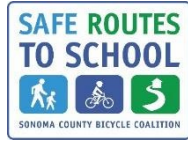




METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION



Cool
Petaluma
2050



Petaluma Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Task Force Minutes

Date/Time: Thursday October 19th, 2023, 4:00pm-5:30pm

Location: Petaluma Community Center, Activity Room
320 North McDowell Blvd

1. Task Force Members in Attendance

- a. Christina Panza, Director, SRTS/SCTA SRTS program
- b. Sarah Hadler, SRTS Coordinator/Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition
- c. Peggy Flynn, City Manager, City of Petaluma
- d. Bjorn Gripenburg, Active Transportation, Public Works, City of Petaluma
- e. Ken Eichstaedt, Traffic Engineer, Public Works, City of Petaluma
- f. Drew Halter, Director, Parks and Recreation, City of Petaluma
- g. Mike Gardner, Superintendent, Waugh School District
- h. Walt Spiller, Traffic Sergeant, Petaluma Police Dept
- i. Zoe Unruh, Multimodal Planner, SMART
- j. Deb Fox, Co-Founder, Operations and Collaborations, Cool Petaluma
- k. Elece Hempel, Executive Director, Petaluma People Services
- l. Maria Arce, Transit Specialist, Public Works, City of Petaluma
- m. Mady Cloud, Petaluma City School District Trustee
- n. Danny Alvarez, Boys and Girls Club
- o. Molly Nagel, Community Schools/Wellness Coordinator, Petaluma City Schools
- p. Ruth Miller, Principal, McDowell Elementary School
- q. Michelle Gochberg, Co-Superintendent, Old Adobe Union School District
- r. Rachel Beer, Parks and Recreation, City of Petaluma
- s. Kent Carotles, Public Works, City of Petaluma
- t. Jennifer Remmers, Petaluma Blue Zones Project

2. SRTS Task Force Overview (Goals & Objectives)

- a. Organized body to share barriers to walking/biking;
- b. We want to hear from parents/school districts/school staff and other stakeholders. It is a venue for sharing program initiatives and projects; facilitate collaboration among agencies; identify concerns
- c. Meetings are once a month; switch b/w east and west Petaluma (City Hall and Community Center)

3. Partner Announcements

- a. **Safe Routes to School Program Report- Christina:** SRTS is a countywide program funded federally from the Transportation Bill through regional transportation agency (SCTA). It serves any school that wants to promote active transportation to/from school and/or educate their students to do so safely. The program encourages, educates and evaluates how

kids get to school and what the barriers are. It works to improve roads, build collaboration and share information. It also works with law enforcement and public works to learn how to make it safer for kids and families. The Task Force is where the sharing happens. Schools need to opt in every year. Application process and then determine what level of service can be provided each year.

- i. **Evaluation** – Every participating schools is evaluated by conducting student arrival/departure tallies and student address GIS maps. Student arrival/departure tallies on how students travel to school on a normal day, and are conducted in September. GIS maps show where students live in relation to schools to understand potential for walking and biking, areas for improvement, viable meetup spots for bike and walking trains.
 1. Petaluma’s 2023-24 tally reports and GIS maps are in progress and will be available soon.
- ii. **Parent survey** – sent to schools in Spring 2023 and results and parent comments sent to city overall to understand barriers to walking and biking. The data is shared with the city to help with Active Transportation. There was a lot of interest from parents to help with SRTS issues – parent names were shared with school(s) for those that responded.
 1. Petaluma had 461 responses
 - a. 70% of respondents drive kids to school in single family vehicles frequently
 - b. 44% drive in single family vehicles daily
 - c. 20% walk daily
 - d. 1.7% bike daily
 - i. 8% frequently
 - e. 53% stated that concerns about vehicle traffic (busy roads, unsafe crossings, etc) is the barrier to active transportation
 - f. 85% parents agree is important to children’s health
- iii. **Program services** -All the Petaluma information can be found on the SC SRTS website: [Events and News>Task Forces & Collaborations>](#) It will include Petaluma’s spreadsheet of participating schools, includes each school’s various SRTS engagements (Generally most participating schools do walk and roll a minimum of 5 times annually (Oct, Nov, May) Plus, the website will have notes and handouts from each task force meeting.
 1. International Walk & Roll to School Day was Wed Oct 4. 61 schools participated countywide, 11 schools in Petaluma, with 3 more doing end of Oct.
 - a. ***Bike train – 68 kids participated for Mcnear!***
 2. [The October Walk & Roll to School or Anywhere Challenge](#) is still happening.
 3. November is [Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day](#). 11 schools registered in Petaluma
 4. [Snapshot of each participating Petaluma school’s engagement in SRTS during 2022-23](#) has been posted to the handouts for the 10/19 SRTS meeting.

