

San Rafael School District

Safe Routes to School Task Force Meeting Notes

Wednesday, January 24
5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

[View Recording](#)

Participants

- Leo Bezard – Office of Supervisor Sackett Intern
- Phil Chapman – Laurel Dell PTA
- Gwen Froh – SR2S/MCBC
- Matthew Hartzell – WTB/TAM
- Wendi Kallins – SR2S
- Mo de Nieva-Marsh – SRCS School Board, Community Action Marin
- Craig Murray – SMART pathway connection advocate
- Dave Pedroli – San Rafael City Schools Maintenance & Operations
- Nhat Phan – City San Rafael DPW
- Kate Powers – TAM Citizen Oversight Committee
- John Neville – Marin County DPW
- Julia Reinhard – Aide to Supervisor Mary Sackett
- Mira Schwartz – SR2S
- Pilar Sanchez – Family Liaison, Laurel Dell
- Jean Severinghouse – Resident, bike advocate
- Jen Shriber – SR2S/Parametrix

Poll

The group was polled on whether they would like to meet online or in person for the spring task force meeting. 36% could go either way, 36% prefer virtual, and 27% wanted to meet in person. Based on the poll the next meeting will remain virtual. An in-person meeting will be considered for the fall.

Safe Routes Presentation (Gwen Froh, SR2S/MCBC)

See the [attached presentation](#) on walking and bike buses and park and walk.

Discussion (Wendi Kallins, SR2S)

Park and Walk Locations

Sun Valley families use Andy's Market as a park and walk location.

Near Davidson, a church on Woodland had previously allowed families to park to drop



off students. The City wants to make Mahon Creek Path a permitted area for people to camp; this would make it difficult for students to use the pathway.

A lot of Laurel Dell families have been parking behind Davidson to walk to school.

Reducing Speeds

AB 43 is a new law on lowering speed limits. Part of this bill allows new speed reductions lowering speed limits to 15 MPH within 500 feet of a school. Implementation of the new law is currently being evaluated; outreach is needed before implementation. Enforcement is also an issue to make sure change occurs if speed limits are changed. The City will look into adjusting speeds on Woodland (near Laurel Dell and Davidson).

Another assembly bill authorizes automatic speed enforcement cameras. It is currently in effect in San Francisco and several other cities as a pilot. In the past, automatic cameras have been problematic as the constitution guarantees that people can be confronted by accuser in court; this presents a legal challenge and the law won't be expanded until it is tested.

Improving Road Behavior

Davidson starts at 9, while Laurel Dell at 8. There is a lot of industrial traffic during this time.

Safe Routes can work with law enforcement to communicate about speed limits, enforcing traffic laws, etc. as law enforcement has a wide following on social media. For example, people drive around school buses when they're loading/unloading and ignore signs.

Traffic calming near schools can reduce speeds. Quick-build options are relatively low-cost, fast to implement, and can serve as a pilot before more permanent infrastructure is installed. A future meeting could include a presentation on these options.

There have been a lot of complaints on Nextdoor about students on e-bikes. Safe Routes includes e-bike education in its programming.

Laurel Dell School Street Possibilities

Closing the road in front of the school to through traffic during certain times would calm traffic for drop-off and pick-up. However, this presents challenges to consider.

Woodland is a challenging street for students and families to walk on to get to school. Parking behind Davidson on Jordan Street allows walkers to start closer to the school. There is a proposed class I pathway here, but it didn't score high in the City's bike plan so it has not been prioritized. The bike plan is being refreshed so there is a new chance to show support for the project.

A closure could be similar to closures for San Rafael Porchfest. During this event a lot of children and families were able to safely walk around the Gerstle Park neighborhood.

In Kentfield, a residential street (Acacia) was closed to through traffic during drop-off and pick-up periods. This has been ongoing as a pilot for four years since no public entity has claimed responsibility of moving the barriers. This is currently the responsibility of parent volunteers. Crossing guards were used for a time but it proved to be too much extra work.

In Europe, electronic bollards can be raised and lowered to close off streets to traffic. Considerations would need to be made for garbage pick-up, mail, emergency response, etc.



The Short School will reopen in fall 2024; traffic impacts from this will need to be taken into consideration.

The first step should be developed a suggested route map for Laurel Dell. This would help identify routes as well as issues along these routes and would be a good introduction to discussing what’s possible in the area.

Updates

Education & Encouragement (Gwen Froh, MCBC/SR2S)

A number of spring activities are planned, and more information can be found on the [Safe Routes website](#). These include Walk and Roll Wednesdays, Rainbow Quest Challenge, National Bike to School Day on May 8, and the Bike Hero contest in May.



The parent volunteer luncheon will be held on January 25 from 10:30-12:30 in San Rafael. RSVP to Mira@marinbike.org.

E-bike safety messaging and guidance can be found on the Safe Routes website. Safe Routes has been teaching dedicated e-bike safety classes.

City Updates (Nhat Phan, City of San Rafael DPW)

The City is aiming to fund 1-2 projects in the next fiscal year. It is currently evaluating current design concepts and looking for grant funding.

The City would like to spread awareness about road user safety and be involved in education about safe behaviors. It is currently looking for opportunities to do this.

The ribbon cutting for the Third Street cycle track was held two weeks ago; this has been a six-year project. Based on feedback the City will consider the next phase of improvements.

Civic Center Pathway

Funding for construction of a path under Highway 101 at the Civic Center SMART station has been sought through the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods federal grant opportunity. Results will be made public in March. The upcoming Safe Pathways call for projects could also be an option for funding.

County Update

Supervisor Sackett had asked for an active transportation planner in June 2023; this has been approved in the county's budget. A senior transportation planner will be focused on active transportation, on-street infrastructure, Vision Zero planning, etc. the hope is that this will enable the county to coordinate more with city partners.

Other

AB413 (Wendi Kallins, SR2S)

New state legislation has gone into effect prohibiting parked cars within 20 feet of the approach to a marked or unmarked crosswalk and within 15 feet of a crosswalk with a curb extension. The law will go into full effect in 2025; in 2024, drivers can be issued a warning for parking too close to a crosswalk. This law would require enforcement even in locations where there is no red curb.

Next Steps

- Discuss strategies for speed reduction, traffic calming, and road user behavior



improvement

- Give a presentation on e-bikes at a future task force meeting
- Follow up on a mapping workshop for Laurel Dell
- Look into potential school street barriers

Next meeting dates

- May 1 at 5 PM

