



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Safe Routes to Schools
San Rafael Task Force
Meeting Notes
Thursday April 20, 2017

Attendees:

Dian Allen- Terry Linda Homeowners Association, Amy Beresford- San Rafael BPAC, Molly Blauvet- Parent Davidson MS, Damon Connolly-County Supervisor, Bjorn Gripenburg- - MCBC Policy and Planning Director, Bill Guerin-DPW Director City of San Rafael, Peggy Clark, Safe Routes to Schools, Rachel Kertz- Board Member San Rafael School District, Maika Llorens Gulati- Board Member San Rafael School District, David Carey, Capital Facilities, Joakim Osthus- Civil Engineer San Rafael BPAC, David Parisi- Parisi & Associates, Mary Sackett- Vallecito Elementary School, Mark Schott Board Member Dixie School District, Jean Severinghaus- Caltrans District 4 BPAC, Joe Stewart- Teacher/Parent/Resident- Redwood High School, Dan Zach- Senior Director San Rafael School District, Phil Abey-Site Design Committee- Parent San Rafael High

Wendi reported the Urban Green Program requested Safe Routes to Schools to draft a letter of support. This would be for funding for the Anderson to Second Street project.

I. Review of Issues list – (attached)

The list presented was developed from notes taken during the previous meeting. Issues were placed in three different categories: around a school, corridor leading to or from a school, and those in a specific neighborhood. The next step in the process is to conduct a Walk Audit to observe situations on the ground, then develop recommendations, take them to the City for review/approval, then back to the Task Force.

The short-term plan is to address issues that require little to no additional funding. The larger, long term projects will be prioritized. The project at Vallecito School needs to be prioritized.

Attendees were asked to review the list for comments or additional items to be added.

Comments:

1. Missing – multi use pathway to San Rafael High from Union and 4th.
2. Davidson- issues on the backside of the school
3. The intersection by Tap Plastics is very busy during school hours.
4. Request for a pedestrian rapid flashing beacon near Davidson and Laurel Del. Similar to the one near Bio Marin.
5. Dixie School property gate it remains locked near the Mark Day School.

SMART -Multi use path, what is the future of this path for Davidson students?

SMART is in support of the path if they find the funding. This is great news and very encouraging for the San Rafael DPW. The sidewalk to the Canal from 2nd will also be addressed. It is very narrow for students walking and cycling to Davidson.

Damon commented that this section of San Rafael is the most challenging part of his route during his month long #RidewithDamon. He feels the danger is physical and emotional traveling north and south and into the Canal area. The sidewalks are his only option and they have very challenging sections too.

Students have the same challenges. The students traveling from the Sun Valley area to Davidson do not have a recommended safe route to Davidson. Many of the students ride on the sidewalk, because of the street conditions: parked vehicles blocking the street and speeding.

Terra Linda – Arias and Trellis

David reported that both intersections are under review. There are three schools that use this intersection. There is a stop sign; however it is a long distance to cross and there is no traffic control, just a crosswalk. Vehicle drivers often do not yield to pedestrians. This was observed during the Walk Audit with a police officer present. Recommendations include a bulbout crosswalk, with red curbing, stripping and signs. The red curve will increase visibility. This will help drivers see at a greater distance when students are in the area.

Other issues

Devon Street is used as a cut through street. A neighbor was killed while walking across the street. Vehicles speed and the blinding sun are dangerous factors. Drivers are by passing the freeway traffic and using Devon. They are also using Monticello Rd as a cut through street.

Walking School bus is seeing approximate 60 students walking at Vallecito

Mark Day School traffic.

In the past staff and parents were instructed to drive a specific route to/from the school to help manage the flow of traffic in the neighborhood. Attendees did not know if this was still part of the school's transportation plan. Private schools are required to have transportation plans; if it is not enforced it does not work. David said he would look into it.

David thanked the city for all their feedback and information. They have been very helpful as solutions are explored. He will continue to work with the DPW to identify the short and long term projects and develop an estimated cost and schedule.

Esmeyer and Trellis

The stop line is pretty far back and there are no marked crosswalks. The speed of vehicles taking the right turn is high too. Painting the curb red and moving the crosswalk up are low cost, short term improvements. Striping and improved curbs could be a solution however there are drainage issues that must be addressed at the same time. This will be a long-term project requiring funding.

The crossing guard at this location is known for parking her car just beyond the crosswalk to help slow traffic.

I. Access to San Rafael High and Davidson Middle School – Downtown Circulation

David presented a map of down town using the School Districts EIR Report release in April. It included a very detailed traffic and pedestrian study with existing conditions, mode share and infrastructure. He worked with the city on this long-range master plan keeping in mind an additional 200 students are projected to be attending the school.

There are a number of drop-off and pickup locations on two-way traffic streets. There is a goal to increase green trips to the school by 25%. The school districts will continue to encourage green transportation. Many routes were identified with positive and negative conditions. Transportation from the west to the high school needs to be enhanced for students traveling to and from school.

The School District EIR Report is a very thorough and robust report. With the many issues and variables evaluated, they believe they have identified the best travel options for students. The SMART train and multi-use pathway was also included in the report. The School District's focus is to get travel facilities right while working with Safe Routes to Schools. Gratitude was expressed for the partnerships.

