



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



**San Rafael Safe Routes to Schools Task Force
Zoom Meeting Notes
Wednesday, July 22, 2020**

Attendance: Wendi Kallins- Safe Routes to Schools, Tamara Rich -Team Leader Sun Valley School, Kate Colin-San Rafael Vice Mayor, Dan Zaich School District Capital Facilities Program, Gwen Froh- Safe Routes to School Program Director, Dave Pedroli- School District Operations, Peggy Clark- Safe Routes to Schools, Lauren Davini- San Rafael Traffic Engineer, Leslie Garber -Mark Day Assistant to Head of School, Patrick Golier- Parisi Assoc Engineer, Jean Severinghaus- Volunteer BPAC, James O'Brien- TAM Crossing Guard Consultant, Rob Purvis- Parent Vallecito School, David Parisi- Parisi Engineering, Monika Kainz-Parent Laurel Dell School, Maika Llorens Gulati - School Board Member, John Neville- County of Marin Traffic Engineer, Amy Probst- Parent/ Teacher at Coleman School, Bill Guerin- San Rafael Director DPW

Developing Transportation Plans

Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) team has been attending meetings county wide and with the Office of Education. School Districts are focused on developing plans to run classes and SR2S is focused on supporting plans to get students to schools safely.

As of this meeting how and when schools will reopen has not been determined. This meeting was scheduled during the summer to plan ahead and to present concepts; no decisions were expected to be made during this meeting.

County wide districts are struggling with how to use the yellow bus and Marin Transit services. The possibility of more families driving students will have a negative impact on safe transportation options for students. When the number of vehicles increases during school hours there will be significant traffic issues, that will have a negative impact on the neighborhoods too. Safe Routes to Schools will continue to encourage safe walking and rolling to school practicing physical distancing.

Toolkit presentation

COVID [Back to School Toolkit PowerPoint Presentation](#)

Please view this presentation used during the Zoom meeting. Notes/comments will refer to the PowerPoint slide by title. Not all slides have comments below.

Planning for the Fall - 3 Objectives- slide

A transportation committee needs to be created for each school to ensure roadway space using pop-up facilities and locations for park and walk are identified in advance of school reopening. Pop-up facilities are usually temporary and create space for students to spread out when walking and rolling. The existing Bike Ped Master Plan, the Safe Routes to Schools Plans and suggest Route Maps can be the first resources to identify needs in specific locations.

Volunteers from the community are needed; parents, neighbors, active Safe Routes volunteers, school Site Councils and BPAC members would be great resources. SR2S staff will be available to develop an encouragement plan; however, they cannot be at every school. Safe Routes to Schools does not have the resources to work with every school in the county. We are asking volunteers to create a temporary committee to take the necessary steps. Some schools are close to each other; Laurel Del and Davidson Middle School; this can be an opportunity for schools to work together; pooling resources.

Safe Routes is available to provide encouragement resources to encourage students/families to use the temporary facilities.

Tools to Consider- slide

Street Adaptations are all about finding space on roadway networks that lead to schools to provide additional space for walking and biking while physically distancing.

Sidewalk Extensions- slide

The advantage of these options is to allow students to spread apart while traveling and waiting to enter a school campus. Useful for narrow roads or without sidewalks. The challenges are for vehicle drivers to be aware of these temporary facilities. *Proper and effective messaging to all users is very important.*

Bike and Roll Lanes- slide

These provide dedicated space for students to travel safely on bike routes that are separated from vehicles. These are best used on roadways that have a high volume of

students cycling; streets leading directly to a school and roadways adjacent to shared use paths, parks and waterfronts.

Slow Street- slide

These facilities are being used throughout the Bay Area and the country. They are used on quiet residential streets that are closed off to through traffic; that still allow access for emergency and local vehicle access. They are typically used in grid roadway networks where drivers can find an alternate route. The materials used are sandwich boards at the end of each block, with signs discouraging through traffic.

One-Way Traffic Flow- slide

Good options for a street that will also include a bike way or if a school is making use of pick-up/drop-off for drivers. Good for roads with parking lanes and without existing bike lanes.

Additional Engineering Tools-slide

The information on this slide are not: temporary, quick build or used in pop-up scenarios. They are engineering tools that may be considered.

