Novato Task Force

Meeting Notes

February 7, 2013

Present (10)

Wendi Kallins – Program Director for Safe Routes to Schools; Laura Kelly – Volunteer Liaison for Safe Routes to Schools; Deborah Cole – Street Smarts Coordinator; Jason Nutt – Novato Public Works Director; Mark Silva – Novato Unified School District; Mike Hanlon – Novato Public Works; Pat Eklund – Mayor of Novato; Andrew Barrington – Novato Police Department; Eric Riddel – Novato Police; Barbara Curtice – Sinaloa Middle School; Marla Fields – San Jose Middle School.

Street Smarts – New Safe Driver Campaign

Deborah provided a dynamic presentation on the new Safe Driving Pledge Campaign by Street Smarts. Speeding is 70% of the problem in Marin. The Safe Driving Pledge Campaign encourages residents to drive safely and promotes Marin County residents to be courteous drivers. In turn, the driver receives an official “Safe Driving Pledge” decal to display on the rear window of their vehicle. The purpose of the Pledge campaign is to raise awareness and encourage motorists to drive within the legal speed limit on neighborhood streets, and safely share the road with pedestrians and bicyclists. The Street Smarts campaign tracks local participation.

Deborah said the campaign has lots of materials and table displays to be used at community events, so please call if you need them. The website offers valuable education and resource tools in the ongoing campaign to improve driver, pedestrian, and bicyclist behaviors. The link to the Safe Driving Pledge Campaign is on the Street Smarts Marin website:

http://www.streetsmartsmarin.org/pledge.html

Mike said he has taken the pledge, and the decal is now displayed in his car. He shared that the Street Smarts website is well designed, easy to navigate a powerful information tool. Jason informed the group that Novato plans to make the Streets Smarts campaign a citywide initiative, and will work on seeking town approval. The best way to launch Street Smarts would be to tie-in with an upcoming Novato event. Jason will work on this to make it happen.
Wendi suggested working with Sinaloa Middle School, which has expressed a strong interest in utilizing the Street Smarts campaign and getting the police department involved in endorsing the program. Pat mentioned that she would be glad to help out. Another suggestion was to engage PTAs to help implement the StreetSmarts campaign in Novato.
Wendi mentioned that www.saferoutestoschools.org has a bike safety agreement for parents to use that can be accessed on our home page. It’s an agreement to be signed by a parent and their child, which outlines daily safe biking practices. Sinaloa has requested a modified version to pass out to all the middle school students. They and their parents will sign the agreement and the student will bring it back. Once signed, the child receives a bracelet.

Wendi also shared that Safe Routes to Schools has a new Distracted Driving program for high schools. The campaign is currently being implemented in three High Schools via their Peer Resource classes. http://www.marinij.com/novato/ci_22584952/hazards-texting-while-driving-brought-home-marin-teen Wendi said if there is any Peer Resource teachers that would like to have their class take ownership in implementing the campaign at their High School, to please contact her. Mark suggested contacting Vicky Romero the AVID coordinator at the Novato School District Office. Wendi said she would do that.

School Updates

Hamilton School successfully launched a regular “Walk and Roll To School” day every Wednesday, in efforts to reduce traffic and pollution. Their initiative was profiled this month in the February Safe Routes to Schools e-newsletter:

“Walk & Roll Wednesdays” launched at Hamilton School
Happy “green” students traveled by scooter, bike, foot and carpool on January 23, 2013 to officially launch “Walk and Roll Wednesdays!” at Hamilton School in Novato. The Safe Routes to Schools Volunteer Parent Committee at Hamilton led by Jason Davis and Vice Principal Paula Lytz were part of the team of adult “greeters” stationed at three school entrances as students arrived on campus. Children were given a green leaf sticker, which served as a reminder for students to travel green every Wednesday in efforts to reduce traffic congestion and pollution. If a student traveled by foot, bike or carpool, then they were given a raffle ticket. Lytz then drew one lucky student who she presented with a new bike helmet in class late Wednesday morning. The Hamilton raffle will be held every Wednesday until green travel becomes habit to the school community.

This is a school-wide effort. Hamilton is heavily publicizing their green travel initiative through PTA e-blasts to parents, school-wide phone announcements to families and the school newsletter. The Hamilton Student Leadership class made colorful posters to promote “Walk and Roll Wednesdays.” Davis shares that his mission is to transform the travel culture at Hamilton on Wednesdays so that parking lots are empty and families have fun by socializing while traveling to school.

