



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



## **Kentfield Task Force**

### **Meeting Notes**

**November 18, 2011**

#### **Present (12)**

Wendi Kallins – Program Director for Safe Routes to School; Laura Kelly –Volunteer Liaison for Safe Routes to School; Billy Cameron – Vice Principal at Bacich Elementary School; Paul Miller – Director of Maintenance and Facilities; James Jacobson – California Highway Patrol; Katie Rice – Marin County Supervisor; Marnie Ganong –Parent Leader at Bacich; Heather McPhail – Parent Leader at Bacich; Beatrice McMillan – Neighborhood Captain; Jennifer Doucette – Neighborhood Captain; Dana Marotto – Neighborhood Captain; Erika McGrath – Bacich parent.

#### **County update by Katie Rice, Marin County Board of Supervisors**

The Task Force congratulated Katie to her appointment to the Board of Supervisors representing the Ross Valley. Her appointment took place earlier this month after Hal Brown announced his resignation. Katie shared she will be designating one of her staff to track on Safe Routes to Schools issues, and attend task force meetings if she can not be there herself. Katie commented that the Safe Routes to Schools Task Forces in Marin are instrumental in helping to reduce school related traffic and to make improvements to roads and pathways to support walking and biking to school.

Katie shared that she is currently working on seeking county involvement/solutions towards improving the pathway behind Bacich School, but said that it's a complicated task because multiple agencies are involved, including the County, Parks and Open Space, the Transportation Authority of Marin, and Kentfield School district. Parks and Open Space also have validated the complexity of the project. Katie said it boils down to securing proper funding to get it fixed.

Marnie asked Katie how we get Public Works to get more involved with our Task Force priorities. Katie responded that there are juristic issues and it's not clearly defined who is responsible for what. The County and Department of Public works is

supportive of Safe Routes, but their ability to actively participate in Task Force meetings and projects is constrained by both budget and staffing. Katie will schedule a meeting with the Public Works to discuss the task force's priorities on the project list.

Katie will review the neighborhood project list generated by issues expressed by the captains, and seek input from public works on which agency would have jurisdiction over the area in which projects are identified.

### **Update from Neighborhood Captains**

#### *Greenbrae neighborhood (Jennifer and Beatrice)*

Greenbrae is the biggest of the six pilot neighborhoods. Co-captains Jennifer and Beatrice suggested next year dividing the territory into smaller neighborhoods. The captains had a positive response to the request to form carpools with families on your street or nearby. Email has proven to be a very effective communications tool for creating a master carpool list. There are more walkers now, but once the winter rain season is in full force, then more carpools are expected to form.

The co-captains send out a community email once a month a community email. A walking school bus leaves at 7:40 am every morning from Creekside. Some parents drive to Creekside, park, and then walk the rest of the way.

#### *SFD Firehouse neighborhood (Dana)*

Dana shared that email has been an excellent communications tool for their neighborhood, but to be cautious of email overload and to keep the content very simple. Dana also anticipates that the rain season to be an opportune time to encourage carpools.

#### *Laurel Grove (Marnie)*

Marnie shared that almost the entire neighborhood is walking or biking to school. Travel by foot is becoming the norm for getting to school. New families observe the culture, and walk or bike too. If a parent is driving their child, then they must be aware that they are going against the neighborhood culture. The enormous turnout at International Walk and Roll to School Day helped to further boost awareness of the movement to travel a green way to school.

Marnie shared that the next tackle will be to keep the momentum going when the rain season arrives. Wet weather easily tempts parents to revert back to driving their children. Another challenge is reminding everyone of safety etiquette, like at the SFD crosswalk, which is not safe.

### *Kent Middle School neighborhood (Sabrina)*

Sabrina shared that students at Kent Middle School are gearing up to embrace and engage in [saveagallon.org](http://saveagallon.org) – a program that enables groups to track their green travel mileage in efforts to reduce Greenhouse gases. The premise of Save a Gallon is that small steps we make in our lives to reduce car trips **do** add up.

Members log miles and then the website calculates the cumulative gallons of gasoline saved, as well as the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> being prevented. The site provides students with charts that track miles for walking biking, carpooling or taking the bus throughout the year. Anytime you don't drive is logged as a Save A Gallon mile. Safe Routes to Schools will loan two scanning devices for Kent students to log miles as students arrive to school. Getting students to register will need to be done in advance of logging miles at Save A Gallon. (Heather mentioned that we did not get national grant funding for scanners.)

Sabrina also shared that Kent Middle School will participate in the Green Ways to School classroom four-week challenge in March. She also reported that Teens Go Green conducted an educational and fun bicycle field trip with 60 students to downtown San Anselmo for ice cream, and back. Rules of the road were taught when “driving” your bike.

### **Bacich Elementary School Update, Billy Cameron**

577 students participated in Walk and Roll to School to Day. The event was a huge success at Bacich, and the Marin IJ published a photograph. However, the next day had an even longer car line than normal.

Funding was approved for 9 new bike racks to be installed at Bacich. The racks will be placed in front of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom area.

Billy is planning to contact the Fire Department about rezoning or changing the time limit for parking for the fire lane in front of the Kindergarten area. Some parents have received tickets if they are there after 3:00 pm. The ticket amount is \$158.

