

Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) County-Wide Task Force Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 21, 2024 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Join Zoom Meeting

Task Force Members Present

- Alysia Bixler, RCAA
- Vanessa Griffin, RCAA
- Mason Rewerts, RCAA
- Peache Green, Humboldt County
- Brittany Powell, City of Eureka
- Jesse Willor, City of Eureka
- Katie Marsolan, City of Eureka
- Oona Smith, HCAOG

Alysia – Opens Safe routes to school meeting, members go around and introduce themselves and who they represent.

Bay to Zoo Trail Project Presentation

Presenters: Brittany, Jesse, and Katie from the City of Eureka.

Brittany begins the Bay to Zoo Trail presentation by showcasing a draft of the StoryMaps website designed to offer a comprehensive overview of the project. The website provided an early look at the trail's planned alignment and its connections to key locations throughout Eureka. The trail, which will feature a variety of segments, including a raised boardwalk and improvements around Harris Street and Sequoia Park Zoo, aims to enhance connectivity for schools, residential areas, and commercial districts. The Trail will pass through locations such as Zane Middle School and Washington School, ultimately connecting with the Bay Trail and other existing pathways.

The Bay to Zoo Trail was initially identified as a Safe Routes to School project and is designed to improve safety and accessibility for students and the broader community. The project is currently in the approval and environmental documentation phase, with construction anticipated to begin in 2026. The website will also include sections on trail benefits, funding sources, and a detailed project history. The team is actively seeking public feedback and collaboration to refine the project and promote its benefits. The Eureka City team wants to encourage community engagement through tabling opportunities and invite suggestions to enhance the trail's safety and utility. The project has received a grant for \$100,000 from the Coastal Commission, nearly 9,000,000 in active transportation program with a 1,000,000-dollar match from the city of Eureka. As well as money from the state of California transportation improvement program, with \$1,000,582,000, \$70,000 from HCOAG bicycle and pedestrian 2% set-aside funds represent only 9% of city funds to date and 91% of grant funding.

The Bay to Zoo Trail Project dates back to 2000 when the Eureka City Council first established the trail committee. The project has evolved significantly over the years, focusing on promoting safe and active transportation, especially around Zane Middle School.

The StoryMaps website will feature a detailed timeline of the project's development, from its early days to the current status, including funding updates and the path forward. It will also include contact information for anyone interested in learning more or getting involved.

The Bay to Zoo Trail is set to connect various key areas, including schools and commercial districts, and will link up with the Bay Trail once it's completed. This connection will offer a continuous network from Eureka to Arcata, providing new opportunities for students and residents to safely travel across the city.

The Eureka City team is looking for community feedback and suggestions to ensure the trail meets everyone's needs. They are also working on a bike master plan that will enhance the city's overall biking and walking network.

Oona offers incorporating the HCAOG bike route and trail map into the website. Currently, it's a static map based on a crowdsourced collection of family-friendly routes. This map includes recommendations from the community for quiet, safe routes ideal for biking with kids. In the future, HCAOG plans to develop this map into an interactive app for route planning. Here is the link to the map:

<https://www.hcaog.net/map/>

Oona - Also notes that August meetings are usually the lowest attended by school staff as everyone is busy with back-to-school. We will keep you in mind to stay connected with this project and Eureka City School people.

Alysia – Alysia suggests that we do the Bay to Zoo Trail presentation again when we have more school staff at SRTS meetings.

Jesse – City of Eureka has done one-on-one outreach with the school district to try and understand how to find the right balance between trail access and school safety. That is one of the challenges we are working through with Zane. Wanting to provide trail access to students and the school desires to make security a priority. There is no right answer. Jesse hopes in the future to be able to talk with city school staff on the issue of access and safety so that together they can really dive into that subject. He appreciates this group and the opportunity to discuss these topics and thinks this is an important topic for the SRTS Task Force to explore in the future. We need good solutions that will allow access but maintain safety.

