



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



## **Mill Valley Task Force**

### **Meeting Notes**

**November 1, 2012**

#### **Attendees (20)**

Wendi Kallins – Director for Safe Routes to Schools; Laura Kelly – Volunteer Liaison for Safe Routes to Schools; Stephanie Moulton-Peters – Mill Valley Mayor; Deborah Cole – Street Smarts; Carey Lando – Marin County Public Works; Cecilia Zamora – Mill Valley Public Works; Maureen Parton – Aide to Kate Sears; Elizabeth Thomas – Mill Valley BPAC; Raoul Wertz – Mill Valley School Board; Kim McFerren – Old Mill School; Dennis Turchon – Strawberry Point School; Anne Zarraonandia – Edna Maguire School; Vickie O’Reilly – Park School; Willow Older – Park School; Cliff Waldeck – Park School; Rebecca Smith – Park School; Tricia Satake – Mill Valley Middle School; Steve Bode – Yuba Bicycles; Marlis Jansen – Mill Valley parent; Tim Ryan – Director of Maintenance and Operations, MV School District.

#### **Mill Valley School Updates by Parent Volunteer Leaders**

Park School has expanded its Safe Routes to Schools volunteer team to include Cliff Waldeck. The SR2S sign-up sheet on Back-To-School night was helpful in building a SR2S volunteer committee at Park. The new Principal this year is supportive of the SR2S program and activated the parent phone tree the night before International Walk and Roll to School Day. Park had a strong turnout on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Raoul Wertz attended the event. There is a parent employed for Clif Kid, and provided Park with extra goods to distribute at iWalk 2012 including mini flashlights. Bike racks were full and the school newsletter highlighted the event.

Dennis led the way for the third time at Strawberry Point School’s on International Walk and Roll to School Day. Mill Valley County Supervisor Kate Sears and CHP were present. Dennis does not have a SR2S team at Strawberry, but he shared that the PTA is very supportive of the program and lending a hand. Email was an effective communications tool in organizing and publicizing the event. The school community appreciated the new sidewalks and ramps at Strawberry Point. Dennis shared that his

5<sup>th</sup> grader will be at graduating this school year, so he will need a parent replacement to start training to replace him.

Anne shared that the major construction at Edna Maguire is creating congestion issues, but families are using the school bike paths more often. Driving hasn't been an option during the construction, so neighborhoods are walking and biking more to Edna Maguire to avoid a construction traffic nightmare. As a result, Anne said the travel by foot is creating a high level of community bonding and positive green travel energy!

Kim reported that Old Mill School had a large turnout on International Walk and Roll to School day, with full support from the Principal. Co-Team Leader Molly De Vries is no longer at the school. Kim said that every Wednesday Old Mill has a regular Walk and Roll to School Day. Students are greeted and get stamped if they have traveled by carpool, bike or foot. Juice is also offered to green travelers. Kim said she does not have a SR2S team in place, and is currently working independently. Stephanie said that scouting out other parents who are walking and biking to school is one way of recruiting extra help.

Stephanie shared that the Tam Valley team leader parent expressed an issue that kids in "masses" on International Walk and Roll to School Day get distracted in groups, and asked the Task Force for solutions on how to successfully herd kids. Elizabeth suggested having lead parents wear bright vests to "look" more official to the kids so they don't get out of line. Wendi said closing the street for a big event like International Walk and Roll to School Day is another possibility, and some towns do close streets near the school. Reminding parents to use and demonstrate biking hand signals while in route to school was another suggestion.

Mill Valley Middle School had a successful International Walk and Roll to School Day, and partnered with Whole Foods for donations. 8<sup>th</sup> grade WEB volunteers staffed welcome tables at multiple entrances as well as near the school bike racks.

### **Regular Walk and Roll to School Days**

Laura encouraged all Mill Valleys schools to work towards the goal in early 2013 of establishing a regular Walk and Roll to School Day every Wednesday. A guide on how to promote this was distributed to all Team Leaders. Using your school's web site and newsletter are the effective communications tools to launch a no car day.

Vickie asked about hosting a raffle at Park school with a prize donated by a local bike company. Laura said kids enjoy raffles and we have tickets in our office if you solicit donations.