- Pedestrian recall setting - The photo was taken in Berkeley; the city eliminated the need at many intersections for the pedestrian to have to push a button to activate the crossing signal. They are now pre-set to display the “walk” symbol.

- Signal timing for active transportation (urban areas)

This may not be appropriate in these towns; they are used on city corridors with a high volume of cyclists to manage traffic lights to coincide with bicycle speeds..

- Speed Management/Traffic Calming

Used to slow traffic to make a roadway safer for all road users including students traveling to school.

Pop-Up Considerations- slide

Some of the resources needed to separate traffic from students; sandwich boards, cones, planters (long term pop-up use) something that is “forgiving infracture” (not steel or heavy). Barriers that will protect students walking and rolling and not damage vehicles.

Predictably is very important. Do not create a bike way going against the flow of road traffic. Cyclists should ride with the flow of vehicle traffic. Establish a complete suggested route network that leads directly to the school(s).

Park and Walk- slide

The [Office of Education](#) provided guidelines (check for updates) on routes for entry/exit to a campus. Routes will be specified for cohorts; using as many entrances and exits as feasible. The SR2S recommendations of pop-ups and park and walk supports the school's plans to reduce the number of vehicles and students congesting at the front of a school. Staggered start/end times for a school day could also reduce congestion.

Loma Verde Elementary School piloted a Park and Walk campaign last year. The program was a huge success. On average 160 vehicles were driven onto campus during drop off; this was reduced to 80 vehicles during and after the campaign. Lawn signs were used to identify suggested parking locations in neighborhoods.

Park and Walk locations provide an opportunity for families with multi age students or cohort carpools that live too far or do not have enough time to walk/roll the full distance to campus. This SR2S program has already proven to be a viable program, the learnings are documented from the pilot and marketing materials are available. The Department of Public works supported SR2S by making sure there were no unintended consequences for the locations that were identified.

PedPods and Pedal Pods- slide

These are alternatives to a “walking school bus”. If/when schools identify cohorts for classroom needs; these cohorts could also meet up to walk/roll to school while maintaining physical distance. These could be 2-3 families not to exceed groups of 6 students/adults traveling to school together. Another option for a Pod are the social bubbles some families are forming outside of school; parents could take turns supervising the pod. There are a number of resources available throughout the bay area on walking cohorts. Please contact SR2S for more information.

Encouragement programs

Encouragement for Active Travel- slide

Safe Routes staff are here to support efforts to maintain active travel to school. There is a concern that less families will want to carpool and the bus services is still to be determined. Cycling has increased nationally during this time. SR2S will continue to encourage walking and rolling to/from school; this may be the only exercise some students get each day. Health professionals have stated COVID is less dangerous outdoors while physically distancing. SR2S on-line education curriculum is a resource to continue these healthy practices.

Safe Routes Education and Encouragement Programs

SR2S staff are looking at encouragement programs/challenges without campus welcome tables; this does not mean walking and rolling will not be promoted.

Safe Routes to Schools now has [Remote Learning](#) resources for all “classroom” curriculum on-line for grades 1-8th grades in English and Spanish. These lessons were distributed to all the schools in the county this past spring. These will be prompted in the fall too.

[Savvy Family Cycling with Youth](#) is a resource for parents to use when teaching their children. The lesson provides tools to evaluate when a child is ready and how to ride on the roadway together. An example is parents/adults are suggested to ride behind students to keep an eye out vs. in front of them where they cannot see behaviors.

Summer Bike Week

During the spring SR2S hosted a Bike Week for middle school students. Over 500 students participated. Now there are two Summer Bike Weeks contests for elementary and middle school age students; 5 days of fun and education activities; participants can win ice cream for their family.

[Family Bike Week](#)- elementary age

[Bike Week](#) - middle school age

Volunteers were asked to share these resources on their local NextDoor network. SR2S would also welcome support to continue promoting these resources at the schools.

A [Social Distancing Tips for Walking and Rolling](#) is available in English and Spanish. Over 500 copies were distributed this spring via the Canal Alliance.

