

MINUTES
Safe Routes to School Committee Meeting
September 12, 2013 3:30 P.M.

The Safe Routes to School Committee met during a regular meeting on September 12, 2013 at 3:30 p.m. at Mesa Verde Elementary School, 3801 College Boulevard, Farmington, New Mexico.

Present:	Coordinator:	Anngela Wakan
	MPO & City of Farmington Staff	SRO Lead Coord. Michele DeLese Joe Delmagori June Markle Steve Krest Duane Wakan
	Attendees:	Jennifer Bowles Deanna Maurer Leslie Nord Cynthia Sosaya Jeff Treat

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Anngela Wakan and the following proceedings were duly had and taken.

Mr. Krest moved to approve the minutes from the August 22, 2013 meeting. Mr. Delmagori seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

REPORTS FROM PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Apache

There was no information yet on reopening the pathway behind Apache Elementary. Mr. Krest needs to see if the City of Farmington owns the easement along this path. Possible funding to reopen this path for walking and biking may be sought through the MPO process. An update on this potential project will be provided when more information is available.

The PE teacher at Apache Elementary is interested in participating in the Walk Across America program and will let Mrs. Wakan know for sure if their participation is approved. He would consider allowing students to earn points for walking or participating in other outdoor activities during their recesses since many do not walk to or from school.

Ladera

Mrs. Wakan met with the new Ladera principal, Phyllis Maestas. Ms. Maestas is currently very busy working to get settled into her new position.

Because of liability concerns, Ladera has decided not to use student crossing guards at this time.

Ladera is interested in participating in the Walk Across America program. Mrs. Wakan will be meeting with Ladera's PE teacher, Josie Wallace and the 5th grade leadership group next week to discuss how they would like to see their program structured.

McKinley

Also due to concerns with student liability, McKinley has decided not to use student crossing guards along Tycksen.

Mrs. Wakan will be meeting with and training three volunteers who have offered to lead walking school buses for McKinley. Mrs. Wakan distributed a sample of the letter that will go out to McKinley and Mesa Verde students who are close enough to walk or bike to school. 500 copies of the letter will be given to McKinley for distribution to their students. Mr. Krest and Mrs. Wakan also noted that there was a small stipend available for the walking school bus leaders.

The MPO has not yet received updated enrollment information from the Farmington School District for the 2013-2014 school year. Once this information is available, Mr. Wakan will update the school maps to be used for planning routes for the walking school buses. It was determined that since no actual addresses are shown on the maps, there was no risk to students or families in posting the maps in the schools. Both McKinley and Mesa Verde plan to display their maps in the school library. It is hoped that the maps will generate an interest among the student in participating in a walking school bus or simply in walking or biking to school.

Mrs. Wakan said McKinley would also be participating in the Walk Across America program. She asked if Ms. Nord would be willing to punch student's cards for McKinley. Ms. Nord said she would visit with Ms. Dixel to see what was going to be needed for the program and who could be enlisted to help.

Mesa Verde

As noted above, Mesa Verde will plan to display their student enrollment map at the school to help generate interest in the walking school bus program. Principal Sosaya asked for 450 copies of the walking school bus letter that they will distribute to those students who are not bused to the school. The Committee also discussed expanding the buffer on the map from the one-half mile radius to a one mile radius to include more families with students who might be interested in walking or biking to school.

Mesa Verde plans to participate in the Walk Across America program and thought they might start out with about 100 participants.

ENGINEERING: Mr. Krest had no engineering update.

The parental survey forms will be sent home with students in early October.

ENFORCEMENT: Officer DeLese had no enforcement update.

EVALUATION: Mr. Delmagori reported that the fall student arrival counts had been taken the weeks of September 2 and 9. These counts were started in 2008, so there is now five years of comparison data. MPO Staff and other volunteers count how students

arrive at school, whether by bus or personal vehicle, or if they walk or bike. MPO Staff then summarizes the information for each of the SRTS schools. Mr. Delmagori noted that the national average for walking/biking to school is at 10-15%.

Mr. Delmagori reported that the fall counts showed Ladera with the largest percentage of walkers at 30%. Mesa Verde has 65-70 walkers each day which is up from previous years. Their percentage of walkers/bikers is at 13%. The number of students walking to McKinley is down this fall, but they still have 17% of total enrollment who walk to school. Apache has the largest number of bus students and the lowest number of walkers at 7%. Mr. Delmagori said that Ladera and McKinley are “neighborhood” schools where walking to school is easier and more convenient.

