



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Ross Valley Task Force MEETING NOTES January 28, 2011

Present (13)

Wendi Kallins – Program Director for Safe Routes to Schools; Laura Kelly –Volunteer Liaison for Safe Routes to Schools; Sharon Sagar – Ross Valley School Board President; John Reed – Fairfax Town Council; Jeff Kroot – San Anselmo Town Council; Chris Rardin – California Highway Patrol; Todd Milowe – San Anselmo Police Department; Bob Sutherland – Fairfax Police Department; Ted Fehlhaber – Wade Thomas Team Leader; Tanya Henry – Wade Thomas Team Leader; Jen Grenier – Upper Brookside Co-Team Leader; Bridget Clark – Co-Team Leader for Upper Brookside; Meghan McCarthy – Team Leader for Lower Brookside; Renee Goddard – Team Leader for Manor Elementary School - Tracy Smith, Principal, Upper Brookside.

Note: Public Works Directors were unable to attend this meeting for San Anselmo and Fairfax (Kathy Wilke retired in December) so the Task Force unfortunately did not receive infrastructure project updates at this meeting. Updates will be provided at our next meeting on May 6, 2011.

Law Enforcement Updates

Chris reported that CHP is ramping up and increasing law enforcement around schools as the result of parents calling to report areas of “poor driver behavior.” Tickets are now aggressively being issued to speeders, and to drivers that do not yield to pedestrians. A crosswalk sting was setup near Bacich School which was a big success. Chris also shared that KRON-TV covered the increased patrol in a news segment called “people behaving badly” which can be viewed at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZ_XYBjN3NY&feature=youtube_gdata_player

(You may get an error message – just hit refresh and it will run)

Bob reported that in Fairfax patrol cars have a regular presence at the following crosswalks: Sir Francis Drake near Manor Elementary School and White Hill Middle School, Oak Knoll and Miranda. Renee shared the police presence has been effective at getting drivers to slow down at the crosswalk areas. Renee also said it would be helpful

to get more patrol in popular kid neighborhoods where speeding does take place like Cascade and Deer Park. Bob responded that side street coverage is on their circuit too.

Todd reported regular police presence in San Anselmo at Butterfield and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Todd also shared that a collision study was recently completed which revealed the top 5 hot spots to be: 1) 600 block of SFD, 2) 1400 block of SFD, 3) 1600 block of SFD, 4) 300 block of Red Hill Avenue 5) 400-500 block of San Anselmo Avenue (Pine Street to Magnolia). Todd shared that increased law enforcement is being implemented in these five areas. Jen asked if Pasadena near Upper Brookside could get patrol attention. Jen also shared that it's an ongoing problem that cars park in the red zone at school. Ted said that they are aware of this problem and do park at the Woodland side of campus to discourage parents to stop blocking the red lane and crosswalk.

Town of Fairfax updates:

John shared that Public Works Director Kathy Wilke has retired and that the town is hiring an interim manager. John also shared that there is a discontinued sidewalk from Olema to Klaus that they are moving forward. There is also an unfinished sidewalk near the old location of Albertson's that is being corrected by the town.

Renee said that the DayCaring preschool parking lot is a dangerous area due to a water pipe which needs to be relocated. The funding is there, but it's a slow process getting the water pipe moved.

Brookside Configuration Change: Two Campuses to Two Independent K-5 Schools

The decision to change the Brookside Campuses from a K-2 and 2-5 configuration to two K-5 campuses was made by the Ross Valley Board of Trustees in the spring of 2010 in the context of planning for overall increasing enrollment and facilities needs in the Ross Valley School District. The split will take place over the next few years, starting next year. Sharon shared that the District is now working on readjusting boundaries and that a study will be completed by February 8, and then a decision reached in early March.

It was asked how the new boundaries will affect Manor and Wade Thomas. Sharon said there will be less student transfers allowed. Children will be highly encouraged to attend the Ross Valley Elementary School which is closest to their home. This will help alleviate major traffic congestion issues.