Anne shared that sometimes an incentive (like a prize) isn't needed, and the passion to walk or ride is to help our planet.

Wendi addresses the issue that some neighborhoods don't have the ideal infrastructure to heavily promote walking or riding, but that driving part way and then walking the rest helps to decrease traffic congestion around a school. Parking and walking also makes it safer for regular bike riders by keeping down car traffic near the school.

## **Teachable Moments**

### *1. Sinaloa Middle School Student Biking Accident in Novato*

The Task Force discussed the tragic death of Hailey Ratliff, a Sinaloa Middle School student, who was biking home from school on September 27<sup>th</sup> when an SUV collided and killed her. Hailey was riding west on Novato Boulevard west of Sutro Avenue when she was struck in the roadway by the eastbound SUV.

Wendi shared that Hailey was unfortunately biking on the wrong side of the road and was hit head on when she darted out to cross. The speed limit for the area where Hailey was hit is a transition speed limit zone 45 mph, reducing to 35 mph closer to the school zone. There is no official report on the collision. (the report has since come out after the meeting "It is the determination of the NPD that the collision occurred because the bicyclist entered a roadway without yielding the right of way to an approaching vehicle," the report said.

Wendi shared that teaching children to ride in the same direction of traffic is very important safety message. Riding the wrong way in a bike lane is one of the most dangerous things you can do. Riding your bike on sidewalks is also not safe primarily due to interference with walkers and the danger of drivers backing out of their driveways. Safe Routes to Schools released the following statement after the Novato biking accident to all Marin County principals and SR2S Team Leaders at each school:

*The Transportation Authority of Marin's Safe Routes to Schools program is deeply saddened by the tragic death of Hailey Rattiff, a 7th grade student at Sinaloa Middle School who was struck and killed while bicycling home from school on September 27. Our hearts go out to her family.*

*We recommend that you dedicate next Wednesday's International Walk to School Day for the safety of all children and remind everyone to take proper safety precautions whether driving, bicycling or walking.*

*Drivers need to:*

- obey all traffic laws*
- abide by the speed limit*

- *be extra watchful for children on the roadway*

*Walkers and bicyclists need to:*

- *be alert and predictable,*
- *follow all traffic laws,*
- *be extra cautious when crossing the street*
- *make eye contact with drivers*
- *bicyclists should always ride on the right with traffic*
- *bicyclists should always wear a helmet*

*There is no way to guarantee against these tragic accidents, but we can increase everyone's safety by abiding by these simple safety rules.*

Wendi also shared that a parent in San Rafael created a bicycle safety agreement for their child to sign. Stephanie distributed the bike safety agreement to the Task Force. SR2S encourages parents to replicate this sample agreement with their child as a way to institute safe biking and walking to school. Wendi will forward the Word document to Mill Valley Team Leaders.

## **2. Tam Junction**

The Almonte bike path will be completed in December. The damaged bike/pedestrian lane delineator at the beginning of the northbound row will be replaced by the County Department of Public Works. DPW is evaluating options for the Almonte bike lanes south of Almonte/Miller. There are site line issues at some of the corners with tall landscape where there is a bridge that comes over Coyote creek. In the middle of the path is a telephone poll. Kids are riding against traffic, or on the sidewalk. They come down Shoreline and may stop at the gas station side and then ride against traffic. Maureen said the overgrown landscape areas have been trimmed, and vegetation issues are being managed.

Good News – TAM has approved a new Crossing Guard at Pine Hill at Shoreline. Caltrans is studying the Pine Hill Road area and making recommendations by the end of the month.

## **Marin County Project Updates**

Carey provided an update on several projects. CalTrans is working on the traffic light signal updates. Tennessee Valley Road and Shoreline Highway signals should be operational by the end of the month. Flamingo Road will be interconnected with the Tam Junction signal. Please give County Department of Public Works a call if you

notice any issues. Caltrans is getting poles and pedestrian push buttons. The signal is anticipated to be installed in December, and operational in January.

Carey also mentioned that work on Marin Avenue was completed this fall.

Anne thanked Carey for the completion of Evergreen Avenue sidewalk.

Carey said there is a new study in Tiburon to provide a bicycling facility on Harbor. Dennis shared they are looking to install a new crossing light by the end of the school year near Strawberry Point.