Mr. Delmagori said the student arrival counts would be completed again in the spring.

Mrs. Wakan said she would like to have SRTS involved with the MPO process and said that federal dollars for SRTS projects could be sought through the MPO. Mr. Delmagori explained the competitive process used to seek the available federal dollars and the scorecard that was recently developed for scoring projects. He said that the current scorecard does not award points for SRTS projects, but the New Mexico Department of Transportation and the state’s MPOs will be reviewing the scorecard next year and the inclusion of SRTS projects could be considered at that time.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Walk Across America:

Mrs. Wakan explained that each school might want to name the program something different for their school and suggested getting recommendations from the student leaders. The Committee discussed how to print, laminate, and punch the cards. It was decided that the schools could print the cards even though they might not be in color (Mrs. Wakan will provide the sample punch card) and could laminate and cut out the cards needed for their participating students. SRTS will provide the zip ties so the punch cards can be attached to the student’s backpack. Mr. Krest said he has already purchased some different types of punches that include a foot, a dog, a star, and several others, and will make sure each school has a couple to work with. The Committee thought the foot punch was perfect.

Mrs. Wakan said each school could decide what types of activities they would count toward having earned a punch, but recommended the punches be limited to no more than two per day for any student.

Mrs. Wakan said SRTS has 200 chain bracelets, 200 walking school bus charms, 200 walking person charms, 150 water bottles, and 80 large and medium shirts. She said she will purchase more chain bracelets, charms (also include a turkey charm since SRTS will be the recipient of the Turkey Trot money this year), jump ropes, Frisbees, etc. Mrs. Wakan also asked that SRTS encourage participation in this year’s Turkey Trot scheduled for either November 16 or 23. The entry money raised will be donated to SRTS for the purchase, hopefully, of a bike trailer and to begin building a bicycle fleet.

Mrs. Wakan recommended a student receive a charm after getting 20 punches, trading up to a Frisbee or water bottle after earning a certain number of charms or choosing to keep the bracelet and charms if the student wanted. She suggested perhaps allowing five completed punch cards to be traded in for a t-shirt.

Mrs. Wakan suggested that each school have a box or designated area where students could turn in their completed punch cards. Mrs. Wakan said the student leaders are excited about the prizes and the opportunity to trade in smaller prizes for something larger.

Community Bike Rodeo: The Community Bike Rodeo is set for Friday, September 27 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the Sycamore Community Center. The Sycamore Center has volunteers available, but Mrs. Wakan would like to have several additional volunteers with bike rodeo experience.

Mesa Verde has agreed to loan out their helmets for the rodeo. Officer DeLese said that SRTS could use the bikes the juvenile probation/drug court office has, but she added that she thought the bikes were for bigger kids and that some bikes may need repairs before they could be used. Mr. Krest will get the bikes to the Sycamore Center prior to the rodeo.

Mrs. Wakan said that Mike Barnhart who works at Cottonwood Cycles has also volunteered to help with the rodeo.

Mrs. Wakan suggested posting a flyer in as many other community locations as possible to advertise the rodeo.

Walk to School Day – October 9

Mrs. Wakan said she still has about 200 copies of the Walk to School Day flyers that were used in May. She and Mr. Krest agreed that these could be changed and used for the October 9 walk to school day. Mrs. Wakan has ordered reflective “slap” bracelets as prizes for those students who walk or bike to school that day.

Mrs. Wakan has contacted the San Juan Kids publication to help promote this event and will be contacting the Daily Times as well.

The Committee agreed that using the area school’s mascots last year provided a great draw for the event. Mrs. Wakan is contacting the local high schools, and the City’s police and parks department to see if their mascots would again be available for the walk to school day event.

If any school wants to encourage off-site drop-offs by their school buses the morning of the event, it will be up to each school to contact the bus barn to get that authorized. Mrs. Wakan also said it had been a good idea for the schools to call students’ homes the night before to remind them of the event. She recommended the schools do this this year if possible.

Mrs. Wakan will also be contacting Animas Elementary to see if they are interested in participating in the walk to school day event this year.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, October 10 at 3:30 p.m. at McKinley Elementary.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.