



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Ross Valley SR2S Task Force
ZOOM Meeting Notes
5/29/20

Attendance:

Wenid Kallins, Peggy Clark Safe Routes to Schools, Brain Colbert- San Anselmo Town Council, Gwen Froh- Safe Routes to Schools Program Director, Renee Goddar- Fairfax Mayor, Scott Schneider- San Anselmo DPW, James O'Brien- TAM Crossing Guard Consultant, Mandy Hill- Team Leader Brookside School, David Gehman- Director of Maintenance Ross Valley School District, Kelly Zalewisk - Operations Manager Marin Transit, Erin Hill- Team Leader Hidden Valley, Tarrell Kullaway- MCBC Executive Director, Nancy Vernon-Aide to Katie Rice

Yellow Bus program

Partial refunds were issued with the schools closing campuses due to the virus. Families were offered the option to donate their funds to the drivers of Michael's Transportation. About \$12,000 was awarded to the drivers- Thank You!

Marin Transit (MT) did move forward with the scheduled lottery for next school year. The lottery/registration will help MT collect data on what families are interested in riding the bus, what route and what the ages are. So far 340 families have registered (= about 400 students, this school year had 500 student riders), the elementary schools have not registered - on hold until more information on the structure of the school year is announced. No passes have been made available for purchase. Messaging has gone to current and non-pass holders stating they can sign-up to get a pass and will not have to pay anything until the bus service has been

confirmed. Families are encouraged to sign-up with no commitment; this will help MT understand what services will be needed. Sign-up is still scheduled to close June 1, 2020.

Once the protocols and school schedules are announced county wide, MT will announce information on the yellow bus service. MT has been in communications with the County Office of Education and has been briefed on the same information Safe Routes to Schools is receiving. The number of students permitted to ride a bus will have an impact on the service offered and the cost to families. In July MT will be meeting with the joint committee to determine a yellow bus service and what the financial picture is and how it impacts the county.

If schools do move forward with staggered start times this will impact the length of time bus service and crossing guards will be needed throughout a school day. The crossing guard budget is limited too; if their work days are extended it could impact the # of crossing guard positions.

Another consideration is: will families want to pay for the bus service if schools have staggered school days, use a hybrid model or remote learn only. Many parents are now working from home; this flexibility may encourage them to drive their children vs pay for a bus service. This all influences the financial stability of the program moving forward.

There is a contract with Michaels to use a bus for a full day; that contract was based on the current bus schedule. If the busses are used for more routes each day there is a likelihood Michaels will want to adjust the rate per day.

Marin Transit was asked to confirm who the governing organization(s) are on the yellow bus policies. It will be helpful for SRTS and the school districts to understand who may have the final say in the number of students that can ride a bus. Again this could influence the cost per family of the # of students per bus route is limited.

Discussion of school reopening

Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) has been in communication with the County Office of Education; SR2S program is also waiting on established guidelines. Wendi has a meeting scheduled with Max Korten who is heading up Marin Recovery to obtain an update and to hopefully get on their task force.

Safe Routes to Schools wants to support schools and families during this time. We are anticipating traffic to schools will increase and may increase even more if bus service is limited. SR2S will work with local agencies to support and remind families that walking and rolling is key to good health and to reduce traffic near schools. Municipalities are being asked to look into “roadway pop-ups” to encourage traffic calming. These could create space in the roadways, enabling physical distancing for the students.

The Safe Routes to School engineer will be working very closely with town and county DPW staff to develop a “toolkit”. Each school has its own unique circumstances to create safe and new circulation patterns.

School Districts must also consider after school care; that may have priority over the geographic locations students are traveling to/from and how cohorts are determined at the school level. All of this will influence the way students travel to and from school.

Safe Routes is looking at “ped pods and pedal pods” to encourage students in the same cohort to travel together. Safe Routes will be developing encouragement challenges that do not include “welcome tables” or request support from teachers.

Safe Routes goals will include:

A.. How can we mitigate an increase in traffic while providing safe infrastructure and social distancing.

B. How “park and walk” can support these efforts around schools.

C. How is safe space maintained around schools so walking and rolling can continue to be encouraged while maintaining social distancing.

[Manor Elementary and White Hill School Suggested Route Map](#)

Reviewing the immediate area around the school. Ideas were requested to identify locations and suggested options to create space for students walking/rolling to school. Cycling by nature, creates space for individuals; however walking does not, especially for students. They will need additional space.

The Town of Fairfax is currently focused on how to reopen the downtown businesses. There is a concern of who will manage the students as they get to school; if they need to stay in a cohort group how and who will manage that spacing.

This will influence the routes recommended. Glen Drive- may be accommodating the buses

Sherman Court- historically has been a discouraged route to students walking; however this may be needed for spacing of pedestrians.

Bike Spine- over 100 students use this route now. If there would be an increase in riders (especially if bus service was reduced) a request was made to temporarily close off a portion of the route to vehicles due to the increase of riders to White Hill.

These are all good thoughts as the district moves forward. Now is the time to collect information and ideas for future planning. The Town of Fairfax wants to make sure all the organizations that are needed are meeting and discussing options and that the hands on support will be available and provided for the plans that get proposed: Police Dept, School District, School Representatives and Public Works, Crossing Guards.

The Marin County Bicycle Coalition has been presenting and speaking directly with several cities and towns including at the recent San Anselmo Town Council meeting. Requests have been made; asking municipalities to

look at identified bike routes and the Bike Spine as a route many riders use and how to make them safer for all users with better facilities.

