



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Ross Valley Safe Routes to Schools Task Force
Zoom Meeting Notes
Friday January 15, 2021

Attendance: Wendi Kallins- Safe Routes Projects Coordinator, Peggy Clark Safe - Routes to Schools, Gwen Froh Safe Routes to Schools- Education & Encouragement Director, Renee Goddard-Fairfax Council Member, Scott Schneider- San Anselmo Asst DPW Director, Nancy Vernon - Aide to District 2 Supervisor Katie Rice, Marci Trahan- School District Superintendent, Tarrell Kullaway - MCBC Executive Director, Brian Colbert- San Anselmo Town Mayor, Kelly Zalewski- Main Transit School Operations Analyst, David Gehman - Director of Maintenance and Operations, Garrett Toy - Fairfax Town Manager & Public Works Director, Jennifer Schriber - Parisi Transportation Engineer, Matt Farber- Lead Instructor for Safe Routes to Schools, Gina Singleton- Hidden Valley Team Leader and Sleepy Hollow Homeowners Association,

New Lead Instructor for Safe Routes to Schools

Matt Farber will be developing and delivering curriculum for 1st-12th grade students, focused on the importance of bicycle safety, healthy lifestyles, active transportation and the environment. His background is working with students and bicycle touring.

Safe Routes Curriculum

Safe Routes to Schools pedestrian and bicycle safety revamped curriculum is available for live instruction virtually and for remote learning students. Safe transportation education continues to be an essential need especially now that students are traveling to and from school in the morning, mid-day and afternoons with hybrid schedules. Contact peggy@marinbike.org for more information.

All of the public elementary schools in this district hosted Safe Routes to Schools pedestrian and bicycle safety education classes this fall. The PE teachers along with the administration have been very supportive. Classes remain to be scheduled at White Hill Middle School.

Two of our on-line classes feature drone footage for a Virtual Walk Around the Block and Virtual Bike Rodeo. Local students filmed and role played cycling and crossing intersections while practicing skills learned in Safe Routes classes.

[Pedal Playground](#) and [Chalk-N-Walk](#) encouragement resources are available to all schools in the county- Check Them Out! Campuses that are closed during after school hours; as they are in Ross Valley have a challenge offering Pedal Playground to students right now unless the school allows students to ride on campus during school hours. The district may be able to consider them after protocols change.

Return to School Update

Marci reported that all the schools are open including White Hill with 6th grade students since early fall. The upper grade students will return in January all using a hybrid schedule. Students are split into three cohort groups and their days on campus rotate. There is a cohort for students that have chosen not to attend classes on campus. Students not on campus on a given day all Zoom in with a teacher.

Students and families have been very supportive by following the recommended safety protocols by wearing masks, staying home when feeling ill and social distancing. If a student is feeling ill they can stay home and use Zoom to still attend school.

The number of entrances per campus depends on the layout of the campus. Families were asked in a survey what entrance they would use and then they were assigned that entrance. This was a well thought out plan that has been working.

The school district is looking to expand the number of hours students are on campus. One of the biggest challenges is staffing availability with the hybrid schedule. Teacher aides are needed to support the schedules. The vaccine will help; however 6ft of distancing is still required; this limits the amount of students permitted in a classroom at one time.

The school district partnered with the YMCA and applied for grants to fund more “learning hubs” for the free and reduced lunch program students. This provides more student time on campus supported by YMCA. They will be applying for the middle school next. The district fully understands it is critically important for all students to receive social and emotional support during these challenging times.

The Health Dept has not addressed how or when the 6 foot distancing required will change. Face coverings will be required for a long time to come. Hopefully the campuses will be open to all students next school year.

Brain commented on how grateful he is as a parent to have the schools in session. He feels it is vital for students to have social interactions with the teachers and other students. He is impressed with the schools districts ability to even open campuses and that they are considering expanding the length of time each day.

The students at White Hill that walk or roll to campus have specific entrances/exits they must use. A recording was made for the students to visualize the routes better. Adult drivers drive up to campus and unload at the sign that applies to the grade level of the student(s) in the vehicle. Students cannot be dropped off on Glen Drive to avoid congestion. All students are directed to handwashing stations and there are 6ft space markings all over campus.

Yellow Bus update

The Yellow Bus service will not be operating this month. There were a number of issues considered that influenced this decision; including the cohort system and space needed to line-up students at bus stops. A suspension has been issued to Michaels Yellow Bus company for this academic year. Marin Transit (MT) did exercise their “first option” which enables MT to have the contract in place for next year. If they need to extend the current suspension they can do that into next school year. The school district will be updating the school communities.

Marin Transits fixed route service continues along Drake Blvd. Three routes service the middle school. There are still capacity limits: largest bus is 9 passengers, smallest if 4 passengers.

Report on Transportation Plans

With the hybrid schedules congestion has not been an issue county wide; however it is still very important to have students walking and biking to school for health, education, climate and developing independent thinking reasons.

Butterfield Road

Nancy reported the committee met regularly for several months at the start of the school year to help plan for students maintaining social distancing.

