



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Safe Routes to School Committee

Thursday, April 9, 2015
Meeting Notes

Attended

Pat Ecklund- Council member, Marla Fields- Parent San Jose Middle School, Michael Hanlon- Public Works, Derek Knell- School Board Trustee, Mark Silva- School District Facilities, Ashley Tam- Parisi Associates Engineer, Hank Ryan- Novato BPAC, Alex Montgomery- Novato BPAC

Update on Safe Routes activities

Bilingual Program- TAM supported Safe Routes to Schools by hiring a bilingual Volunteer Coordinator to support the Latino community. Monica is doing a great job developing awareness. SR2S has partnered with the Marin County Dept of Health Services to increase awareness. Both programs are meeting with parents during monthly Charla Cafe. They are also meeting with the ELAC or Latino PTO. Education presentations are made during these morning meeting providing both programs an opportunity to meet involved parents in the school district. Parents recently supported Walk & Roll events at Lynwood and Hamilton Schools.

Meetings are scheduled at Loma Verde and Olive to develop similar support for both programs

Safe Routes to Schools is also partnering with Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) in Novato. The program encourage residents to eat healthy foods and lead active lives. One of its goals it to help to make Novato more walkable and bike-able.

Safety Issues:

ATP call for projects- The ATP application process has changed resulting in State and Federal funded projects not receiving approved funds as they have in the past. Previously funded programs are not getting funded now. Disadvantaged communities are now getting support and large projects (not small ones) are getting funded.

Michael Hanlon attended a training hosted by David Chan to explain the in depth application process municipalities must now be aware of and plan for when submitting for funds. He found the training extremely useful; Novato must change/improve how and what is included in request for ATP funds. One of the down sides learned from this

training is that cities like Novato are submitting applications that are competing with cities like Los Angeles.

The training was attended by many agencies with instruction by Caltrans representatives. Many of the agencies are well versed on ATP and provided helpful information.

Every year the application process will be more demanding and it would be beneficial for Safe Routes to Schools projects to partner with larger, local municipalities when submitting for funds.

Mike reported on the notes he took during the ATP training:

- Novato lost points because the schedule for deliverable was unrealistic.
- Focus is on projects that are fully planned
- Projects must have a complete streets plan before submitting
- Engineer plans need to be included
- Scope and schedule of a project must be developed and clear
- CEQA documents are requested; which is very unusual especially for cities the size of Novato.
- Projects that have matching funds will receive greater points. This will be a challenge for cities like Novato compared to LA.

Consideration:

If Marin County submitted for ATP funds as a whole possibly with TAM this would be an advantage. An example of a good, big project is the pedestrian bridge on Grand Avenue that was awarded Safe Pathways funds.

The 2015 ATP call for projects is June 1.

List of Novato Projects that are funded though other sources such as Safe Pathways:

- Nave Drive- crosswalk on County Club with pedestrian light at Ignacio, and Laurel wood on the west side at Ignacio,
- Laurel West- Island with a cut thru- at Ignacio Blvd
- Ignacio & County Club- installing a new cross walk with pedestrian activated lights.
- Plum at Olive -building out a sidewalk.

TAM- Safe Pathway funds are local funds, they do not require in depth studies and can be approved quickly and are less expensive.

What projects can SR2S look at to tie in with large local projects?

SR2S projects need to be identified and planned for 2016 funding options.

1. Loma Verde School area for many, many years has not had any bike lanes that lead to the school. Access to the school is very challenging.
 - The pathway that goes by the homes in the school area needs many improvements

- Alameda de la Loma going west does not have a bike lane leading to the play ground. There are concerns the street is not wide enough to include a bike lane. Students can ride on sidewalks in Novato in non business areas.
- Bel Marin Keys now has a park. Kids are crossing the highway to access the park. In addition Hamilton Schools enrolment has increased. A sports complex is planned for the east side of Hwy 101. A pedestrian bridge would be a great project to include in a ATP proposal.
- Many people are walking over the Rowland Ave over pass.
- The San Jose Middle School list of improvements bundled with the Bel Marin Keys overpass and Hamilton School could be a good fit to meet the requirements for ATP funds in 2016.

Wendi commented on the Mill Valley, E. Blithdale interchange that is under review. This project is being studied for various safe travel options for the people traveling by foot and bicycle. Once this review process is complete it would be helpful for Novato to look at the proposed improvements and the cost of the project.

Novato schools that need Safe Routes to School improvements are:

- Our Lady of Loretta School: street needing improvements: Novato Blvd., DeLong at Sherman, 8th at Grant Street.
- McKay Street- is used by many pedestrians and does not have any sidewalks or crosswalks. The bike lane is poorly painted and not visible.
- 7th Ave to Diablo- is currently under environmental review. It includes plans for a bike lane, sidewalk widening. This project is funded for planning but not for construction. The need for additional funds could be supported from ATP in 2016. The plans would need to be completed and include CEQA details.
- San Marin Drive has a list of issues
- Stafford Lake projects list is a good fit bundled with other project for ATP funding.

Projects Scheduled

- Lynwood- pathway- the culvert will be redesigned because the area floods precluding the use of the pathway. Parents still cut through the school parking lot
- Vineyard Street- the entire road will be resurfaced

Cross Walk Projects list - City of Novato (see attachment)

List of projects that are in Safe Routes to Schools area of focus: these projects are not very expensive and could be funded locally.

These project are all funded

- 1 - South Novato Blvd at Lark Court
- 3 - South Novato Blvd at Yukon Way
- 7 - Ignacio Blvd at Country Club Drive
- 21 - Ignacio Blvd t Laurelwood Dr.

Below is the list of “priority ranked” crosswalks and the schools they serve:

- # 1- Rancho School
- # 3 & 4 - Rancho and Novato High School

- # 5 & 13 Our Lady of Loretta
- # 8 - San Jose Middle School and Loma Verde Schools
- # 23- Sinaloa Middle School, Lu Sutton, Novato Youth Center
- # 26- Pleasant Valley School

Hamilton Safety Issues:

The street leading to the Main Gate needs improvements. The SMART train will be coming soon. Education is needed at the schools on train travel.

Bowling Ave- Parents at Hamilton do not want their kids traveling by bike or by foot in this area. The residents in the apartment building create “personal safety issues. It was recommended the police be contacted and asked to increase enforcement. The building owner needs to be informed that the residents are creating a “personal safety issue”.

The gate at the back of the school will be relocated this summer. Currently vehicles are driving up to the locked gate; when they back out drivers must make a 3 -point turn and they cannot see students approaching the school. The gate will be moved back to the street/circle.

Other items:

Wendi will develop an “issues list” and work with Michael on a list of priorities that have the best chance for funding next year. Projects can apply for funds several times before they are funded.

SR2S Team Leaders are needed at: Olive, and Rancho Schools.

July 26 is Sunday on Sherman event
Tour de Novato- May 2nd

The next meeting is Thursday, July 30, 2015 at 11:00 to 12:30.