Parents need to remind their children to lock their bicycles. The County Sherriff's office reported an increase in bike thefts both at Bacich and Kent due to unlocked bikes.

Heather shared she is now part of the TAM Advisory Committee serving as an advocate for Safe Routes to Schools. The committee covers budget issues concerning Measure A funding which includes crossing guards, infrastructure and

education. Heather continues to serve as the communications liaison for all neighborhood captains.

Parent Erica McGrath requested Task Force support regarding a safety issue in her neighborhood, near the Woodlands Market regarding the lack of a stop sign. Erica brought a petition to be signed in support of her trying to obtain town support. Wendi suggested that we add her issue to the issues spreadsheet, which details all neighborhood concerns (see last section of this report).

### **Prioritized list of neighborhood safety issues, Wendi Kallins.**

Heather prepared a master spreadsheet outlining Kentfield School District safety issues, which were submitted by neighborhood captains and parents. The spreadsheet details approximately 20 issues to be discussed and prioritized. More issues are still coming from other neighborhoods. The captains have prioritized the list (on a 1 to three scale, 1 meaning high priority) and below is the link to the list:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/ccc?key=0Au3quFSD03QZdGR2WHc5Z3INb3NYdEI2dVBfdUizYkE&hl=en\\_US](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/ccc?key=0Au3quFSD03QZdGR2WHc5Z3INb3NYdEI2dVBfdUizYkE&hl=en_US)

Wendi said that she would add the Woodlands safety issue to the spreadsheet, which was expressed by Task Force newcomer, Erika McGrath. Erika bikes with her children to Bacich and is concerned that the Woodlands crossing guard does not make sure the children get all the way across the street. Her recommendation is for better training. Even more important is the proposal of a stop sign to be installed between the corner of Upland and Woodland. She has a letter detailing the area and a petition that she will forward to Wendi.

Erika feels that if her neighborhood is to support SR2S by increasing the numbers of walkers and bikers, then drivers need to slow down and a stop sign needs to be installed in what she described as the “fork in the road” area where cars going up hill do not see the cars coming down. As it stands now, Erika feels that Upland is extremely dangerous to walk or bike.

Heather offered to talk with Erika about the petition process, based on her experience with Laurel Grove. Paul asked what the other property owners are doing. Erika said the town has a long list of town improvement requests, and it’s hard to make headway because of all the parties involved – from the county to homeowner’s associations. The county has scheduled it to be reviewed to see if a stop sign is warranted.

The Task Force briefly discussed three of the issues on the spreadsheet:

- 1) RVNS Crosswalk at the Bacich Campus

Billy shared that a petition will be needed to prevent no walking across the main lot during morning drop-off. Billy shared the principal does not want to reroute this crosswalk. The route presently is the shortest one, and it's challenging to get students to instead walk around the perimeter and stop using the popular route. Dana suggested using cones to direct. Wendi said this is a big "flow" issue and we should continue to brainstorm regarding solutions

## 2) East Gate Locking Times on the Bacich Campus

Billy will check with Sally Peck to see if the locking time can be unlocked at 1:00 pm after the Kindergarten is released, and remain unlocked. The gate is currently unlocked when the older students are released. Unlocking and locking is not an option. The reason the gate is not unlocked earlier than school release time is that many years ago an intruder entered the unlocked gate. Thus, a fear of strangers coming on to campus is the concern. However, the East gate needs to be unlocked to enable walkers and riders access to the school.

Marnie mentioned that the East side gate also reflects are green travel culture at Bacich, and should be a grander and more welcoming entrance for walkers and bikers; A symbol of the school's commitment to foot travel. The car lot is presently our main entrance – which sends a message that driving is our main form of transportation for students to Bacich. The East Gate should not be an obstacle for bikers and walkers, especially if it is locked. The East side gate represents our culture. Get Marnie to write up.

## 3) Lack of a stop sign at Via Hidalgo

Wendi said that input is needed by the community regarding the activity at the base of Via Hidalgo, before Corte Lenosa and the series of office buildings. The strategy is not to ask for a stop sign, but document the traffic non-flow. Document what people are saying and identify the problem, and then let the experts come in because they often are aware of solutions that the community does not even know about. When the community asks for a specific solution and that solution is not possible for various reasons, it shuts down the process. Better to identify the problem first and leave it open for multiple solutions.

## 4) Sir Francis Drake Boulevard – Corridor

More crossing guards are needed on SFD. Wendi mentioned that there is a budget allocated every year for crossing guards. If a proposal for an assessment for the addition of a crossing guard is approved, then another one has to be taken away

somewhere else. The number of walkers helps to warrant the need for a crossing guard. Heather asked if the district could raise money for a crossing guard.

To get CHP and Sheriff coverage, traffic complaints dictate where the coverage is assigned. Complaints are taken very seriously. Can we encourage the neighborhood captains make phone calls to report the issues? The CHP has committed to monitoring speeding hot spots in the school district. Marnie will compile a list of the speeding hot spots based on parent input.

The Task Force will continue discussing the list of safety concerns at our next meeting.

**Our next Task Force meeting is scheduled for at 9:00 am on December 14th at the Kentfield District Office.**