The DPW's from the towns and county attended the meetings. They considered several resources including sidewalk stencils and cones for separating the bike lanes to provide more space. The committee adopted "a wait and see approach" due to how the schools were managing students approach/exit of campuses. Massive congestion has not been an issue at this point. The issue that continues to come up is vehicles parking on the shoulder of the road blocking the bike lane for students headed toward campus. The county will be sending out a communication to the neighbors; asking them to not allow service vehicles to park on the shoulder.

The Safe Routes to Schools [Chalk N Walk](#) program was a huge success. Encouragement and safety messages were chalked outside of the schools. Encouraging students to walk and roll to campus must continue even if congestion is not an issue right now. Safe Routes to School does not want to see the cultivated behavior of walking and rolling diminish because heavy traffic is not a challenge right now.

Safe Routes continues to offer monthly encouragement activities to the school community. School support is instrumental for messaging; it can tend to get lost with all the updates being provided to families weekly/daily.

Wade Thomas School

Park and Walk locations were identified by the previous team leader who moved away this past fall. Since then no action has been taken.

Fairfax Town Report

Renee reported that during this "slow time" the town is looking at potential infrastructure opportunities and reviewing previous plans for bike lanes down Broadway. Many ideas/opportunities were developed when the town was opening up streets to outdoor eating and creating space for downtown users. Some of those ideas will be reviewed.

The only project underway right now is the high visibility flashing beacon at the Azalea crosswalk. The project needs to be designed and bid out; the schedule is summer 2021. This project is funded by TAM.

San Anselmo Town Update

The DPW has been very busy responding to COVID needs and managing projects with staff furloughs, They are focused on moving projects forward.

The DPW is about 90% completed with the design of the sidewalk along Drake Blvd by Butterfield. This was originally the Brookside Sidewalk Gap Closure Project; project scope was reduced and now it is just on Drake Blvd only. The next step is to schedule a public Zoom meeting and send out notices to the neighbors. DPW hopes to schedule construction for this summer.

Two of the three sidewalk gap closure projects have been completed. The final one will start up on Sunnyside by Wade Thomas School. This project includes a mid- block crosswalk that connects a pathway toward the school. Public notices will be sent out to neighbors.

The Bike Spine project is almost completed. CalTrans paperwork needs to be submitted. Several 100 public notices would be mailed to the property owners along 3 miles of the route. Construction would begin spring/ summer 2021.

The Wade Thomas PTA president had identified safety issues crossing Drake Blvd at Barber Ave. The control is very old; the contractor suggested upgrading one component to a lead pedestrian interval. This has the “walk signal” come on before the green light for the vehicles. This helps pedestrians cross the street before the drivers begin.

There are other project studies underway including “The Hub Study is an analysis of all the traffic patterns at the hub in San Anselmo. The study will evaluate all modes of travel: bikes, pedestrians, public transit and vehicles to enhance safety and circulation. It will include short, medium and long term improvements options. One design option is a roundabout/traffic circle. Community meetings will be scheduled and announced to collect

ideas. The town is excited to learn what options are available to make using the hub safer and efficient for all users.

Other Topics:

At the next meeting Safe Routes will present the Ross Valley Issues list. This working document will be updated with new issues to be discussed, prioritized and planned for.

Safe Routes to Schools(SR2S)- Post COVID

A request was made for an explanation of how SR2S has and plans to adapt to the new normal for school age students and their families actively getting to schools.

SR2S will be developing a work plan making use of the new education and encouragement resources. It was recommended that an SR2S report be prepaid to help identify how the programming can be incorporated into a town's planning; Slow Streets was an example provided. The recent increase in walking and cycling across the county has been a positive result of the pandemic. This is an opportunity for SR2S and towns to identify and develop facilities that encourage students traveling to schools safe and healthy.

The ToolKit developed by Safe Routes to Schools is a good example of how the county and towns (Department of Public Works) worked together to identify temporary and in some cases permanent facilities for safer travel. Program volunteers are a key component of SR2S successes; they too demonstrated their support of the program this year. The TAM Safe Routes to Schools Advisory Committee will be a helpful resource; along with input from elected officials county wide to help identify how the program will grow and adapt.

Since March 2020 the program pivoted quickly by creating on-line education and encouragement resources for students at home and attending schools with hybrid schedules. Existing and new partnerships have been strengthened this year including constituents from across the Bay Area. The Safe Routes to Schools National Partnership has developed and shared best practices that are being implemented throughout the country.

The Zoom meeting format has also been a positive result. More people are able to attend meetings that normally would require additional travel time and other conflicts.

Traffic Study for Butterfield Road

A one page scope of work has been developed with the input from the local and county DPW, TAM and Parisi Engineering. The group agreed to put the study on hold until next fall. The partners all agreed if the community is not involved changes will not be made. The community influences the traffic patterns and use of the roadway and they must be included if improvements are to be implemented in the future.

Next Zoom Meeting

Friday, April 30th at 10:00am.