycling.

Kent Survey- Despite the good work of the Green Team the 7th and 8th grade students are not participating. There is a core group of student participating; however this does not translate out to the rest of the school. The number of students walking has seen a huge increase along with a fluctuation in carpool numbers. One way to reach all 6th grade students through our bike safety classes but unfortunately Kent is the only school that does not allow SR2S to present our curriculum to students during PE. The afterschool program only reaches a fraction of the students. SR2S can also offer curriculum that meets Science standards. Class options are "Green House Gas Effect". This is an excellent class to reach 8th grade students and impact their perspective for traveling green.

The spring surveys were conducted in April for 2013. They will be conducted the week of May 12 in 2014. Traditionally the spring survey does not have a high rate of class rooms completing them. The schools have many things going on in the spring that distract them from completing the survey.

Marnie suggested the survey results be published for the school population to see.

Brookside School Surveys reported a 19 % jump in green trips. Now that Brookside is a K-5 school and more than ½ of the students live nearby the school this is not a surprise. The principal at Brookside (formally assistant principal at Bacich) is a huge supporter of the SR2S program and he has obtained full buy in from the school administration and teachers. This is combined with a very active SR2S Team Leader - Debra Merten similar to Bacich's fabulous team leader Heather McPhail Sridhran.

These efforts at Bacich and Brookside are excellent and these schools should not be compared. They have very different challenges regarding traffic and road conditions surrounding the schools.

Marnie- It would be nice to see a survey break down by neighborhoods to identify the changes. She inquired if a survey could be conducted.

Wendi suggested a simple way to view results would be to post a map at school. Identify neighborhoods by specific colors. Student post a sticker identifying their neighborhood. This would provide a quick visual of how many students/families are participating per neighborhood. Another option would be to conducting a parent survey to collect information on what the parents are experiencing.

Wendi- The parent survey would need to be updated. She will send out the survey from last time to Heather and Marnie. However she does urge Bacich to make use of the neighborhood map. This is an effective way to get the students involved and a great display to have for all to see at the school.

Katie commented- The map would be a great opportunity to see results now and a helpful reminder of their efforts to walk, cycle and carpool. This will encourage the kids to get the message to their parents.

School Policy- *see attached hand out*

Wendi- Presented a copy of the Larkspur- Corte Madera school District policy for SR2S as an example for the Ross District. The goal of the SR2S policy is to institutionalize the SR2S program in all district schools. Each year roles and people change and this policy ensure the program stays active. The districts who currently have incorporated this policy are Larkspur, Ross Valley, Mill Valley and Novato. The content/language is a little different for each district. In some districts the School Board and/or the Superintendent defined the content of the policy.

Wendi will send Heather the other districts policies. The National SR2S Partnership site has templates.

Updates from County work on Issues

Heather and Carrie reported:

Item 1. Ross Valley Preschool. School is requesting sandwich boards be posted indicating authorized parking and safe walking routes. The school wants to add in bear prints on the path way from the bridge to entrance to the school. They are currently waiting on the sign off from the county and the parks. This is a small project and will encourage kids to use the creek side path. Unfortunately this was not completed last fall but it is in the works.

Katie suggested once the faculties are completed the school include a walk of the route(s) during the start of the school year orientation. This is an opportunity for all the students to physically see and walk the suggested routes and inform their parents of the best routes. It would also include pointing out the area where students should be dropped off for school.

Item 2. Wolf Grade- Parents have contacted the school and the county about vehicle drivers not yielding to students crossing the street. Drivers get impatient and honk to complete their right turn. Bacich is requesting a crossing guard. The request is under review.

Item 3 Wolf Canyon Rd. Reports that vehicles have crossed over the curb onto the sidewalk. There has been a request for sidewalk barriers. The roads asphalt is in poor condition and it is not a true curb. The county is aware of the request and is reviewing the reports and factors causing vehicle drivers to cross onto the sidewalk. There are many considerations and improvements will be made. Once the review is completed the county will report back to the Bacich SR2S committee in 4-6 weeks.

Nancy asked what happens when the county receives such requests from the community. Carrie said it depends on who is reporting the problem.

Issues of Acacia McAllister/Behrens

McAllister Ave & Acacia Ave- There was an incident with a student being hit by a driver during a rushed/late to school drop off. The student was not injured and this incident has heightened awareness of neighbors and parents of the dangers at this intersection.

Nancy commented- This is a dangerous intersection during drop off and parents of the school need to be made aware of the issues. The CHP did investigate the incident with the child; the student dashed out into the road not seeing the approaching vehicle and the vehicle driver did not see the student as he was making a wide turn. There were also parked vehicles that obstructed the child and the driver from seeing each other.

Katie - This area near Bacich was not designed to meet the current capacity of the school. It is time to review this intersection. The school does have staggered start times with Kent in the morning and staggered pick-up times.

Officer Ruiz- Recommends the school consider different options to reduce the vehicle traffic during drop-off: staggering start times of school for various grade levels. Driving behaviors must change – Acacia road has gotten very bad over the years. Officers are more present at McAllister and Stadium and this has influenced behavior.

Carrie- Agrees this area is reaching a critical point. There is not a lot that can be done because of the width of the road way. Suggest for the short term that the school addresses parent and kid behaviors. Remind parents they are putting their own kids at risk. The County does have McAllister on their radar. There is a proposal to post no parking signs where the dirt path meets the road. They are hoping the signs will be posted in February or March of this year.

Marne - (2 comments) 1. Acacia road is defined on the Green Way to School map as a road for pedestrians not vehicles during school. This came from the neighborhood captions. McAllister is the green way to drive/carpool. Does this need to be re-thought? 2. When McAllister is planned to be improved how much of the area will the County look at? It is important the redesign considerations extend all the way to the front door of the school (the school property). If the school does not have the funding could that cause a bottleneck in the overall plan? The plans need to include the County property to the schools front door.

Carrie- Situations like this do occur with projects of this scale usually completed in phases along with a rating assigned to the issues to determine how they will be prioritized. The County has a policy to include pedestrian and bike needs. When funds are limited the best case scenarios is considered.

Parking Near Marin Catholic – In December the school board voted and made announcements that parking on Sir Frances Drake Blvd would be limited to 4 hours. Some tickets were issued as students did not get the notices.

CHP reported speeding is still a problem; the officers are working to stay visible on Drake. They are surprised how good drivers have gotten on Wolf Grade. Officers have not been issuing tickets as they thought would have been the case. The school is doing a great job of placing directional cones. Drivers exiting the school must look left as well as right when leave the school.

Set next meeting

Next meeting date: April 30th at 9:00am. A week before Bike to School Day