[Hidden Valley School Suggested Routes Map](#)

Butterfield Road is the primary route families take for driving, walking or rolling. Green Valley Court is the primary route into the school; it may be time to continue talking about temporarily closing off the roadway to vehicles and what the fall out would be in the neighborhood. Including vehicles parking along Butterfield and blocking shoulder space along the roadway to the school.

Scott from San Anselmo DPW did have discussion with Bjorn from MCBC. They discussed the major bike routes through town to San Rafael and Fairfax. They did not talk about routes to specific schools. They discussed San Anselmo Ave and Greenfield. San Anselmo Ave may be a location where temporary signage could be posted “residents only” to try and limit through traffic. That may reduce traffic volumes during the day. Greenfield is a commercial area; signage to discourage traffic could frustrate business owners.

The town is hopeful that the reduction in parents driving to work will reduce the number of vehicles on the roads during school commute hours. At the same time there may be an increase with the number of parents thinking it is more safe to drive then walk. Remote drop- off locations are still a good idea; unfortunately not many locations were identified.

All agencies are on hold until the schools make an announcement. Marin Recovers is helpful; all the communities and towns are going to determine how protocols are enforced. If there are no afterschool sports for students, encouraging cycling may be an opportunity. A concern remains and continues to be discussed addressing the safety of pedestrians when there are more cyclists on the roadways.

Safe Routes online

[Safe Routes to Schools- Social Distancing Tips for Walk and Rolling](#)

An information flyer was created as a resource to students and families throughout the county. With the increase of students walking and biking during the “shelter in place”; these tips are very useful safety reminders. The resources are available in [Spanish](#) too.

The Safe Routes to School program will be staying active throughout the county, providing meaningful resources to teachers and students; while supporting parents and the school districts. SR2S has developed on-line lessons; these lessons are normally presented in the classroom throughout the county each school year. [SR2S Remote Learning Lessons](#) are available to all students and parents.

[Bike Week](#) Middle School Students- May

Will be rolled out in May; daily cycling related activities will be presented to students. As students track their participation they will be eligible to win prizes at the end of the month. Over 500 students participated this past spring and the program will be rolled out during the summer too.

Safe Routes Offerings this Spring

[Art and Poetry Contest](#) - April

Elementary and Middle School students submitted works for the month of April. All school districts and local social media resources were provided information. Many (50+) wonderful submittals have been received.

[Walk and Roll Recess Challenge](#)- May

“Get your Ya Yas Out” is a fun contest for parents to conduct with their children. There are a host of activities students can do during the challenge; walking, rolling, hula hooping, ball toss and jump roping. There are students that have challenges getting out doors while practicing physical distancing. All healthy physical activities are encouraged and can be tracked for the challenge.

Updates and reports

San Anselmo

There have been a few changes in staff and the shelter in place order has slowed things down. The city is looking at ways to modify the downtown on weekends to close the main roadway for outside dining in mid- June.

CrossWalk Study

Work continues the DPW is trying to push along.

Brookside School Sidewalk Gap Closure Project

During the last meeting it was discussed that the project be focused on the Sir Frances Drake segment that can be covered by the existing funding. The consultant is working on the design; a public meeting will be scheduled and announced.

Sidewalk Infill Project

Funding has been awarded from TAM to work on a few small sidewalk infills near schools (no design work required). These are scheduled to be completed this summer. Locations are: Wade Thomas School: Sunnyside, Robson - Harrington Park, Brookside School: Coletta Ave/The Alameda .

SFD/Ross Intersection

A request was made to the city to make a longer pedestrian interval. The DPW reached out to an electrical company. The box currently in place does not allow for this change. In the future the city would like to upgrade traffic signal boxes; they are outdated.

Other updates

Fairfax

Due to the shelter in place, current projects in process have somewhat slowed down. The city hosted a workshop earlier in the month with 90 participants to discuss infrastructure to help the downtown open for pedestrians/bicycles while maintaining physical distancing in the next couple of weeks; 98% of the comments and feedback were positive. There are several volunteers offering to help with ideas and designs.

Azalea Crosswalk

The sidewalk and crosswalk that is funded and critical to the city infrastructure has not moved forward. It is set to move forward.

Cascade Canyon

The stripping project has proven to be a temporary solution to speeding. Most of the controversy has quieted down. People are learning how to use and negotiate the area. The speed limit is 15mph.

Dominga and Creek

A concept plan being considered; to make the right turn off of the bridge (where a pedestrian was hit and killed) safer. No action has been taken at this time.

Other updates

Butterfield Road update

The County was exploring doing a study on Butterfield called the Multimodal Transportation Study. A collaborative effort including the following organizations and a few more: towns, Marin Transit and TAM. The purpose is to understand what is going on for “all road users” from Sir Frances Drake Blvd to San Domenico. Collect data, bring the community together and learn if there are changes that could be made if there was community support.

The traffic patterns have changed due to the shelter in place. A document has been developed that outlines the steps the county would like to take when things settle into the new normal.

Eyes Up- Focus Group

A Zoom meeting was hosted by Wendi; 14 people attended. The purpose of the group was to understand broad safety concerns and drill down into the message and offer behavior changes they thought people could support. Attendees were asked what 1-2 actions they would take: a. activate “do not disturb” on mobile phones and b. a pace car program

(bumper sticker “I drive the speed limit”) to encourage other drivers not to speed. A fundraising campaign will start up and the project will continue when the time seems best.

This program may be needed more than ever with the amount of recorded speeding drivers due to less traffic on the roadways.

Next meeting

Safe Routes to School- Ross Valley Task Force Meeting: Tuesday, July 21 at 10:00am

The Town of Fairfax may schedule and invite task force members prior to the July date when more defined information is made available on school re-opening in the fall. Advance planning will be needed.