Oona – Thank you for speaking about this. We often have a risk management school staff person attend these meetings. It would be interesting to hear their opinion about this subject. There are many people within the ATP program who are devoted to this subject. She suggests it would be beneficial to present this topic to the Active Transportation Program (ATP) biannual conference. Recommending this as a topic: what is the best practice for developing the right balance between access and safety. Oona will reach out to CTC staff suggesting this. If you have any suggestions for who could speak to this and present at the conference, please let her know.

Report Out

Peach - Provided an update on their involvement with Eureka schools this year. They discussed their plans to promote "Walk, Bike, or Roll to School Day" on October 9, aiming to use materials such as flyers and certificates to encourage students to use safe routes to school. Humboldt County has supported Walk to School Day in the past. They hope to revive a past initiative that supported similar efforts. Currently, they are reaching out to Alice Bernie and Grant schools but are cautious not to overwhelm them with emails at the start of the school year. She is wondering if anyone here is planning a Walk to School Day event or is open to collaborating.

Alysia – RCAA has organized these events for schools in the past, but they currently don't have a relevant program. However, she has past Walk to School Day posters and stickers she can share.

Oona—Arcata Public works or engineering/Arcata Parks & Rec may have a giant banner they have put up in the past. She suggests reaching out.

Oona – HCOAG has received grant funding to pay for a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) feasibility study to explore the possibility of obtaining locally funded, permanent, full-time management for the program. Other organizations have successfully implemented full-time managers, and this study will assess the potential benefits of such a role for SRTS. A dedicated manager would ensure the program's continuity and effectiveness, as opposed to the current approach of relying on constantly changing grants to sustain the initiative. This position would be at a director or manager level and would help maintain the cohesion of SRTS. DHS is already involved, and HCOAG believes that RCAA could contribute valuable support to the study. More updates to follow.

Vanessa – Vanessa provided an update on the South Arcata Multi-Modal Safety Improvement Plan (SAMSIP). Over the past month, SAMSIP project partners have established a task force and started their outreach plan. The first workshop for SAMSIP will take place on August 29th from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM at the Senior Center within the Arcata Community Center. This workshop will give GHD, Caltrans, and the City of Arcata the opportunity to gather input from citizens and community members on creating more equitable alternative transportation options. The City of Arcata has an interactive map, a survey, and additional information available on their website for those interested.

Alysia- Alysia provided an update on RCAA's current project in Rio Dell, which focuses on connecting neighborhoods with a riverfront trail. Additionally, Rio Dell will feature a new mural created by students and local artists. RCAA has also applied for an ATP planning grant for a SRTS project in Loleta and are awaiting to hear back. Alysia also brought up a bike education training that occurred on August 22nd. This workshop was for educators who want to empower youth to feel more confident riding a bike. Melanie Williams plans to host these events again in the future. You can reach her at mwilliams@bikesthere.com

Oona – Oona Shares out about an upcoming tabling event called Festejando Nuestra Comunidad 2024 on Saturday October 5th. This will be at CR with cultural and arts performances with food trucks and fun activities. This could be a good tabling opportunity for the City of Eureka. Here is the link to sign up for tabling: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfPqpk0h0GpVXFcdx-a4YNhHq_Ad-m2HmfYxjVkjU1tnC0mA/viewform



Alysia – Alysia shares out about upcoming bike tour planned on the Samoa Peninsula (October TBA). This bike tour would showcase the new murals in Manila, Samoa, Fairhaven and along New Navy Base Road funded by the Clean California Peninsula Beautification project.

Oona- Oona shared that SRCT is planning a bike ride for the new bike trail, and noted that October has been getting ready to be the new Bike Month in Humboldt. Many groups are organizing rides to celebrate in October. Oona suggests that SRTS get together and support making October a good month for trails and collaborate with the mural bike event.

Next meeting: Wednesday October 16th, 2024 10 am – 11 am on ZOOM