



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Mill Valley Safe Routes to Schools Task Force
Zoom Meeting Notes
July 23, 2020

Attendance:

Wendi Kallins- Safe Routes to Schools, Kevin Cuffe Tam High PTA parent, Clay Kunz- Parent Tam High and BPAC member. Amanda Finlaw- School District Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Communications Specialist, Christina Mueller- Parent-Edna Maguire and Mill Valley Middle Schools, Sarah Adams- Parent Edna Maguire and Mill Valley Middle Schools, Des McKissock- Marin Horizon School Transportation, Urban Carmel- Mill Valley City Council, Patrick Golier- Engineer Parisi Assoc., Dan Cuddeford-Homestead Valley Homeowners Assoc., John Neville- County of Marin Traffic Engineer, Lisa Lund-Parent Mill Middle School, Sarah Estes-Smith- Aide to Kate Sears, Rob LaPorte- Project Manager- Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, Glenn Newcomer- CA Highway Patrol, Stephanie Moulton-Peters - Former Mayor/Councilmember, Kathy Mcleod- Crossing Guard Supervisor, Gwen Froh- Safe Routes to Schools Program Director, Peggy Clark- Safe Routes to Schools Program Manager

Developing Transportation Plans

Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) team has been attending meetings county wide and with the Office of Education. School Districts are focused on developing plans to run classes and SR2S is focused on supporting plans to get students to schools safely. This meeting was scheduled during the summer to plan ahead and to present concepts; no decisions were expected to be made during this meeting.

The yellow bus service for Mill Valley has been suspended for this school year. It was struggling; with COVID restrictions and the service has been stopped. The possibility of more families driving students will have a negative impact on safe transportation options for students. When the number of vehicles increases during school hours there will be significant traffic issues, that will have a negative impact on the neighborhoods too. Safe Routes to Schools will continue to encourage safe walking and rolling to school practicing physical distancing.

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 by title. Not all slides have comments below.

Planning for the Fall - 3 Objectives- slide

A transportation committee needs to be created for each school to ensure roadway space using pop-up facilities and locations for park and walk are identified in advance of school reopening. Pop-up facilities are usually temporary and create space for students to spread out when walking and rolling. The existing suggested Route Maps can be the first resources to identify needs in specific locations.

Volunteers from the community are needed; parents, neighbors, active Safe Routes volunteers, School District Office, City and County DPW would be great resources. BPAC members could be the coordination group for these objectives. SR2S staff will be available to develop an encouragement plan; however, they cannot be at every school. Some schools are close to each other; this can be an opportunity for schools to work together; pooling resources. Parents that have moved up to middle school could help out at their previous elementary school given they know so much about the school.

We are asking volunteers to create a temporary committee to take the necessary steps in advance. Safe Routes to School understand there are added pressures on the school district and administration and the city staff; volunteers from the community are essential and now is the time to start planning.

Tools to Consider- slide

Street Adaptations, what to plan for on campus and planning for education and encouragement. Street Adaptations are about finding space on roadway networks that lead to schools to provide additional space for walking and biking while physically distancing.

Sidewalk Extensions- slide

The advantage of these options is to allow students to spread apart while traveling and waiting to enter a school campus. Converting curbside parking or a travel lane to pedestrian space. Useful for narrow roads or without sidewalks. The challenges are for vehicle drivers to be aware of these temporary facilities. *Proper and effective messaging to all users is very important. Planning for the set-up and take down of the cones, message boards is needed.*

Bike and Roll Lanes- slide

These provide dedicated space for students to travel safely on bike routes that are separated from vehicles. These are best used on roadways that have a high volume of students cycling; streets leading directly to a school and roadways adjacent to shared use paths, parks and waterfronts.

Slow Street- slide

These facilities are being used throughout the Bay Area and the country. They are used on quiet residential streets that are closed off to through traffic; that still allow access for emergency and local vehicle access. They are typically used in grid roadway networks where drivers can find an alternate route. The materials used are sandwich boards at the end of each block, with signs discouraging through traffic.

One-Way Traffic Flow- slide

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. Good for roads with parking lanes and without existing bike lanes. *Proper and effective messaging to all users is very important here as well.*

Additional Engineering Tools-slide

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

- Pedestrian recall setting - The photo was taken in Berkeley; the city eliminated 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.
- 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

Some of the resources needed to separate traffic from students: sandwich boards, cones, planters (long term pop-up use) something that is “forgiving infracture” (not steel or heavy). Barriers that will protect students walking and rolling and not damage vehicles.