Wendi reminded Team Leaders that March 11 through April 6, 2013 is our countywide GO GREEN Classroom Challenge. Several Novato schools are planning to participate in the contest, and those that would like to sign up should contact laura@marinbike.org to receive supplies and instructions.

The contest is a month-long Marin County initiative to reduce traffic and pollution by promoting green travel to school. A ‘green trip’ to school is when your child travels to school by walking, biking, carpool or bus. The classroom at a school with the highest percentage of green trips at the end of the four-week period wins a trophy.

Another upcoming important date is May 8, which is Bike to School Day. Safe Routes to Schools will supply all schools with colorful buttons to give to children as they arrive at school bikes racks on the morning of Bike to School Day. To prepare for Bike to School Day, Three
Riding with Youth workshops will be hosted this spring. Please contact peggy@marinbike.org to register in advance. The locations and dates are:

- **Saturday, April 6, 9:30 to noon - Tamalpais Community Center, Mill Valley**
- **Saturday, April 20, 9:30 to noon - Marinwood Community Services District, San Rafael**
- **Saturday, April 27, 9:30 to noon - Larkspur Recreation, Larkspur**

Wendi said that Safe Routes to Schools would like to encourage more group “Family Fun Rides” by bicycle to an end location. The route selected would be easy and possibly end at a park. Jason said in Santa Rosa this was done with a movie night ending in the park. Partnering with Parks and Recreation was encouraged. The Hamilton Movie Theater was suggested as a gathering point. Obtaining the families registered for the Tour De Novato was also discussed.

**Infrastructure Updates**

Wendi will prompt David Parisi to follow up from the San Jose Middle School walk audit from last fall.

Crossing on Ignacio Boulevard is dangerous and the City has been discussing ways for improvement. A crosswalk, island barrier in the middle and bike boulevard have been discussed as possible solutions. However, the City is not moving forward with ideas until input is received from David. A bridge has been proposed to cross the creek. Funds are limited, and financing is a concern. Wendi shared that Fairfax has implemented a low cost project to create bike routes with signage and stenciling. The bike routes wind through back neighborhoods.

Jason shared that the City of Novato and Alta Planning and Design will come to consult on plans for Sutro Avenue (Vineyard Road to Center Road) and Vineyard Road (Vivian Court to Eucalyptus Avenue). Four routes will be developed to improve the area. Public works are contacting the neighbors for feedback. Before pursuing funding, they will invite and engage the community to propose a feasible design. A bicycle plan implementation meeting was scheduled for February 11, 2013 at 7 pm.

A pathway along Nave Drive in front of the new gymnasium at Hamilton School was mentioned as another infrastructure improvement needed. A feasibility analysis is needed, as well as financing for this project.

Wendi said that the funding for Safe Routes to Schools grants is more competitive than in the past. The reason is that SR2S is now consolidated with other programs seeking transportation enhancements and alternatives. There is no separate fund for infrastructure. The national partnership is working hard to reverse the decision in California. A petition to dedicate funding for Safe Routes to Schools is being circulated by the Safe Routes National Partnership. Click here to sign the petition: www.surveymonkey.com/s/M7M5J5L

**Novato Police Updates**

A new OTS grant has been received for Distracted Driving operations and enforcement outreach including enforcement – speed, seat belt and pedestrian crosswalk.
Car accidents slightly declined last year while education outreach efforts have gone up. DUI checkpoints were implemented October 1 – December 30, 2012. There has a notable increase in the number of DUI arrests. There is a higher level of police expertise due to better training in the detection of drinking and/or drugs.

Pat mentioned that there are still some very dangerous crosswalk zones. For example, the one near City Hall on Sherman is not safe. Pedestrians don’t make it all the way through the crosswalk. What can we do to increase safety? Can we add flashing lights? Marla added that the crosswalk near the 101 on ramp at Bel Marin Keys and Ignacio Blvd. is another dangerous crosswalk. Wendi said they had asked for a No Right Turn on red at that location. Jason said there are multiple safety issues at that corner. Jason said CalTrans has jurisdiction of that corner, not the city.

Our next Task Force meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 18th at 7:00 p.m.