Philip Abey is a volunteer on the high school's design committee with the San Rafael Bond Project. He also has a student attending the high school.

The design committee is working to develop a long-range plan for students that get dropped off in the vicinity of the school. Currently students are forced to walk around the campus to gain access to the school grounds. This is not efficient or smart route for them.

A design option includes a pathway through the campus during phase 1 of the stadium redesign. The 2nd design phase would include addressing the parking by the athletic field. This would offer 2 more direct routes onto the campus. A path through campus would take students off Mission and 3rd Streets. The pathway would be added through the fields if they are relocated.

Another issue to plan for is traffic flow and parking during construction at the school. If a pathway was constructed soon it would redirect students safely to campus and be a low-cost solution.

The location of the fire training station by the high school was in question. Would it block the path in Phil's proposed design? Also with the future move of the Transit Station north, how would that impact the pathway to the campus?

[Presentation on MCBC proposals](#)  **[San Rafael BPMP Update - SR2S Task Force.pdf](#)**

Bjorn Gripenburg is the new Policy and Planning Director for the Marin County Bicycle Coalition. His presentation addressed potential street designs the city could consider to develop safe routes throughout San Rafael. The street design presented included facilities for all ages and abilities with a mode shift to include many types of bike and pedestrian ways.

Options include, protected bike lanes using a vehicle parking lane to protect cyclists from vehicle traffic. Intersections can be the most dangerous facility for vehicle drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. The primary goal is to develop a network of routes that connect throughout the city to encourage and reduce the travel time for green transportation.

The north/south direction needs a seamless riding experience. Currently traffic conditions on Second Street are very high. Third Street is not a good place for cyclists leaving Fourth Street as the most natural route to enter the downtown. A challenge on Fourth Street is drivers double-park creating dangerous conditions for all road users. Fifth Street has less traffic with a calmer traffic flow.

Travel to Davidson would require back roads as 2nd street is too congested. Suggested exploring the back roads to the school but it would require some modifications as 1st Street is a one way street.

To make such changes the city would need to define a baseline for green transportation, develop a travel grid for downtown first and then address then neighborhoods.

A suggested project list would include:

- West end /4th connection
- Southern end travel links with a MUP
- Albert park with travel links
- Mahon Creek MUP needs an easier way to get to it and to be connected to other travel links
- Transit Center entrance required cyclists to get off their bikes; this is not an efficient way to travel.
- Grand Ave- how to design the transit center for students traveling to nearby school safely?

General comments:

Molly expressed her thanks for including a pathway to the schools. There currently is no connection north/south or east/west for students to use. Student traveling from Bret Hart face a challenge if walking or bicycling to the high school. Parents will continue to be drive (carpool) until alternate routes are constructed. The high school should identify drop-off locations (not on Mission). One option could be the Salvation Army parking lot (before they open). It is currently chained off when they are closed for business. A long term plan is needed. The pathway proposed in Philips presentation seems like a positive improvement.

Joe expressed his support for connecting the Mahon Creek MUP. It is an underutilized resource for students traveling to schools. It currently goes “nowhere”. He emphasized the need to use all funding wisely to enhance existing resources and ones planned for the future. The sidewalks in the Canal are the only resources students have traveling to the high school and Davidson now.

A suggestion was made to consider a pathway near Bellum near 101 North and Hwy 580. This will be a necessity in the future.

Participants agreed east/west travel on 4th street is the best options. Vehicles speeds on 5th are too fast. Currently students use some of both streets. Request to consider making 4th street one way or creating a wide bike lane; 2nd and 3rd are currently one way. Another suggestion is to make 1st street a “bike boulevard” with two way directions. The students could use the Mahon Creek MUP and connect to the transit center. Fourth street lights should not be in sync to slow traffic.

An example of how traffic would be affected is reviewing traffic during the weekly farmer’s market. Fourth Street is actually closed to traffic. Businesses experience an increase in business even with parking removed/restricted during this event.

Tamalpais Ave is not a safe bike route; comments included closing part of the road to vehicle traffic or making it a one-way street. Heatherton would not be the safest option. Make it more bike friendly.

A safety issues for students traveling on the multi-use paths is the number of homeless people.

Wendi proposed a bike trip similar to a Walk Audit be scheduled to view and experience the challenges student’s cyclists experience during their commutes to and from school. It provides an opportunity for the everyone to look at options on the ground, including routes to campuses. Six people at the meeting expressed interest in participating in a planned ride this spring before school gets out for the summer.

A walk audit for San Rafael High will be scheduled for the 1st bell is at 7:50AM. The walk would need to start at 7:30 as many students are traveling to the campus. Students have been observed in the street at the CVS intersection waiting for the light. The walk will be planned for at least 1 hour. The study/report conducted by the school district also has data to be reviewed.

The EIR included a number of variables for students traveling to Davidson. This report included the current pathways to the school, including the ones that do not currently have a connection like Mahon Creek MUP. The next walk audit needs to include information presented in the EIR.

The BPAC will need to have information from Safe Routes.

Caltrans Online Survey Update

Over 3,000 responses to day. San Rafael included over 200 comments.