### **Mill Valley Project Updates**

Cecilia provided a detailed update on four projects, including good news that a letter was received today for the first project in the amount of \$391,000 in funding.

*Project One: Mill Valley Middle, Tam High School areas - Pedestrian & bicycle improvements on Miller Avenue. Funding is from TAM Regional Transportation Grant/ Other funding TBD. Total costs are estimated at \$6,000,000. Received local measure A Safe Pathway funding, looking for further/additional funding. Streetscape plan just adopted by City Council based on recommendation from streetscape committee. SR2S Cycle 10 application was approved for \$450,000 funds have been allocated, right of way research has started and design should start soon. HSIP Cycle 5 application was approved \$350,000 last week. This grant is for construction of sidewalk between Sunnyside and Forest St (North), as well as bicycle lanes on both sides of Miller between Sunnyside and Millwood Avenue. Timeframe: 2012-2014.*

*Project Two: Mill Valley Middle, Tamalpais High School areas - Multi-use pathway (Camino Alto), intersection curb extensions (Camino Alto/Miller Ave.) pedestrian crossing treatment (Miller Ave/Almonte Ave.) Funding: Federal SRTS 2nd Cycle (2010/2011). \$565,000 for Summer 2013. The Request for design funding has been approved by Caltrans. We got the surveying for the project area done. Right of way research for the intersection of Miller Avenue and Almonte has been complicated and surveyor is still working on determining City boundaries.*

*Project Three: Mill Valley Middle, Tamalpais High School areas - Multi-use path on Sycamore Avenue between Camino Alto & Sausalito/MV bike path. Funding is from Transportation Enhancements – Federal. Project is scheduled for Summer 2014. City is in the process of hiring the County to coordinate Right of Way certification and acquire easements from school district and Methodist Church. CTC extended due date for award of construction contract to October 31st of 2013. Design Engineering is 85% complete. City is coordinating with PG&E for the relocation of a utility anchor.*

*Project Four: Mill Valley Middle, Tamalpais High, Park, Edna Maguire, Old Mill*

*School areas* - Miller/Almonte Ped Activated Signal 204K, sidewalk extension (E. Blithedale @Elm/Alta Vista, 98K), vehicle feedback signs (Tam High, 36K), update schools traffic signs (Citywide, 65K). State-funded project scheduled for Summer 2013. Approval of design and construction funds was received. City is in the process of getting CEQA environmental clearance and right of way certification. Design work should start before end of 2012.

Anne asked if East Blithedale can install a guard rail near the stop sign (kitty corner the car wash). There is a slight drop off to the creek. Stephanie said that path is being repaved next year so we can add the request to the evaluation process.

### **Street Smarts**

Deborah provided an update on Street Smarts, a public education campaign to improve driver, pedestrian and bicyclist behavior.

Street Smarts is launching this month a new Safe Driving Pledge campaign. Marin County residents sign a pledge to drive safely and courteously on our streets. In turn, they receive the official “Safe Driving Pledge” static cling decal to display on the rear window of their vehicles. The primary purpose of the Pledge is to raise awareness and encourage motorists to drive within the legal speed limit on neighborhood streets.



For other Street Smart program updates, please go to URL:  
[www.StreetSmartsMarin.org/pledge.html](http://www.StreetSmartsMarin.org/pledge.html)

### **Cargo Bikes**

Mill Valley parent Marlis Jansen provided the Task Force with an update of how she is using an electric cargo bike for school transportation with her two children who are 7 and 9-years-old. Marlis said it's quicker for her to use her bike because to get to school because there is a fire road for part of the way. Marlis says cargo bikes are an alternative to minivan -- you can carry your kids and your groceries. It's a family bike.

Unfortunately, our Task Force meeting was cut short of time. Stephanie is inviting Yuba to lead at our next SR2S meeting. Steve expressed strong interest in working

with the SR2S program, and is offering our Team Leaders significant discounts to be early adopters of their electric cargo and utility bikes. He said cargo bikes are no longer a radical option, they are now for everyone and support our biking culture.

**The next Mill Valley Task Force meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2013 from 9 – 11:00 a.m.**

