



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Ross Valley Task Force Meeting Notes for Safe Routes to Schools May 6, 2011

Present (11)

Wendi Kallins – Program Director for Safe Routes to Schools; Laura Kelly – Volunteer Liaison for Safe Routes to Schools; Bret Joyner – Director of Maintenance and Operations for Ross Valley District; Sean Condry – Assistant Public Works Director for San Anselmo; Jeff Kroot – San Anselmo Town Council; Robert French – San Anselmo Police Department; Dave Gallegioni – Deputy Sheriff; Renee Goddard – Team Leader for Manor School; Ted Fehlhaber – Team Leader for Wade Thomas; Jen Grenier – Team Leader for Brookside Upper School; Meghan McCarthy – Team Leader for Brookside Lower School; Kathy McLeod – Wheelscape.

Brookside Lower Elementary School Recommendations for Parking Area Improvements

Wendi distributed hard copies of engineering recommendations for the front and back parking lot drop-off areas for Brookside Lower Campus. Bret provided everyone with a quick recap of the walkabout, which was conducted last year; the walkabout clearly defined the traffic flow and pedestrian issues for the Butterfield front entrance to the school, and the drop-off area on the backside of the campus.

1. Front parking lot at 116 Butterfield school entrance

The front parking lot is currently both an entrance and an exit. The exit is located at a stop sign that is not very visible. Many parents opt to park along the fence, which causes chaos. The proposal to have two entrances at 116 Butterfield was well received by the Task Force. The proposal for new angles for auto parking spaces was also well received by everyone. The new parking layout would include 60 degree angled parking for maximum efficiency and safety.

Meghan shared that she really likes the way the plan encourages students to walk around the parking lot perimeter to the school entrance. The striped walkway, which currently exists, would be eliminated. The recommendations provide a 6' continuous, protected walkway around the parking lot. Wendi talked about the costs of pathways vs. a

sidewalk. Sidewalks are more expensive because of the curb installation. However, terrain often determines if a sidewalk or pathway is a better option. Sean mentioned that a less expensive way to go is to use thermoplastic.

2. Back parking lot at Brookside Lower

Brett talked about how the challenges for the back entrance are more complicated and that a timeline of 3-4 years is a realistic goal. The portable multipurpose room will need to be torn down. Cars park sideways no matter what you do. This summer new lines will be painted for the existing parking spot. Overall, it's a complicated area so a solution will be expensive.

Wendi strongly recommended applying for funding and mentioned that right now there is a call for projects for CalTrans and recommended applying for a grant. The deadline to submit a grant application package for Cycle 3 federal funds is July 15, 2011. There is no local match required. \$1,00,000,000 is the maximum amount that can be requested for an infrastructure project, and \$500,0000 for a non-infrastructure project. The federal money is channeled to us through CalTrans. Wendi prompted that now is the time to take care of lingering infrastructure projects and apply.

Meghan mentioned that regardless of the portable multipurpose room, there are things we can do now to improve the troubling situation on the backside of the school. Brett said he is meeting with Marci (Principal) and the FTC next week and welcomes Meghan to attend and provide input.

Renee asked if CalTrans funds community projects. Wendi said yes, but engineering drawings must be submitted now. Renee asked who is the contact at Fairfax Public Works until the vacant director position is filled. Wendi said Wayne Bush is the person for Renee to contact regarding public works input. Renee said she doesn't think it's possible before the July 15th applications deadline for the Fairfax Public Works department to apply for anything. Wendi said that there will be additional funding available through other sources, local, regional and state even if the Federal program is held up.

It was noted that Brookside Lower had no improvements mentioned for Alameda located on the backside of the school field. Sean said Alameda is not a maintained town road, but that it would be beneficial to bring the quality of the road up to town standards. Sean said that there has been some recent pothole work completed on Alameda. San Anselmo unfortunately cannot assist with solutions for Alameda due to the fact that it is not a town maintained road.

Other school updates:

Sean shared that a SafePath project is underway for Butterfield between Carlson and Woodside. A sidewalk will be installed in the last quarter of 2011/early 2012.

Specifications for Wade Thomas school infrastructure improvements are being sent to CalTrans for final approval. Bids will be accepted in July. New sidewalks are a big part of the bid, as well as some work on Greenfield Avenue.

