



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



## **Ross Valley Safe Routes to Schools Task Force Friday, February 28, 2020 Meeting Notes**

### **Attendance:**

Wendi Kallins, Gwen Forh and Peggy Clark- Safe Routes to Schools, Mark Reagan- Ross Valley School District, Nancy Vernon-Aide to Katie Rice, Christopher Whitlock- Marin Transit, David Gellman- Director of Maintenance Ross Valley School District, Gina Singleton- Parent Hidden Valley School, Renee Goddard- Mayor Fairfax, Scott Schneider- San Anselmo Dept of Public Works, Central Marin Police Officer

### **Updates and Reports:**

#### **San Anselmo Town Update**

##### **CrossWalk Study**

The Crosswalk Study completed by Parisi Engineering is now being reviewed by the county in a two-step process. The county is focused on completing the review in the next couple of months; the Butterfield corridor is a major focus for the study.

1. Determine if currently unmarked crosswalks at intersections warrant stripping.
2. Determine if a crosswalk needs additional stripping.

##### **Safe Pathways Grants Received**

The Safe Pathways Grant was awarded. One large grant was awarded for the Saunders Ave at Sir Frances Drake intersection. A [HAWK beacon](#) will be installed.

Another grant application was submitted for the completion for sidewalks that meet dirt walkways. There are a number of locations where the sidewalk will be added to complete the sidewalk. There are some locations where residents want to keep the rural feel with the dirt path vs paved. The town does have the right-of-way to make the improvements; the town is working with the residents. This project will take a good deal of coordination.

The design meeting held earlier this year addressing the Brookside sidewalk was not well attended. The people that did attend expressed minor concerns; the people that were really pushing for it did not attend. The “park and ride” at Butterfield and Drake will be losing some parking spaces. Another meeting will be scheduled and announced to the community.

The town has funding for one section for this Safe Routes to Schools requested project; therefore, one segment will need to be identified nearest the school. The area at Sir Frances Drake Blvd seems like the location that will benefit most people. Many people are seen walking in the roadway on the northside of Sir Frances Drake Blvd.

### **Brookside Sidewalk**

The “Brookside Sidewalk Gap Closure Project” has been approved. The town will do what they can to reapply for funding to support sections not funded currently.

A possible option for additional funding is SB1, a major state transportation program that allocates funding for every jurisdiction. The City of Novato used this funding to put in Sidewalks on Vineyard Road; this could be an option for San Anselmo too.

A sidewalk to Hidden Valley School on Green Valley Court also needs a funding source.

### **Bike Spine**

The Bike Spine is a slow moving project due to staff availability. The project includes signage, striping and green backed sharrows. A request was made to change the suggested route from Richmond Road to Kensington Road as an option to keep students away from the roads with the most traffic when possible. The next hurdle will be working with Caltrans for local assistance and approval.

The intention for the Bike Spine is to identify a suggested safe route for students to cycle. Many families do not want their child cycling on Butterfield Road. The “backway” roads have other challenges: parked vehicles, dogs, driveways, cut through traffic. At this time there is not one unanimous decision on the best suggested route. There is an option to note both suggested routes on the map. Roadways would include route signs and road markings. One could be labeled “primary” route and “alternative” route.

Scott recommends the northbound route have both routes and the south bound be one route. Sharrows for the south bound route would have the road stencil for one direction only. The DPW may encounter hurdles with Caltrans.

### **Other Updates:**

Request to fund a crossing guard for 2 locations: Brookside School and Butterfield and Drake. The Butterfield and Drake intersection is a controlled intersection; these tend to rank lower with the current TAM crossing guard evaluation process.

The task force members were asked to get creative when seeking options for approved funding for the safety of students. The fee to post a crossing guard is \$18,000.00 annually.

Options for funding:

1. Request both towns share the cost for an additional guard.
2. Seek funding resources: Community Service grants.
3. Consider moving a guard from one location to another. This was a successful option in Corte Madera. They approved moving a guard and in exchange a road facility was improved.
4. Stagger the hours for one guard to move from one location to another during a specific shift.
5. Consider the volunteer crossing guard program. There are still fees associated for this service including training and insurance.

### **Fairfax Town Update**

#### **Safe Pathway Grant Received**

The crosswalk on Azalea Ave approaching Drake Blvd does not provide pedestrians a safe crossing of Drake Blvd. A controlled crosswalk with flashing beacons is under consideration. The intersection for Azalea and Broadmore is 3 -way only; considered a very confusing intersection for all road users.