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. Establish a complete suggested route network that leads directly to the school(s).

Mill Valley has many existing roadway networks. There is a defined bike lane on the east end of town by Mill Valley Middle School, Miller Ave bike lanes and crosswalks with pedestrian signals. The areas by the schools will require the highest priority.

Bike Parking- slide

Is there adequate parking space, planning for an increase in student riders? Mill Valley Middle School (MVMS) has a very high number of students who already cycle; where on campus more bikes could be parked. Chat comments: The MCOE did a walk through at MVMS and discussed moving bike racks around the campus to create spacing for students.

Park and Walk- slide

The [Office of Education](#) provided guidelines (check for updates) on routes for entry/exit to a campus. Routes will be specified for cohorts; using as many entrances and exits as feasible. The SR2S recommendations of pop-ups and park and walk supports the school's plans to reduce the number of vehicles and students congesting at the front of a school. Staggered start/end times for a school day could also reduce congestion.

Loma Verde Elementary School piloted a Park and Walk campaign last year. 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.

Park and Walk locations provide an opportunity for families with multi age students or cohort carpools that live too far or do not have enough time to walk/roll the full distance to campus. This SR2S program has already proven to be a viable program, the learnings are documented from the pilot and marketing materials are available. Parents and students learned about safe and proper behaviours when walking and when driving in a school zone. The Department of Public works supported SR2S by making sure there were no unintended consequences for the locations that were identified.

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. Another option for a Pod are the social bubbles some families are forming outside of school; parents could take turns supervising the pod. There are a number of resources available throughout the bay area on walking cohorts. Please contact SR2S for more information.

Encouragement programs

Encouragement for Active Travel- slide

Safe Routes staff are here to support efforts to maintain active travel to school. There is a concern that less families will want to carpool and the bus service is not available. Cycling has increased nationally during this time. SR2S will continue to encourage walking and rolling to/from school; this may be the only exercise some students get each day and it provides time for students to see each other. Health professionals have stated COVID is less dangerous outdoors while physically distancing. SR2S on-line education curriculum is a resource to continue these healthy practices.

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.

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.

A [Social Distancing Tips for Walking and Rolling](#) is available in English and Spanish. Over 500 copies were distributed this spring via the Canal Alliance.

[Mill Valley Suggested Routes Maps](#)

Please review this link for your school's maps. Tam Valley and Edna Magurie maps will be posted on this site soon. These maps will direct volunteers to look for locations for potential pop-ups..

Traffic Committee - Steps to Take- slide

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. **Communications are also essential with the school community and surrounding neighborhoods in advance if access to a school changes.** Surprises or pushback from neighbors will not help; involve them in the process in advance.

Park and Walk locations that have not already been approved must get approval. One potential location is the shopping center with Whole Foods for students walking to Edna Maguire School. The property owner must give permission for this to be a suggested Park & Walk location.

Pop-up locations must be approved by the town or County Dept of Public Works (DPW) in advance. The ideas suggested by Safe Routes to Schools are based on “best practices” from NACTO. The DPW must sign-off and potentially issue a permit.

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; they do not have the staff. 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.

Discussion

The County of Marin - DPW received a grant to install some of these facilities throughout the county. There are three schools in Mill Valley in the county's unincorporated areas. Tam Valley school already had started discussing facility improvements; reduce parking on Marin Ave and Bell Lane. A walk audit was conducted at Edna Maguire; issues were identified. Strawberry Point is also in the County area. John Neville- jneville@marincounty.org is the contact for the County DPW.

Work is already planned for the intersection of Camino Alto and Sycamore Streets. The planned improvements (sidewalk bulb outs) should be helpful for creating space for students.

Access to the pedestrian/cyclists bridge over Hwy 101 from Seminary Drive is very challenging for Strawberry and Mill Valley Middle Schools; this could be a place for improvements. It would be good to consider somewhere for a Park & Walk/Ride location.

City of Mill Valley DPW staff were not present at the meeting. Councilmember (Urban Carmel 415-548-3111) was requested to update the City of Mill Valley DPW on this meeting and direct them to the SR2S presentation. DPW staff at other task force meetings expressed the need to have consistent messaging throughout the county.

Clay was requested to take this information back to the Mill Valley BPAC to learn if members could help out.

