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SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Kentfield Task Force

Meeting Notes

April 29, 2011

Present (11)

Wendi Kallins – Program Director for Safe Routes to School; Laura Kelly –Volunteer Liaison for Safe Routes to School; Billy Cameron – Vice Principal at Bacich Elementary School; Amy Jones – Team Leader at Bacich; Jenny Walsh – Kent Middle School Vice Principal; Chris Rardin – California Highway Patrol; Paul Miller – Facilities Manager for Kentfield Schools; David Chellson – Deputy Sheriff for Marin County; Marnie Ganong – Bacich School parent volunteer; Heather McPhail –Bacich School parent volunteer; Sabrina Browne – Kent Middle School parent volunteer.

Back to School Package

Billy, Amy, Heather, Marnie and Shannon Pigott met to discuss and identify the different neighborhoods surrounding Bacich. Six neighborhood zones were identified:

1. Woodlands
2. Sir Francis Drake (Kentfield Fire House area)
3. Laurel Grove
4. Berens/McAllister
5. Greenbrae
6. Magnolia (Murray Avenue to Woodland Road “Northwest Larkspur”)

Each neighborhood was described as having its own unique challenges. To clearly define and tackle the challenges, the idea of recruiting a “Neighborhood Captain” was proposed. Each Captain will evaluate, explore and/or research the following:

- Identify families in each neighborhood
- Survey (what are families currently doing, what are the challenges of carpooling/walking/biking)

tes and maps
otion?

- Carpool options (using remote parking lots as a carpool meeting place ... Molly Stones, Woodland, etc)
- Carline Lot (Which carline is appropriate? "Green Lot" or "Red Lot?")
- Bus?
- Alternative drop-off locations for children (i.e. Creekside)

Wendi mentioned that the Marin Transit District does not plan on providing more school "tripper" buses, so this funding would need to come from parents. For some parents, the convenience of not having to drive may be worth it. However, the district looked into buses and found the insurance to be cost prohibitive even with parents paying.

The proposal of two parking lots at Bacich School (the Green Lot and the Red Lot) would help to eliminate a lot of the crisscross driving congestion that occurs at peak school drop-off and pick-up hours. The creation of designated parking lots (which would be assigned depending upon where you live) would help to alleviate clogging.

Rough drafts of route maps were prepared for two (of the 6) neighborhoods. Wendi shared that SR2S has engineers that can help to create maps all of the neighborhoods. Wendi also mentioned that the creation of the Neighborhood Captains could be used as a pilot program for Safe Routes to Schools, which is trying to create "SchoolPool Organizers" for every neighborhood in Marin. The overall goal is to create sustainable neighborhood communities that work together to travel green to and from school.

Wendi said that finding neighborhood leaders/organizers is key. PTA or Site Council was mentioned as sources to recruit active community members for neighborhood captains. Billy mentioned that Bacich has an Open House scheduled for May 18th, which might be a way to attract new parents for neighborhood captains. Wendi and Laura will meet with the Neighborhood Captain focus group on Monday, May 16th at 9:00 am at the Bacich conference room.

Back to School Night at Bacich is scheduled for late September. The goal is to distribute route maps for all 6 neighborhoods and a back to school package. The Task Force goal is to complete all the contents of the package by the end of July.

Police Education (Chris)

Chris distributed two handouts that could be used to educate parents and drivers. The first was a pamphlet with safety tips on safe bike riding entitled *Bicycle Riding*. The



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gressive Drivers Beware!” This flyer discourages emerging techniques. Both educational pieces can be tied in with encouraging safe biking and driving. Chris also handed out a Driver’s Education manual that might be helpful for student drivers at the College of Marin.

Wendi asked Chris about another pamphlet about the CHP’s education program offered at schools. Chris did not have it, but will bring it to the next meeting.

Rainy Day Options (Billy and Marnie)

Billy and Marnie are still in the process of brainstorming about rainy day options for drivers. Directing drivers to use appropriate parking lots in efforts to reduce traffic flow and congestion (especially on rainy days) will be a key part of the recommendations.

Letter for Kindergarten Parents (Wendi and Laura)

Safe Routes to Schools distributed a copy of a letter to distribute to all Bacich Kindergarten parents at Back to School night (please see *Attachment A*). The letter could also be forwarded to all Kindergarten teachers to e-mail to all Kindergarten parents. The letter discourages Kindergarten parents from driving their child to school (alone) for the next six years, and instead identify green travel options such as organizing a carpool or walking/biking on a regular basis. Kindergarten orientation was mentioned as another key time to provide a handout to encourage daily green travel. Billy suggested taking some of the tips in the letter and forwarding them to parents, instead of the long letter format.

Starting the Year Off Right! (Wendi)

Safe Routes to Schools distributed a second letter to give to all parents (please see *Attachment B*). The letter encourages walking and biking to school as a way to increase physical activity and confidence in children.

One of the main concerns with the launch of a green travel education and encouragement initiative at Bacich is the 2011 closing of the creek path. Construction is scheduled for August/September and it will impact all Bacich neighborhoods. Adjusting the timeline was discussed as an option so that the construction does not interfere with the long-term green travel initiative.

Laurel Grove Petition Update -

letter that was distributed at our last meeting is up
has been very successful at getting cars to move
when parked in the route that bikers use to get to and from school. CHP distributed a
letter to Laura Grove Avenue residents on March 25, 2011 regarding unsafe speeding
and general pedestrian/bicyclist safety. The letter is a reminder to residents to “share
the road” and a copy of the letter is attached (please see *Attachment C*).

Local residents/drivers are more aware that the area is an active bike route. As a
result, there has been in decrease in the number of cars parking on the street during the
peak school commute hours. Marnie shared that there is a noticeable increase in law
enforcements and tickets are actively being issued; the community is very aware of the
increased law enforcement presence. Plans to have “Share The Road” signage installed
are in the works. Neighborhood support is tremendous, except for one strong dissident
who is concerned about getting a ticket.

Education Programs for Safe Routes to Schools

Classes for 2nd and 4th graders have been scheduled at Bacich. Wheels in Motion
outdoors bicycle training for all 4th graders have also been scheduled.

Wendi asked Jenny about scheduling bicycle safety classes at Kent Middle School. Jenny
said that it is extremely complicated to schedule classes at Kent for 500 kids, and that
it’s not feasible at this time because of the packed curriculum. She also said that the
SR2S classes are a tough sell for the P.E. teachers. Wendi encouraged having a SR2S
instructor come to Kent to talk with the P.E. teachers. Jenny shared that she thinks the
SR2S classes are better for the 4th and 5th grade level. Jenny offered the Kent campus
for Safe Routes to School to host classes for 4/5.

WheelEscape Bike Club (After School)

Sabrina shared information about a new program created by the local League Cycling
Instructors called *WheelEscape* which is now offering after school bike classes to teach
children the safest routes in their own neighborhood. The classes teach children how
to safely ride their route to school from their neighborhood. The student/teacher ratio
is 6 to 1. Certified instructors teach children skills and rules of safety while they
increase endurance and become confident cyclists. The fee is \$75 per session, for a 4-
week session, or \$65 for Marin County Bicycle Coalition members. Fees include
training materials, snacks and water. A \$20 t-shirt fee is also requested. For more
information, go to www.wheelscape.com.



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Larkspur Recreation Center has hosted a bike club
might be a good resource. Billy also encouraged
coordinating with Larkspur Recreation.

**Our next Task Force Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 1 at 9:00 am in
the District Office conference room.**