



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



San Rafael School District

Task Force Meeting Notes

January 14, 2013

Present (9)

Wendi Kallins – Program Director for Safe Routes to Schools; Laura Kelly – Volunteer Liaison for Safe Routes to Schools; Carey Lando – Marin County Public Works; Leslie Blomquist – Public Works Engineer; Eric Holt – San Rafael Police Department; Alisha Olouglin – Team Leader for Short School; Bridget Hook – Team Leader for Sun Valley; Aaron Feldstein – Academic Dean; John Reed – Fairfax Town Council Member.

Bike Route Project in Fairfax

John Reed, Council Member for the Town of Fairfax, shared a PowerPoint presentation with the San Rafael Task Force regarding a project underway to create a marked bike route through Fairfax neighborhoods that leads to local schools. The new school route runs through the central residential areas of Fairfax and has been dubbed the "Fairfax Bike Spine." The town will soon begin installing signs and thermoplastic street pavement markings identifying bicycle routes to Manor Elementary, Cascade Canyon and White Hill Middle School.



The project, which includes green pavement markings for shared bicycle lanes and arrows, directs children on a safe route to school while letting motorists and others in the area know there are children cycling. The road markings are very bright and designed to get the attention of drivers. Wendi shared that the new bike sign markings designed for this project might become a universal sign in California for all road travel areas that are shared by school children and motorists.

The goal of the Fairfax Bike Spine is to make it safer for kids and encourage them to bike and walk to school. The town sought feedback from parents and neighborhoods when developing the routes. Fairfax also plans to install shared-use lane markings called Sharrows. Sharrows are used to indicate to cyclists where they should ride in the road and to alert motorists to expect bicyclists to share the road.

John said the project is being funded by an \$110,000 grant from the Transportation Authority of Marin to install signage and street markings. It is a low budget, low cost project that helps to increase awareness of designated routes via signage. John said repaving costs are not covered in the budget.

Carey asked if there have any Fairfax speed studies done before the project started. John said no. Findings have been more anecdotal. Carey said the county's engineers would ask for statistical information to support the project. Wendi suggested having a baseline speed level conducted now. This will help document if the Bike Spine has an impact on speed reduction. John shared that no speed limits were changed for this project.

Bridget asked if there is a plan to educate drivers about the bike routes. Wendi said the markings and signage will declare the routes, the next phase of the project is to promote the routes.

San Rafael – Suggested Bike Routes to Schools

After the Fairfax Bike Spine presentation, Wendi suggested exploring a similar project for San Rafael. The San Rafael Bicycle Pedestrian plan maps were posted at the meeting as a starting point for the Task Force to identify potential school routes, and highlight problem spots along the routes. Wendi shared that the downtown area of San Rafael creates much "crisscrossing" challenges for students traveling by foot or bike in San Rafael.

Class 3 bike lanes were discussed. Class 3 lanes refers to a bicycle route where bikes and cars share the same traffic lane without any markings to separate the user groups. Class 2 bike lanes are for bikers only, and are a separate lane clearly marked (and ideal for bike travel). Class 1 are pathways for biking and walking separated from traffic.

Woodland Avenue was identified as the main obstacle or "hot spot" for Laurel Del and for Davidson Middle School. The majority of the route is fairly safe except for Woodland. Alisha commented that she believes that limiting the parking times along Woodland would really help, especially if its declared an official school route.

The Sun Valley School has narrow streets, which is an issue. The Task Force discussed route suggestions. Bridget said single file travel education is needed at Sun Valley.

Alisha mentioned that it is important to teach children to be aware of a driver in a parked car, and that the car door could open while a biker was in route.

Wendi asked how students travelers access Fifth Street. Do they cross A or C Street? Where is an appropriate place to cross? The designated crossing is where 4th and Miracle Mile meet at the

IHop restaurant area. This is the biggest crossing challenge. Wendi asked if we could create an alternate bike route behind 5th Street where traffic is lighter? Would 5th Street be a possible route for stenciling and signage?

Wendi mentioned that the funding to execute the project for San Rafael could come from Safe Pathways.

Bridget said she would like to become more involved in an educational campaign and neighborhood outreach activities.

Aaron said he would like to make a route more accessible from the Canal area. Bellam is the hot spot for students biking from the canal.

Wendi said that the next Safe Routes to Schools contract which is up for renewal includes funding for three corridor studies. Wendi said that if San Rafael was interested in the program that SR2S would help the city closely examine routes and install markings. Setting up a meeting with the mayor was also suggested.

Using bicycle video cameras was mentioned as a way to showcase and document routes – good ones and trouble areas.

Volunteer Crossing Guards

Wendi distributed a volunteer crossing guard handout created by the AAA Traffic Safety Department, and brought a training video to loan out.

Wendi said adult school crossing guards can play a key role in promoting safe driver and pedestrian behaviors at crosswalks located near San Rafael schools. They help children safely cross the street and remind drivers of the presence of pedestrians. A guard helps children develop the skills to cross streets safely at all times. Adult school crossing guards can be parent volunteers, school staff or paid personnel.

Here is the Safe Routes to Schools link for how to train and hire adult crossing guards:

http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/enforcement/adult_school_crossing_guard.cfm

It is not illegal to have parents help. Wendi asked if the police department could help with training. Eric said they do not have anyone certified to train and this creates liability issues.

Creating ‘safety in numbers’ by organizing neighborhoods to travel by foot, bike or carpool to school was discussed. An idea to develop a parent questionnaire on Survey Monkey about how families travel to school was suggested. What neighborhood do you live in? Would you be willing to work with other kids to get to school? Wendi said that she would develop a brief survey. English and Spanish versions were requested. The results from the survey will be used a way to launch neighborhood networks of families in San Rafael.

The next San Rafael Task Force meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 29, 2013.