

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

Wednesday, August 30, 2023, 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Task Force Members Present

- Alysia Bixler, RCAA
- Vanessa Griffin, RCAA
- Tiffany Maher, Morris Elementary
- Scott Mauroff, Eureka City Schools
- Oona Smith, HACOG
- Mat Bigham, Pacific Union
- Kyle Finger, Caltrans
- Netra Khatri, City of Arcata
- Gabe Ostrow, Public Health
- Colin Fiske, CRTP
- Mark Schaffner, Trail Stewards

Group Introduction & New Faces

- Vanessa recently joined RCAA's team after running The Griffin in Arcata. She will assist with SRTS and the McKinleyville ATP grant.
- Mat is the New Principal at Pacific Union.

Updates from the City of Arcata —Netra

Sustainable Transportation Grant

- The city of Arcata applied for a sustainable transportation planning grant to improve the 101 & 255 intersection.
- The grant aims to improve the bicycle and pedestrian connectivity from East to West of the City. They will know by this afternoon if they are successful.

Current Projects: Reconnecting Arcata

- Arcata is divided by highways: 101; 255; 299. In the last six months, the city has been working with Caltrans, Cal Poly, HACOG & partners to figure out how to improve connectivity in Arcata. They are applying for a reconnecting communities grant with Caltrans. The deadline is the end of September. Six miles of highway divides the city in two but there are only seven connections, mainly for vehicles. There is no better connectivity for bicycles and pedestrians. The goal is to improve this by adding more pedestrian or vehicle bridges or highway caps. There could be other options like pedestrian-only crossings. Highway caps are areas of the highway where cars can pass through with public use areas and on top. It could be parks or housing. It could be used in many ways. It's a long-range plan to reconnect Arcata (several years). They will keep applying until they are successful. Reach out to Netra with additional questions.

- Netra will ask some SRTS members for letters of support for the grant. Once successful, they will look for input as the project progresses. Reach out if you want to be involved in the future.
- Oona—In your Sustainable planning grant, did you apply for pop-up money?
- Yes, we have money for pop-ups and 30% for design.
- Mark—Works with Peggy Matinez, who has a business called Great Inclusions and has a visual impairment. He helps her walk and do assessments. It's very informative to walk with someone with visual disabilities and see their experience. He appreciates what the city is doing. There are many things we can do as private property owners, like removing vegetation from roadways to improve pedestrian safety. It's important that when designing these projects, we consider the perspective of all community members using the roadway.

Report Out

Walk Audits with Dan Burden

- In July, HACOOG coordinated a series of walk audits with expert Dan Burden to show how to make our community more walkable.
- He suggested many improvements around the city, such as decreasing the car lane on LK wood to slow cars down and make room for a protected bike lane. It's amazing how small and simple improvements can make a big difference in walkability and safety. Does anyone have any walk audit stories to share?
- Netra—He attended two of the walks. Engineers design the road for the standards of the 70's and 80's and are still carrying those on. Walking with Dan helps us rethink how we look at the streets and who we should design for. The conversation helped us think about how to design our streets properly and what to look out for. It was insightful and refreshing. He hopes Dan comes back!
- Thanks to Oona for working hard to make it happen & Netra!
- Oona—For those who missed Dan, he was here for four days and did two walks in Eureka, a big one with over 100 people in Arcata, one in Blue Lake, Manila, and McKinleyville. Go to HCAOG.net under the projects page for Dan Burden to find articles, slide decks, and video presentations by Dan.
- HCAOG applied for the same funding as Netra and is hopeful. The money would partially fund another visit by Dan for a longer day hands-on workshop to sit down with community members to plan walkability improvements in their neighborhoods.
- The other part of the grant would fund a feasibility study to hire a permanent SRTS coordinator. The study would locate a permanent source of local funding for the position. Once the grant is secured, Public Health and others will talk to schools and stakeholders to brainstorm needs, interests, and funding sources.

Eureka Bike Plan

- The City of Eureka has been awarded a Cal trans sustainable communities grant to help develop the Eureka Bike Plan. It will investigate bikeway access and safety infrastructure improvements. It's seeking public engagement to generate improvement ideas by the summer of 2024.

National Week Without Driving

- Colin—October 2nd-8th is the first National Week Without Driving. It started in Washington State and was designed to get decision-makers and community leaders to pledge to go that week without driving. It is meant to focus on the 30% of the population who cannot drive, many children, and those with disabilities or financial limitations, etc.
- CRTP is hosting the event locally. If you are interested, there is a pledge on their website. Anyone can participate.
- The point is to go about your normal routine without driving and reflect on what kinds of limitations there are for folks who can't drive and how we can change this to make it easier and safer. Hopefully, decision-makers will participate and share their experiences through social media to raise awareness.

McKinleyville ATP/ Walk to School Day

- October 4^h is International Walk to School Day. RCAA, in collaboration with Gabe and Melody from Public Health, will be at Morris Elementary to celebrate and hand out prizes for those students who walk to school. RCAA & Public Health are also planning bike and pedestrian education lessons for third and fifth-grade students at Morris this fall. This is funded through the McKinleyville ATP grant, which ends at the end of December & Public Health's three-year work plan.

Peninsula Beautification

- RCAA is coordinating a Clean California grant with Caltrans called Peninsula Beautification with the goal of beautifying the Samoa Peninsula. Part of it is to plan guided community walks and bike rides to increase the appreciation of the Peninsula's natural resources. This could include bike education. Gabe and Mellody—we could work together to plan education at Peninsula Union or Redwood Coast Montessori.
- RCAA will also plan a community bike ride next Spring along the Samoa Peninsula.
- Gabe—Public Health has separate funding through Outdoor Equity to help with that bike ride.

Next ATP Cycle

- California Transportation Commission is kicking off the next cycle of the statewide Active Transportation Program grant fund. Happens every other year. Kick-off meetings are starting soon. Grant applicants may not be interested in kick-off meetings. They are more about guidelines and scoring applications. However, there will be a cascade of workshops for those who want to apply soon. January is when the call begins.

Next Meeting: October 25th, 10-11 am