Traffic Committee - Steps to Take- slide

Safe Routes to Schools does not have the resources to work with every school in the county. We are asking volunteers to create a temporary committee to take the necessary steps. Volunteers are needed to start planning even without having all the information from the county/school district. Advance communications with the DPW will help to identify what could or cannot work for a pop-up. ***Communications are also essential with the school community and surrounding neighborhoods in advance if access to a school changes.***

Pop-up locations must be approved by the town or County Dept of Public Works (DPW) in advance. The ideas suggested by Safe Routes to Schools are based on “best practices” from [NACTO](#). The DPW must sign-off and potentially issue a permit.

One option is to install a pop-up that would remain in place throughout the school year; this would be managed by the DPW. Focus should be on locations immediately adjacent to the entrance to the school.

Most pop-up resources (sandwich boards and cones) are very temporary; they are set up before the start/end of a school day. These types of pop-ups are not managed by the DPW; they do not have the staff. Volunteers could also put out supplies if approved through an encroachment permit and instructed by public works in advance. One school district suggested reaching out to the school principals, asking them to inquire with the PTA to take the lead. BPAC volunteers may also be available. All school districts have limited resources especially during this time; community support is needed.

Discussion

As of this meeting some of the guidance by the Local Education Agency (LEA) and from schools from the state shared students could potentially ride on a bus: must wear face covering, sit in a staggered way (window/aisle), one student per bench. They could cut ridership in half (28 students vs 56).

Volunteers were asked to use the schools SR2S suggested routes maps to identify locations for enhanced temporary facilities by a school. San Rafael is a large town compared to other town's school districts. It is important to identify and present needs as soon as possible for review and possible approval by the DPW. A recommendation was made for Mark Day and Vallecito representatives to connect, share resources and connect with school principals about ideas; then the DPW. Coleman had been selected as one of the SR2S pilot schools for pop-up facilities this fall. A suggested SR2S route map will also be available.

A concern was expressed on how to identify locations and doing that to assure the temporary facilities will be used. It will be difficult to determine what the student flow will be. The city wants to support efforts; detailed information is key to make the best decisions in advance.

County wide Department of Public Works Directors will be meeting in early August. SR2S will request to present this presentation to them for review and consideration. Hopefully after this information is presented the DPW departments can develop standardized messaging, tools, and processes for consistency across the county.

The lack of bus service is a big concern for many of the students that do not have other means of transportation. A request was made to SR2S; how to support these students/families that have limited resources and live in neighborhoods with very narrow

roads that are already congested. SR2S survey data states 60% of Bahia Vista students walk and almost 100% of the San Pedro are bused. This is a very challenging situation because there are no defined walking/rolling options/routes for students to get to San Pedro School.

The School Board has discussed the challenges with students accessing Vallecito School campus using several access points. Considering a hybrid schedule with possibly staggered start/end that still leaves for potential bottlenecks once students arrive at campus. The surrounding roadways are busy with traffic too. Identifying and obtaining approval for Park & Walk locations in advance will be very important.

The crossing guard program will be funded for the school year. The program managers have not determined how the staggered start/end times will impact the scheduling and budget for the year. The number of schools opening and not opening could influence the budget and scheduling of crossing guards.

A recommendation was made for students biking or scootering to add their contact information to their bike/scooter. If a campus was shut down last minute, this could help get items returned to students. Consider protocols for securing equipment if a cohort needed to leave campus.

Cycling can elevate a person's body temperature; how will the school plan for a student who's temperature reads over the stated protocol? The school district recently discussed health checks; currently schools will be requiring each student/family to answer a health check questionnaire before heading to school. This will include a temperature check. Temperature checks are not planned for the start of each school day at this time on campus.

Monticello and Trellis intersection

Rob Purvis lives very close to this intersection, has children in the school district and coaches sports. He is very familiar with the challenges students encounter travelling to and between the schools while using the suggested safe passage way. He is suggesting traffic calming measures be considered on Terrellis, north of Mark Day to reduce the number of drivers using the intersection. Parents short cut into Mark Day parking lot in the morning.

He also suggested blocking off the end of Trellis where it meets Monticello.. He has drafted a map and will share with Safe Routes to Schools, City of San Rafael DPW engineers, school administrators and the School Board.

Next Zoom Meeting

Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 5:00pm