b. City Update on Plans and Projects:

i. Active Transportation- Bjorn: Safe Routes to School is a top priority for the city council. It helps with the city's carbon neutrality and Vision Zero goals.

1. [Active Transportation Plan](#) - ATP plan getting updated that includes all things walking and biking in the city. It will include a project list and timeline for things like bike routes, crosswalks, new multi-use trails, and highlight areas where we don't have sidewalks in place. There is an Open House Oct 25 @ Lucchesi community center from 6-8 pm
2. [Safe Streets Nomination Program](#) - Due to lots of requests for safety improvements on city streets. Identify improvements on a rolling basis. It was launched last week. Over 100 received thus far since it started last week. Schools and Parks are priority or have history of speeding or collision
3. **Current roadway projects** that will touch school frontages. It is important for the city to collaborate with schools on these projects. And it is possible to focus on task force meetings on these projects. In particular for Casa Grande road project.
 - a. Maria drive is out to bid (Rainer to South McDowell) (2024), Howard (2024), Casa Grande (2025) and N. Webster st (2025)

ii. Transit - Maria:

1. **Youth ride free on the buses.** Partnership in the summer with SMART. Extended for 2 years! On the school tripper routes there has been an uptick of 41% of student riders since it started! It also includes free ride for SRJC and veterans. The City is working to expand it for all public.
2. **Field Trips** - Transit also does field trips with local schools
3. **On-site Travel Training** - Transit recently did on-site travel training at the McDowell Family Resource Center. They can come to you to give training!
4. **Other Update:** They are revamping the bus shelters and removing rear buses for community programs. Microtransit study happening. Smaller vehicle you can request from your smartphone to your door and take you where you want to go within 3 miles.

iii. Police – Walt: The Police Department has worked with SRTS for 25 years. They provide officers at every school for the big events. They are always available for bike rodeos and other such events. They meet monthly with the traffic engineer to come up with solutions for traffic incidents. They are on the streets on a daily basis. SRTS is important to get overall traffic.

c. Cool Petaluma Update -Deb: The City unveiled [Blueprint for Carbon Neutrality](#); Cool Petaluma is working out what feedback we'll need from schools and public; if interested in looking at report it is 112 pages—great education on the front end of the document—what does it mean; action

plans for getting carbon neutrality in 2030; More info at the November meeting.