Brookside Lower has been patiently waiting for drawings regarding the new configuration. Wendi shared that they are having a hard time coming up with solutions. David Parisi is in the process of talking with Steve and they are close to finishing the final recommendations.

Sharon reported that new enrollment for each campus is expected to be 370 to 400 students. Tracy said that when she started at Brookside there were 270 students, and that today there are almost 400.

Meghan shared that there is now a transportation and safety Task Force for each school campus. Neighborhood contacts for surrounding neighborhoods are in the process of being identified for each the school. Specific issues will be identified at future meetings; the kickoff meeting was recently held but there are no published notes yet. Tracy is doing a great job spearheading the meetings. Brookside upper has the greatest challenge since most families live around Lower Brookside.

Meghan said Upper Brookside is a landlocked community. The clogged entrances to the school at drop off time are a key issue (Hidden Valley, Fawn Drive in the back area and Green Valley court). Double parking on Fawn Drive often does not leave enough room for cars to get by and it's generally unsafe. Hidden Valley is a narrow entrance. Another problem is parents who park or drop off on Butterfield, and then pull a dangerous u-turn.

Jen said that some neighbors are so frustrated that they get angry and start yelling at kids. Jen said a common courtesy push is needed. Tracy said tension is high across the board regarding major traffic congestion issues at drop off and pick up times. John said that car idling is another concern.

Renee suggested a remote drop off location. A walking school bus from Coletta was suggested for students and parents that wanted to join in. It's a 7 – 10 minute walk to Lower Brookside. It takes a driver 15 minutes to plough through to the chaotic drop off circle. Wendi added that the more people sign up for SchoolPool, then the more likely people will connect and travel to school together. Wendi also suggested a bus buddy system, and promote older students taking a younger student.

Tracy asked if parents can drop off near the bus stop. Sharon asked if we can we have the bus stop moved? Jen said it was already moved so it would be less of a tangled mess with the flow of drop off and pick up times.

Tracy said it would be helpful if children could be walked out to Butterfield at the end for the day. Jen asked if we can explore a possible drop off under the Eucalyptus trees where there is a wide area to pull off the road.

Wendi suggested that the circle be used for carpool drop offs *only*. This was a well received idea by the Task Force. Meghan asked if SchoolPool can develop an application for an iPhone. Wendi said she would look into it, but shared that we are developing a guide book for developing your neighborhood SchoolPool. Renee disagreed and said that face-to-face interaction is the best way to connect new families.

Room Parents were mentioned as a good way to get carpools organized by connecting parents. Sharon said that she thought Kindergarten is the best time to heavily promote and organize carpools.

Ted said that Principal's have a lot of power regarding telling parents what needs to be done during tough times. Sending more emails to parents from the Principals at Upper and Lower Brookside was suggested as one way to reach the masses.

Program Updates:

Our **Go for the Green** countywide school challenge is set to roll from March 14 to April 8. Please contact Laura@marinbike.org if you have any questions. Wendi added that there will be only one winner for each category; if there is an equal percentage of increase for two schools then other activities will be factored in such as the % of participation in the Go for the Green contest.

To be eligible for the Challenge, schools must:

- administer the student and parent travel surveys
- distribute program e-mails from SR2S via e-mail or newsletters
- publish the SchoolPoolMarin.org link on their website home pages

Green Trips to School Award: \$1,500

Awarded to the school with the highest percentage increase in Green Trips for the year

SchoolPool Award: \$1,000

Awarded to the school with the highest total number of registrations on the SchoolPoolMarin.org website.

Program Achievement Award: \$1,000

Awarded to the school with the highest percentage increase of Green Trips since joining SR2S programs.

Women on Wheels series returns this spring with women teaching other women biking skills. Just added - Moms on Wheels just for mothers - this course will give you the skills and confidence you need to bike safely with your children including a workshop and practice ride with your children. For more information, please contact Peggy@marinbike.org

Our next Task Force meeting is scheduled for Friday, May 6 at 10:00 am.