#### Cascade Canyon Drive

A lane was removed with roadway striping, it caused some problems initially, a curve speed sign was posted along with a speed radar feedback reader. Drivers have slowed down; over all, the nature of the traffic has changed. The police have also increased their presence in this location.

#### Other Issues

Pastori Ave at Center Blvd - Pedestrians have a short time to cross the road. Drivers tend to move forward into the roadway to make a right turn onto Center. The no left turn sign does not work.

Recently a pedestrian was killed in the Deer Park neighborhood. As a result, there has been a good deal of talk about speed calming for Dominga Ave and Creek Road.

Vehicle drivers tend to cut corners at unsafe speeds. Also, under consideration is staggering parking; to create a safer roadway for students traveling to school.

### **Overgrown Vegetation**

Document: [SFD Overgrown Vegetation- pictures](#) (provided by Nancy Vernon)

Specific sidewalk locations where vegetation has overgrown have been identified (photos in link above) Overgrown vegetation tends to force students to walk in the roadway vs. the sidewalk. The County has requested the Town of Fairfax look into these locations.

### **Eyes Up campaign**

The Eyes Up campaign was launched last fall; there will be another launch in the spring (probably now delayed to Fall). A focus group of 12 adults has been established. The group will be asked to review the messaging and to determine if pledges might be effective such as to silence their phones (app available) while driving and/or to put a sign in their vehicle "Pase Car Vehicle" stating they obey the posted speed limits.

### **Butterfield Road update**

A multi-modal traffic study will be conducted with the following partners: Marin Transit, County of Marin, Town of San Anselmo and Butterfield residents. The goal of the study will include providing education on transportation options available, what are the travel patterns of vehicle drivers, cyclists and pedestrians community wide. A committee will be formed to identify funding sources and needs and the scope of data to be collected.

The data will be provided to the community helping them identify the issues, where the gaps are and what changes are needed. The data will give the community information to make informed decisions.

### **Yellow Bus program**

Link to: [Ross Valley Yellow Bus Program- Closing the Gap for Families in Need](#)

One of the main hurdles for the program is the price. Ridership on the Butterfield route is low. Families do not want to pay the standard price for short distances when they live close to a school.

Ridership of families eligible for free and reduced lunch has dropped. The \$500.00 fee is too high for them. Resources are being researched to obtain funding to reduce their fee by 50%. In addition to reducing traffic the yellow bus program addresses the need for climate change behavior. Local businesses have expressed an interest in supporting these issues.

Marin Transit (MT) will be starting a lottery in May. Last year's crash of the web site was frustrating and action has been taken to avoid another one this spring. There will be a two-week window, the random feature of the lottery will be helpful as some busses are full; it will give all families a fair option to get in the program. People will enter their top three preferred routes

Bus drivers are experiencing unsafe driving behavior of drivers in Memorial Park. Drivers turn the buses around at Memorial Park. That is why it can be a good location. They are encountering safety issues getting the students on the bus. Marin Transit would like to get all the students on the bus at the same time. There are safety concerns for a proposed bus stop on Sir Francis Drake and Sunnyside Drive. The DPW will look at the issue and try to identify some solutions.

Renee requested Marin Transit not have a stop at Yolanda and Center; it is not a good location.

JEPA the Joint Exercise Powers Authority; the oversight group of the Ross Valley Yellow Bus JEPA is working on a funding mechanism to keep bus pass prices as low as possible.

### **85th Percentile Rule**

Update from [STREETSBLOG](#) Article [Zero Fatalities Task Force Report: Change the Way Speed Limits Are Set](#)

Zero Fatalities Task Force report has been released. Its conclusion: California needs to change the way it sets and regulates speed limits on its streets. A result of the report legislation will be updated with more traffic safety-related regulations. The report is supported by statistical analyses, stating that traffic fatalities and serious injuries increase with individual vehicle speed. Safe Routes to School advocacy groups are encouraging speed limits be reduced and permitting speed limits be reduced to 15pmh near schools.

### **Safe Routes Activities**

Safe Routes to School goal is focused on a countywide program to reduce vehicle trips to schools by 20%; this will require a shift in behavior. Messaging will be directed to asking families to Walk or Roll to school at least one time a week vs one time a month on Walk and Roll Wednesday as many schools currently promote.

Participating schools will be hosting a classroom contest; asking students how they get to school. May 2020 is Bike to School Month vs celebrating one specific day. Schools will be asked to nominate student Bike Heroes; a student from each will be honored at the end of the school year. (postponed until next year)

Park and Walk encouragement programs will continue. Families are asked to identify a safe and legal parking location off campus where they can safely walk to school.

**Set Next Meeting**

May 29, 2020 at 10:00AM