

Ross School District
Safe Routes to School Task Force Meeting Notes

Monday, April 22, 2024
10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Participants

- Wendi Kallins – SR2S
- Gwen Froh – SR2S/MCBC
- Julie McMillan – Ross Town Council Liaison to Safe Routes Task Force
- Christa Johnson – Ross Town Manager
- Raffaello Pata – Ross Police Chief
- David Rice – Ross Schools Superintendent
- Mira Schwartz – SR2S Volunteer Coordinator
- Jen Shriber – SR2S/Parametrix
- Richard Simonitch – Ross DPW

Safe Routes Presentations (Gwen Froh, SR2S/MCBC)

See the attached presentation on [back-to-school](#) notifications. SR2S will send a back-to-school notice districtwide with information promoting walking and rolling and spreading awareness of SR2S programming. Gwen also gave a [presentation on e-bike safety](#). 10-25% of bikes on middle school campuses are e-bikes, and there are higher crash risks for ages 10-15. Messaging to parents is key to ensure proper bike models are purchased and to spread education of good behavior.

Discussion

SR2S is not currently working with the Branson School, although representatives are invited to task force meetings. Any efforts with Branson? Not at the moment for Safe Routes although Parametrix is working with Branson on their traffic plan. It would be helpful to make the back-to-school packet information consistent for Ross and Branson since there are likely similar trip patterns.

The Ross School will send the SR2S information letter that can go out in their back-to-school packet and e-pocket (e-newsletter to parents).



David Rice and Chief Pata are going to educate parents and students on the different types of e-bikes. It is assumed that parents will be more likely to fall into line once they understand what is legal and what isn't. SR2S can support the district on this as well.

Report Back

Park and Walk and Walking School Buses (Mira Schwartz, MCBC)

Misty has created a weekly habit among students at the Ross School. The school holds three annual events: a yearly kick-off in the Fall, another event around the winter holidays, and a third for Earth Day. Consideration needs to be made to make this program sustainable over time. Repetition, particularly around education, is needed. Ross Coffees are hosted once per month on topics designed to educate, and one can be on the topic of SR2S.

The Ross School needs some more bike racks. SR2S can help let them know the best type of rack the school should purchase.

The Laurel Grove Safe Pathways Project has created some new park and walk locations. As part of Phase II an area was cleared to allow people to park. During the next phase another park and walk area will be formalized in the open area where parking is currently prohibited. Richard will keep SR2S posted on the progress

Police Education Programs (Chief Pata, Ross PD)

Chief Pata expressed concerns about the current bicycle and e-bike legislation and advocated for a shift towards education over citations. He shared that he and David Rice have been communicating this message to parents. Chief Pata pointed out ongoing issues with legislation and highlighted that some towns have created their own ordinances, but these have faced pushback from attorneys. He stressed the importance of collaboration with parents and schools to promote safety and education for children. This includes increasing police visibility around the school at the beginning of the year. Chief Pata also discussed the success of a reward system implemented in Ross and a new initiative for this year involving branded wristbands with a safety message for children. He hinted at future plans, emphasizing the importance of continued messaging and student-led delivery of this message.

Safe Pathways (Richard Simonitch, Ross DPW)

TAM's call for Safe Pathways proposals will come out in early fall. Ross would like to submit its preliminary plans for the final phase of the Laurel Grove project, which would take the project to the Town limit (Macon Grade). The Town got good feedback on this project from an initial review, and the project has been vetted through the Town's bike plan.

Other Encouragement Programs (Gwen Froh, MCBC/SR2S)

The Bike Hero nomination opportunity is coming up. This will be publicized in the next newsletter. SR2S will also send separate information through Misty.

Next Steps

- Chief Pata will follow up with the Branson School to see if someone will attend



the next task force meeting.

- Christa will reach out to Todd Bickel at the Branson School for more information on TDM strategies and will share the information with Wendi.
- SR2S will send the back-to-school flyer to David and/or Maria.
- Gwen will send David information on bike racks

Next Meeting Date

August 5, 10 – 11 AM