4. District/site SRTS issues, concerns & opportunities

- a. [Letter from parent at McDowell Elementary](#) – Emily Oh, parent at McDowell Elementary
- b. Jackie, parent at McDowell Elementary. There are no signs posted that it is a school zone. The bus coming down McGregor is going too fast, as well as cars.
- c. Mark, parent from Corona Creek. Wanted to note that there needs to be safety features added between KJHS and Corona Creek. The crosswalk needs to be daylighted because it is currently done by the residents, bike lanes need ingress and egress north and south while parents park on the bike lane to get into the pickup line for Corona Creek. He has a special needs child who loves to walk to school, but won't let her in the morning because of the traffic. He witnessed a child walking to KJHS and the parent drove into the bike lane because cars were waiting for a child to use the crosswalk at Riesling. The parent driving almost hit 6 kids because she wasn't waiting for the child in the crosswalk to finish crossing. Because the field doesn't allow ingress or regress kids walk in bike lane.
 - i. The City Manager asked if it was possible to do SRTS Travel Plans for all the schools? Signage for drivers. It was noted that SRTS, city and schools need these plans to identify the barriers. Need to have a process and how to prioritize what schools.
- d. David, parent from McNear Elementary - Noted the city has a climate neutrality and vision zero plan. Need to focus on protected bike lanes to get kids riding to school safely and this will help meet those goals. Things to do quickly:
 - i. Broken sidewalks. Homeowner responsibility, but go to the app and then the city cites the homeowner. More to be done to not make it the homeowner responsibility. Funding for it?
 1. Traffic Engineer: Sidewalk program – there is financial assistance. This is typical of cities. And it is important for residents "[See it. Report it.](#)" This is how the improvements get tracked.
 - ii. Rollout signs for slowing near schools. To tell drivers to slow down.
 1. The City Manager responded they need to explore temporary speed limit change. The Traffic Engineer noted there might be that ability in a school zone.
 - iii. There aren't enough bike racks on school campuses. Can there be funding allocated from the city?
 1. Bike racks- 76 bike racks coming. Being installed at city facilities. Not aware of any funding at bike racks at schools. Looking into funding private property.
 - iv. Can provide consultation on what types. How to install?
 1. Some school districts do have funding. SRTS and the city can help consult on best types of racks to consider purchasing for school installation.
- e. Irene, parent at McDowell Elementary - North McDowell there are new lanes for bikes. Could that be all the way to South McDowell? With the protected bike lanes all the way?

- f. Anna, parent at McDowell Elementary - McGregor at McDowell and Park and McGregor. Cars ride fast. It is where we pick up the kids. The drive through at McGregor is really narrow and this is also where cars are going so fast. There are no signs that say it is a school zone. Lots of little kids walking to the apartments behind the school so people aren't respecting the fact it is a school zone. Kids have almost gotten hit on that street. Add that Safeway area is very busy. Lots of cars and people are in a hurry. People don't see the signs nor respect them, so not sure signs are the only answer.
 - i. The City Manager asked staff to look at each school for school zone signs as a priority action.
- g. Mike, Superintendent of Waugh School District - Appreciates the Task Force underway. Acknowledges the comments that parent had about Riesling stated. The Issue is large KJHS and large TK school in a tight corner that has lots of need for improvements. He invites folks to come look at it.
 - i. SRTS staff will be visiting on 10/27
- h. Ruth, Principal at McDowell Elementary. Large population that utilizes public education and new immigrants are utilizing the buses. But we are concerned about the traffic hazards. Buses need a different route during morning drop off. She has had to put cones out to slow the buses. Today a parent side swiped a school van today. They are trying to help people calm down but everything is temporary and the cones can be run over. Very concerned that someone is going to get hit. McDowell is historically underserved, so thank you for making this possible. Please have translation available at future meetings.
 - i. Action Items:
 1. Relook to see what can be done on McGregor and the gated entrance.
 2. Another crossing is happening at Maria near the transit center, near safeway. City has looked at the area and are trying to improve it.
 3. Need signs! Quick fix!!!! City will circle back on the signs, in particular around McDowell.

5. Other Business & Announcements

- a. Pete Gang, Safe Streets Petaluma – Holiday lighted bike ride. Coming up in December!

6. Next Meeting, agenda planning, & adjournment

- a. Thank you to Ruth for getting the word out! Need all the school reps to get the info out so more families participate! For any agenda items, like where to lower speed, please email agenda item suggestions.

The next meeting of the Petaluma Task Force is scheduled for Thursday November 16th, 4pm-5:30 at City Hall, 11 English St.