Jen asked Sean about new bike lanes for the Butterfield/Upper Brookside school area. Sean said that bike lanes could only be installed within the town limits. However, if extra funding is received, then they can extend the town bike lanes in the Upper Brookside area, but would need to seek approval from the county.

Renee shared that Manor School has had funding secured for a long time to finish the church area sidewalk. The chance of losing the funding is great. Unfortunately, the town of Fairfax has undergone a turnover of three public works directors in the past few years, which makes the project difficult to complete. She asked what can be done to push the project through and is frustrated. The sidewalk needs to be completed as soon as possible for safety reasons. Wendi recommends contacting Wayne Bush and John Reed to make it a priority.

Wendi shared that crossing guards will remain in place for Fairfax and San Anselmo for the upcoming school year to reinforce safety. The crossing guards are funded by TAM. Team Leaders shared with all that the crossing guards are highly valued and appreciated by the school community.

Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Tamal Intersection

The intersection of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Tamal Avenue is a dangerous intersection that needs attention. Sean said this project is a priority on the town's list. 40 feet offset the two streets, however, they are timed with the same traffic light. The problem is a lack of understanding regarding which driver has the right away, but the real safety issue is for bikers and walkers. A biker walking his bike across the intersection was recently hit. Former public works director, Steve Myter, filed a report.

The Traffic Safety committee has assessed the area. Three solutions are being considered: 1) A quick and inexpensive solution is to install Yield signs that say yield to pedestrians/No right turn 2) Phased approach, SFD would have one light, Tamal would have another 3) Install a completely new crosswalk that goes straight across the intersection from the bus stop. One intersection, delete the other two. This option is expensive and estimated at \$40,000, but the new crosswalk would allow for left turns only. And when a car makes a right turn, there would be no pedestrian in a crosswalk. Wendi said if you want to bundle this with the federal grant application, then don't mention the High School area, just Brookside. The Federal program does not fund High Schools.

Another project in the works is a guardrail on the south side of Sir Francis Drake, from Red Hill Shopping Center to Butterfield. It will be a cable guardrail system with heavy posts to keep cars out. The posts are installed into the sidewalk.

Jen shared that Upper Brookside is still having meetings to address the traffic congestions issues the school is facing due to increased enrollment. The possibility of starting school 20 minutes later school for Upper Brookside has been proposed. They are looking at staggering release times which is done at many other schools, and Bret added that Tracy Smith had brought it up to the staff at the district office.

A yellow school bus is being explored for one neighborhood. The bus would run from Safeway and Java Hut. Bret is getting a quote for the bus, but it might be cost prohibitive. Wendi said the insurance costs are highly expensive.

Enrollment for Brookside is again increasing from 397 to 440 students projected for next year. Encouraging Kindergarten carpools that stay in place for the long term was suggested.

Go for the Green Contest percentage

Wendi shared that the Green Ways to Schools results for our Go for the Green contest are now posted on the website, as well as the winning class for each school. Wendi shared the details of some of the results for Ross Valley schools with the Task Force.

Wendi also handed out a flyer about creating a Safe Routes to Schools team at all schools. The goal is to institutionalize the program via a dedicated team of parents and staff.

Afterschool trip matching now being offered for SchoolPoolMarin.org

Wendi shared that SchoolPoolMarin.org is now offering online trip sharing for afterschool activities. The TripShare system provides a match list via e-mail of other interested parents whose children participate in the same activities after school. Registering is free and easy. Parents contact each other to discuss and arrange carpooling, walking or biking.

Wheelscape Bike Club (After School)

Kathy shared information about a new program she created called *Wheelscape* which is now offering after school bike classes to teach children how to safely ride their route to school from their neighborhood. The student/teacher ratio is 6 to 1; instructors teach children skills and rules of safety while they encourage endurance and students to become confident cyclists. The fee is \$75 per session, for a 4-week session, or \$65 for Marin County Bicycle Coalition members. Fees include training materials, snacks and water. There is an additional \$20 charge for t-shirts. For more information, go to www.wheelscape.com

Our next Task Force meeting is scheduled for September 9th at 10:00 at the Ross Valley School District Office.

