



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



**Mill Valley Safe Routes to Schools Task Force  
Meeting Notes  
Special Mapping Workshop  
Thursday November 21, 2019**

**Attendees:** David Hoffman- Parisi Engineering, Sarah Adams- Edna Maguire Parent, Vanessa Justice- Park School Parent, Beth Cherry- Tam High PTA, Kevin Cuffe- Tam High Parent, Sarah Estes- Smith- Aide to Kate Sears, Amanda Finlaw- Mill Valley School District, Gwen Froh- Safe Routes to School Director, Lisa Lund- Strawberry Point- Parent, Des McKissock-Marin Horizon School, Kathy McLeod- Crossing Guard Supervisor, Stephanie Moulton-Peters- City of Mill Valley Councilmember, Brian Schwarz- Tam Valley Parent, John McAteer- Tam Valley Parent, Steve Oldknow-Tam Valley Parent, Liz Moriarty- Edna Maguire Parent, Wendi Kallins- Safe Routes to Schools, Peggy Clark- Safe Routes to Schools

This meeting was scheduled to focus on collecting feedback and comments on the school maps. Several agenda items were addressed. There will be a meeting in January.

### **Green Sneaker Challenge**

This challenge was programmed for the start of the school year to develop awareness and participation for Walking & Rolling. The challenge is available to all schools to host when they prefer.

Edna Maguire conducted the challenge in September; it was good timing. The enthusiasm level was high. The volunteers plan to host another SR2S contest in the spring of 2020.

Tam Valley hosted International Walk to School Day. The school's Team Leader was not present at this meeting to provide a full report. Attending parents said it seemed like a high percentage of the school participated.

### **Yellow Bus**

There is a new stop at Montford for several new bus riders. Outreach is needed to inform the school community of the new stop and about the service in general. The route to Edna Maguire is full in the AM, the number of riders for the PM is high; not full. It remains a challenge to fill the buses due to after school activities. The kindergarten students cannot use the bus in the PM

because they are dismissed earlier. There has been no significant change to the bus service the past 3 years.

The School District did invest in a mapping software to assist with identifying where students live and what options they would have to travel to/from school.

There has been some interest expressed from Tam Valley parents whose students go to Strawberry and Edna Maguire schools. The Tiburon School District posted electronic signs promoting the Yellow Bus and how to purchase tickets at the start of the school year.

The Tam High School District is in talks about changing the bell schedule; later start time in the AM. How this will impact traffic is included in the talks.

Stephanie will be meeting with the School District Superintendent in late November and then a meeting with parents supporting the bus program will be scheduled.

### **Funding**

The 2019 funded projects for Mill Valley include:

- East Blithdale Bicycle Improvements
- Throckmorton Avenue and Olive Avenue Intersection Improvement Project

TAM funding includes the repaving of the multi-use path between Sausalito and Mill Valley that was not completed in the first project. This project is scheduled for the summer of 2020.

Mill Valley will be working with Caltrans to get a lane on the freeway overpass. Caltrans is working on many projects and the ramps will be addressed one at a time. This will encourage the expert riders to use the roadways vs. the multi-use paths. Mill Valley will continue to focus on needed projects and identify options for future funding.

### **Winter Planning**

Safe Routes to Schools will be providing messages to encourage students to continue to walk when they can. Make use of umbrellas; “make it fun” “get out your umbrella days”. Students respond to positive messaging and it can change behavior.

Carpooling continues to be a great resource to reducing traffic near schools. Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) has learned that on-line apps are not effective. The schools that have had the highest participation in carpooling have parent volunteer(s) lead the effort by matching up families from specific neighborhoods.

The process involves the school distributing forms to collect contact information and addresses; volunteer parents organize them by neighborhood. If a school has a mapping program, that is

very helpful and helps reduce the manual entering. This process takes time at the start of a school year and then it is done, until the following year.

Keith would like to see Tam High increase the number of students that carpool. Understanding that seniors are the age group that could carpool if their driver license was so designated. SR2S has identified that students usually determine who they want to carpool with. This could have started with the parent's carpool in elementary/middle school and continued into high school.

Redwood High Schools permit program for carpooling has been very successful. The carpool students can arrive somewhat later as they can just pull into a parking spot. Marin Academy also has a good program and have been open to sharing details with schools.

### **Tam Valley Issues**

Attending school parents expressed concerns on the lack of infrastructure of cycling routes to Tam Valley School. Many incoming kindergarten parents are cycling with their children and do not feel it is safe. They have experienced and witnessed several "close calls". Due to the lack of a safe routes to school they feel it is a challenge to encourage more parents to ride with their children and do not feel they could let their children cycle to school - even when of age and skill level - without them.

Many understand the conditions of the roads (narrow) can limit infrastructure options; however, they have suggestions and would like to work with Safe Routes to Schools to identify possible improvements.

Traffic congestion around Tam Valley School has been an issue for many years; with so many more parents cycling with children and on e-bikes the increase of bikes on the roads has increased significantly. Parents have found leaving much earlier for school helps them avoid the road traffic. Campus parking for the larger/ heavier bikes is also a challenge. There is a concern a bike could get knocked over and hurt a student.

Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) and city projects have focused on pedestrian challenges over the years; there is still work to be done. Now is a good time for the organizations to advocate for better bicycling facilities. Some of the roadways are very narrow; Marin Ave, Bell Lane. The mapping project for Tam Valley will help identify the issues, off campus parking and develop possible short- and long-term solutions. This process will take time; the support of SR2S will help with working with the County/ Caltrans.

### **Sycamore Pilot Project**

Vanessa Justice is a 40-year residents of the Sycamore neighborhood; she grew up there. Her family has experienced the neighborhood changes and is concerned about the flow and speeds

of vehicle traffic. Cut through traffic has increased; there has been a 25% increase in traffic since 2012 (2200 to 2700 vehicles). Many students traveling to the middle and elementary schools on the narrow winding roads are at risk when drivers cut corners on blind curves. With so many students and the increase in cut-through traffic, many residents are concerned for the safety of all road users; road paint is not enough to warn drivers of students cycling.

Many neighbors of Nelson Ave are in support of a pilot project to install approved “rubber road bumpers” to slow and discourage traffic. The “bumpers” can accommodate emergency vehicles, are bike friendly and are easy to move. Communities throughout the county have had success to address these issues. Other examples of road facilities to calm traffic have been installed in San Anselmo; speed tables and landscaping.

### **Mapping Workshop**

Mill Valley is the first community in the county to focus and complete many facility improvements; in 15 years many improvements have been made to improve safety. The maps are resources to the communities and resources for future funding applications. Funding for improvement can take years and these maps document that history. Input from the community is needed and valued. Engineers cannot identify all the issues; resident input is necessary.

Safe Routes to School suggested routes maps for Old Mill and Mill Valley Middle School are complete. Maps for Strawberry, Tam Valley and Edna Maguire will be developed. All the maps are digital files and will be updated as needed; they include suggested routes, road facilities, bus information and crossing guard locations.

### **Mapping Session:**

Maps for the schools were distributed to the attending parents and agency representatives to mark-up, add comments, identify routes used and dangerous road conditions. The next step will be for the engineers to update a draft version of each of the maps, present to task force members, make additional revisions and present to the Department of Public Work for approval.

### **Next Meeting:**

January 30, 2020 at 9:30 in the Mill Valley Community Center in the Teen Zone meeting room.