Crossing guards are currently scheduled for 2hrs. If their hours were to be extending it would be for 1.5hrs. This could help if schools adopted staggered start and end times. There are limitations on how much their hours can be adjusted.

Bothin Marsh Presentation

Rob works with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy; through the One TAM partnership he has been working closely with Marin County Parks on the evolving Bothin Marsh Open Space Preserve. The Mill Valley and Sausalito Pathway is included in this project. The project is about adapting to the sea level rise and was presented to SR2S because of the use of the pathway for the community and students.

This is the link to the presentation

(<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:7d7bbbd3-427d-43b0-a651-140da9d45f9b>). Please note that this presentation is based on the much more detailed Evolving Shorelines Project Initial Planning Memo which is available here: <https://www.onetam.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/bothin%20vision%20doc.pdf>

The project is focused on planning for future sea level rise, improving the resilience of the marsh and new designs for the pathway that will make it resilient up to 2050. The Conservancy wants to be innovative and show leadership to developing solutions. They want to ensure the pathway network will be maintained for the community and the

marsh stays healthy and a habitat for many species. It is essential to help manage the rising water.

The Conservancy is currently in the concept design phase. This is a very important part of the process and public input is needed. They ask that the links provided be shared to get more people informed and involved. In September 2020 there will be a public meeting; community input is needed.

Project Contacts:

To learn more: <https://www.onetam.org/bothin>

- Veronica Pearson- Marin County Parks - vpearson@marincounty.org
- Rob La Porte- Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy- rlaporte@parksconservancy.org

Signup for the Evolving Shorelines Project email list here:

https://secure3.convio.net/ggnpc/site/SSurvey?ACTION_REQUIRED=URI_ACTION_USER_REQUESTS&SURVEY_ID=24002

Below are highlights of Robs presentation: please refer to the link above for more information.

- By the year of 2030 there is a projected sea level rise of 1 foot by 2050 projected rise is 2 feet. By 2100 Tam Valley and areas of Mill Valley would be inundated with water regularly if changes are not done.
- Planning and Horizons & Conceptual Phasing- the slide details the Projects Phases (Immediate, Near Term, Mid Term and Long Term).
 - 2ft rise in 2050- calculates to 360 days of flooding on the current pathway
 - 1ft rise in 2030- calculates to over 220 days of flooding a year.
 - All this flooding affects the habitat of the marsh.
- The Potential Design & Reestablished Creek Connection - the slide presents ideas at this time only; the feasibility needs to be studied including the cost and how they would all work together to include a natural process.
 - One concept is redirecting Coyote Creek onto the marsh
- Predicted Sea-Level Rise Impacts
 - Public Access Resilience Goal- does not reflect the “normal tide levels”. They are planning for resilience during King Tides and flood events. This is a requirement from the state. This means planning for a trail that is 6 feet higher than it is today in this location on the slide.

- Trail Alignment Studies
 - Existing Alignment- does have an impact on the tidal circulation.
 - Option 1- realignment
 - Option 2- go on the perimeter of the march; go around the business to Almonte to Miller Ave.
 - Option 3 - includes the “complete streets” design

- Trail Width Options
 - The current width of the pathway is 14ft. To increase safety for all users they are looking at an 18ft wide pathway.

Pathway Repaving Planned

Marin County Parks is working on a communications plan regarding the Mill Valley-Sausalito (Almonte to Gate 6) pathway repaving maintenance project. If permits are obtained soon it will be scheduled for this fall and will require the pathway be closed for 2 weeks. Any details on closures will be broadcasted as early as possible. In the meanwhile you can contact the project manager Nancy Peake (npeake@marincounty.org) for additional information.

Sidewalks on Montford

The issue is to address the sidewalk gaps in Homestead Valley. There is a sidewalk gap on Montford Ave just before Molino Ave. Many students walk this route in the AM and PM. The area is about 100 to 150 feet of no sidewalk on a busy road.

A request was made to consider short term and a long term facility improvements. A suggestion was made to approach the neighbors to learn if they would support or reject a proposal for a sidewalk in the future.

Vehicles are parked where a sidewalk is needed. If parking was restricted this would create space for students to walk and cycle; Currently they are forced into the roadway. The roadway would be much wider if there were no vehicles parked. This could be a short-term solution.

Marin Horizon has addressed this consideration in the past. Clarification will be needed to understand in what jurisdiction this section of the road falls: City of Mill Valley or County of Marin. It appeared to be in the City.

Next Zoom Meeting

Thursday, September 17 at 9:30am