



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



San Rafael School District

Task Force Meeting Notes

November 5, 2012

Attendees (8)

Wendi Kallins – Program Director for Safe Routes to Schools; Laura Kelly – Volunteer Liaison for Safe Routes to Schools; Leslie Blomquist – Public Works Engineer; Lindsay McKenzie – Team Leader for Coleman Elementary; Alisha Olouglin – Team Leader for Short School; Bridget Hook – Team Leader for Sun Valley; Tracey Hessel – Laurel Dell PTA; Jeff Lippstreu – Budget Manager at San Rafael City Schools.

Wendi shared that Travel Plans have been created for Glenwood, Davidson, Sun Valley and Venetia Valley and can be accessed for review on the Marin Safe Routes to Schools website at <http://www.saferoutestoschools.org/sanrafael.html>. Wendi discussed why it is important for each school in the San Rafael school district to develop a Travel Plan, and the role of the task force members in the development process. A Travel Plan explores the obstacles and opportunities that increase green travel to and from school. It documents the issues, identifies interventions and sets up an implementation program to decrease traffic congestion.

Wendi shared the San Rafael School District has volunteer Team Leaders at every elementary school, except Bahia Vista. The Task Force meetings are an opportunity for Team Leaders to share ideas regarding ways to increase safety level at their schools, and discuss strategies to encourage walking, biking and carpooling.

San Rafael Public Works Update

Leslie said that Public Works has completed the following SR2S projects in the past several years:

Sun Valley School – Sidewalk construction on Happy Lane

Laurel Dell School – Installation of sidewalk and ramps along Woodland Avenue. Upgraded crosswalks.

Bahia Vista – Sidewalk and Crosswalk improvements.

Canal area – A multi-use path is being constructed on the north side of East Francisco Boulevard between Vivian Way and Second Street, replacing the existing narrow sidewalk and relocating obstructions. Grand Avenue Bridge to be widened. Designs are ready for a new pedestrian bridge south of the intersection at Grand and 2nd into the canal area.

Leslie shared that they have applied for a One Bay Area grant for this project.

Coleman School – Raised crosswalk and ramps, construction of bulbouts

Davidson Middle School – A design consultant is being hired to address parking issues along Lindaro. Sidewalks and driveways need to be reconfigured. There needs to be a turn out on Lindaro Street so parents can pull out and drop off kids.

Wendi – There is Best Practices report being compiled by ITE with suggestions for incorporating bicycle and pedestrian traffic into freeway interchanges.

Team Leaders – School Updates

Coleman – Lindsay shared that the raised crosswalk project was completed this summer, but that the lift doesn't seem as high as it should go. Leslie said it is only three inches high; this is a requirement for emergency response vehicle times. Car damage becomes a potential problem if it is too high. It's designed for 25 mph.

Another safety issue near Coleman is where the sidewalk curves to the right. If a child is standing in the section where it bends and widens, then there is concern by parents that someone could get hit by a car. The crossing guard has placed cones in this potential danger area for children. Leslie said Public Works will go out and take a look at it.

Lindsay shared that vandalism to the wooden slats have been a problem off the pedestrian bridge that goes over 101. Leslie said they replaced and fixed the wooden slats. The area is prone to vandalism.

On a final note, Lindsay said that Coleman has benefited from the new sidewalks at Dominican College.

Davidson Middle School – Woodland Avenue is the primary safety concern and needs the most attention. Proposed improvements by Public Works include the installation of concrete sidewalks between Woodland Avenue and Andersen Drive; installation of radar speed feedback signs; installation of roadway signage with new striping widening of sidewalks; and installation of a barrier fence along the center median island on Andersen Drive at Mahon Creek Path to ensure proper and safe roadway crossings by students.

There is no sidewalk on the back side of Davidson which makes it dangerous for students that walk to school. The back area is a semi-industrial area with large trucks along the route. Crosswalks and sidewalks are needed. Lindsay said she can rally parents to write letters to request this.

Tracey asked if we can acknowledge the front of Davidson as a drop off zone – but this is not part of the grant. Crosswalks are needed in the front of the school. Cars double park along Woodland Avenue and Lindaro Street. There are no bike lanes.

There is a blind corner on Woodland Avenue between the school and church. Audrey asked if we can remove parking on Woodland. Woodland is the main bike route for bikers, but going Westbound you can't use Albert Lane so the only option is Woodland which is dangerous. All the parking along the church side of the street is residential parking. Can we do a study and park on one side of the street? Or restrict parking during peak community hours? Allow for overnight parking only?

Leslie said that parking removal on Woodland is not feasible at this point because it is heavily used. With budget cuts, we have no funding to enforce a no parking zone.

Wendi said in Fairfax here is a corridor study which identifies and signs routes for bikers, and suggested a corridor study for San Rafael.

Sun Valley School

Bridget shared that a bike path is the most desired infrastructure request, and is ready to rally her school community to lobby for bike lanes. Leslie said the process involves input from neighborhoods and residents, and sometimes it's hard to evaluate the need for parking vs. the need for bike paths. Budget is also a concern. When the economy starts to pick up again, we will be better able to forge ahead. Bridget suggested if there is not funding, then maybe enforcing no parking around the school during school hours.

Wendi that we still have strong local and state funding sources. We have our own transportation funding for infrastructure and crossing guards through the local sales tax. On a state level, Caltrans has had its own state program since 2000 and our national and state advocates are asking it to retain the federal funding at the same level. On a national funding level, national groups will continue to lobby for money even though it's more competitive to do so, than in the past.

Short School

Alisha said she would like to see a corridor study and a travel study for Short School. The school has major drop-off and pick-up issues due to the fact that many families drive from the Canal district. This makes encouraging walking to school difficult, unless parents can drop off at a remote location. The school also has a large bus population.

Wendi suggested scheduling a walk audit for Short School.

Glenwood

Glenwood is a school ideal for promoting walking. Enrollment is bursting. Lindsay asked if there is any talk about rezoning the schools. Jeff said more data is needed on that front before exploring options. It's been off the table for seven months. Enrollment is peaking and the increments of Kindergarten growth is slowing.

Laurel Dell

There is no crossing guard and the drop off area is not safe because the parking lot is tiny making it extremely difficult for cars to maneuver in and out. It's a very tricky passenger unload area in the front of the school off of Woodland. The Public Works Director determines location recommendations to forward to TAM for crossing guards. TAM

conducts counts from hired consultants and scores each location and then a ranked list is developed by TAM which has 70 crossing guards (last time there were 130 location requests). The evaluation process is expensive and lengthy. The master list will not be re-evaluated until 2014.

It was suggested to ask for volunteer parents to help with crossing. Wendi has the regulations to implement this process. One criterion is that volunteer process must be supervised by a staff person. Wendi will bring the criteria to our next meeting.

At our next meeting Leslie will bring the map of the bike pedestrian plan. Wendi will invite Fairfax Town Council member, John Reed, who spearheaded the Fairfax Bike Spine to present at the meeting. The overall goal of the Bike Spine project is to improve the safety of Fairfax's streets for student bicyclists, as well as increase awareness of motorists who share the road with them. Wendi added that corridor programs are the next phase of the Main SR2Sprogram, so the Fairfax Bike Spine is a great role model for the rest of our county.

Our next meeting is scheduled for January 14, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. at the Davidson Middle School conference room.

