



Meeting Notes Meeting #9 – March 9, 2012

Participants: Jim Fraser, Sandy Donnell, George Rodericks, Wendi Kallins, Trisha Seyler, Peggy Curran, John Frick, Susan Moorehead, Marcia Short, Robert Betts, Simon Coyle

The group continued the discussion of school buses:

Susan Moorehead of First Student reported back to the group on a possible route analysis for Reed School District. Assuming all students rode the bus, preliminary results would indicate that numerous buses would be needed for each school within the district, which isn't realistic. Currently Reed School District has a total of three (3) buses which go to all schools. It was suggested that possibly a second survey should be sent out to parents to find out who would really commit to having their child ride the bus, if the cost were somewhat subsidized, before truly committing to any plan that would increase the number of buses for the District, however large or small. It was also suggested that the group should again try contacting the Traffix representative in order to find out the process Danville used to determine how many buses were needed to take traffic off the roadways in their area.

John Frick indicated that mixing the younger students from both Reed Elementary and Bel Air was not seen as a huge issue from the school board's perspective. There is also no regulation for smaller children to ride the bus, in terms of having booster seats, seatbelts, etc. These days, school buses are constructed with numerous safety features. It would appear that educating parents on how safe a bus really is might help change their perspective on allowing their younger children to ride instead of being driven to school. A "Let's Get to Know the Bus" day was suggested so that both students and parents could learn about how safe buses really are and therefore feel more comfortable allowing their child to ride.

If cost were not an issue, and the convenience was there, the group agreed that transferring 20% of children currently driven to school instead onto school buses would require an additional three (3) buses for the district, resulting in six (6) school buses for all three schools. The total cost of one bus is approximately \$70,000 per year (round trip). According to First Student, the more buses acquired for the district, the lower the cost per bus.

The group agreed that this was a community issue, and not just an issue for the school district to work out. In order to obtain three (3) additional buses, it would cost the district somewhere in the neighborhood of \$500,000 to operate all six (6) buses for the district before accounting for rider charges. A new business model would need to be drafted, and

should research ways in order to drive the cost per bus down (staggering school start times).

The group discussed ways to fund the additional three buses. One way would be to impose a sales tax; however sales tax revenues are a modest source of income on the peninsula, which would likely not produce enough funding. Another way would be to impose a parcel tax. Passing a parcel tax would have to come from a third party and not Reed School District, which has made it clear any parcel tax they seek, will be for educational purposes only. A parcel tax may be successful if it can be sold to residents not as funding of school buses but as a means to reducing the traffic everyone experiences on the boulevard. Such funds might also pay for road infrastructure improvements or crossing guards, or anything else that might improve the flow of traffic. Only Belvedere and Tiburon households would be taxed with a parcel tax (not Corte Madera), but it is possible there could be a surcharge on bus ridership from non-paying households to bring them level with those paying the tax. The question remains how much the parcel tax would need to be. A subcommittee was formed in order to explore this question and how a parcel tax might work; George volunteered to head up the committee, which will report back at the next meeting.

Next Steps

- The subcommittee comprised of George, Peggy, John, Sandy, Isolde and Diane will meet to discuss the size of a potential parcel tax, the cost breakdown of how much a parent might pay for a one year, round-trip bus pass, and what amount might make sense to subsidize. The subcommittee will report back their findings at the next meeting.
- Chief Cronin will report back to the group on how City of Danville successfully eliminated 1,500 cars off the roadways during peak school times.
- Discuss modifying the bell schedules to determine if three (3) additional buses would really be necessary, if one bus could potentially make more than one trip during the morning and afternoon.

Prepared by Laurie Tyler, Associate Planner for Tiburon
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