



Final

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)
Meeting Minutes**

5:30 PM, Monday, April, 24, 2023
Rohnert Park City Hall, City Council Chambers
130 Avram Avenue, Rohnert Park, California

Members Present: Gary Gutierrez (chair) X Jan Ogren (vice chair) X Tim Hensel 0
Steve Keith X Shirley Johnson X

Non-Voting Participants: Ashley Cotter (Management Analyst, City of Rohnert Park), Emily Shartin (Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition), Christina Panza (Safe Routes to School Director)

1. Call to Order

Chair Gary Gutierrez called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

2. Introductions

Chair Gutierrez commenced self-introductions.

3. Public Comments

No public comments were presented at this meeting.

4. Consideration of Approval of Minutes for 3/27/2023 meeting

Mx. Ogren corrected a typo: interface instead of interfered, Mr. Gutierrez corrected the call to order had not been updated to reflect the new Chair.

Ms. Johnson moved to approve the minutes with corrections, Mx. Ogren seconded. Minutes from 3/27/23 minutes approved: 4 ayes, 0 abstentions, 1 absence (Mr. Hensel)

5. Safe Routes to School Involvement in Rohnert Park (presentation by Christina Panza)

Ms. Panza is the director of the Safe Routes to School County-wide program. Ms. Panza presented on the Safe Routes to School program. Ms. Panza discussed the program and its benefits, which include:

- cost savings: household savings from reduced gas and car use; education budget savings through reduced student busing costs;
- traffic safety: reduced traffic injuries and dangers for students and community members at arrival and dismissal through street improvements near school; more chances to learn and practice road safety for students;
- safety from crime: increased safety from crime and violence due to more people on the streets, good lighting and better street design; less harassment, bullying or violence when students walk or bike together or with adults;
- healthier students: better health and stronger bones, muscles and joints through more walking and biking; reduced risk of chronic disease, diabetes, and obesity;
- school transportation fixes: solutions to reduced or non-existent bus services through Safe Routes to School; reduced traffic congestion at pick up/drop off times;

- climate benefits and cleaner air: fewer student asthma attacks due to less driving and reduced air pollution results; cleaner air and reduced greenhouse gas emissions;
- community connectedness: stronger student friendships and relationships through walking and biking together; positive social connections for families and neighbors;
- better academic performance: better focus, improved concentration and less distraction for students who are active before school; fewer absences and less tardiness when students walk or bike in groups.

Safe Routes to School offers different levels of involvement for schools – comprehensive, in which schools participate in multiple events and outreach, and limited (one event per year). Ms. Panza also provided an overview of the involvement of Safe Routes to School in Rohnert Park:

Comprehensive	Limited	Served in the Past	Never Served
Evergreen Elementary	Marguerite Hahn Elementary	Lawrence Jones	Thomas Page Academy
Monte Vista Elementary		John Reed Elementary	Technology Middle/High
Richard Crane Elementary		Credo High (separate SRTS High School program)	
University at la Fiesta		Rancho Cotate High (separate SRTS High School program)	

Schools looking to participate in Safe Routes to School (SRTS) need to enroll in their programs. Safe Routes to School is funded by a bay area grant, Sonoma County Transit Authority administers the funding, and the program Safe Routes to School is the contractor.

Mx. Ogren asked if John Reed was a middle school or an elementary school. Ms. Panza clarified that this is referring to John Reed Elementary – all schools receiving comprehensive services are elementary.

Ms. Panza explained that the data derived for Safe Routes to School is provided by tally data from teachers who ask their kids who they get to school a couple of days a year. Ms. Panza’s team also utilized GIS maps to show how close students live to school for program implementation and funding opportunities.

Mx. Commented that there was a trend with Covid – Evergreen has a lot more single-family drivers. Ms. Panza responded that car pooling definitely went down, and that the community definitely reverted back – SRTS was hopeful that more biking would be reported, and there’s a possibility that the data collected didn’t show it.

Mr. Keith asked how the data is collected – are the surveys distributed to various employees at the schools? Ms. Panza explained that teachers collected the data through tally counts – volunteers were used previously, but it was discovered that teachers know their students the best and were more effective at gathering this data. Mr. Keith asked if staff counted bikes – Ms. Panza explained that sometimes staff does do that, but often the tallying is often the best way to capture the data. Ms.

Panza continued that they do also do parent surveys, which hasn't been done in a number of years, but it is going out this Spring. The data is provided by parents specifically, which is very helpful. The survey often helps in identifying routes that are concerning and could be a contributing factor in why students are not biking/walking to school. Ms. Panza also stated that any help sharing the survey would be incredibly helpful.

Ms. Panza explained that SRTS does do a lot of programming with schools. When schools enroll in SRTS, they elect to participate in a minimum of three activities, but SRTS staff is always hopeful for participation in 5-8 events per year. SRTS hosts an event every month – such as walk and roll for the month of March, or Bike to School Day for the Month of May. Ms. Johnson commented that prizes such as the golden sneaker award used to be awarded for events similar to this.

Mr. Gutierrez inquired if the recent inclement weather had been challenging. Ms. Panza responded that the weather did make getting students involved harder, but there are plenty of events to participate in. SRTS provides resources to school to continually encourage their students to bike/walk to school. Mr. Gutierrez further inquired when the tally collecting is done. Ms. Panza answered that the collections tend to happen around the beginning of the year, in September. Mr. Gutierrez and Ms. Johnson asked Ms. Panza about e-scooters and e-bikes, respectively. Ms. Panza noted that SRTS hadn't addressed either of those yet, but would circle back to their curricula developer, as those items will need to be integrated into the program at some point. Ms. Panza also went over the Bay Area BikeMobile Partnership, which was hosted at Richard Crane, Evergreen, and University at La Fiesta. SRTS also does programming for the community and family education such as family bicycle work shops and kids bike adventure camp.

Ms. Panza also noted that there were opportunities to start the SRTS program, through annual/biannual meetings with the City and surrounding schools, or collaborating and identifying projects with the BPAC. She noted that the Town of Windsor had a SRTS task force that eventually evolved into their BPAC. Ms. Johnson noted that she was recently appointed a school district trustee, and inquired if Ms. Panza had presented to the school board. Ms. Panza replied that she had not yet. Ms. Panza noted that forming a task force was a bigger conversation. Mr. Keith replied that collaboration with outside entities such as Public Safety would be good. Ms. Panza explained that task forces have been formed periodically, such as finding infrastructure humps and providing useful solutions to finish a project, and then ending after the project was completed. She also noted that Santa Rosa is trying to set up a task force, with all the school districts, City personnel, police, etc. Mx. Ogren inquired about task force members, and whose role it was to chair it. Ms. Panza responded that the implementation of a task force comes from the City, as it was not within the scope of the Sonoma County SRTS contract to facilitate – in other counties, SRTS does facilitate these meetings, but the Sonoma County team can't commit to one right now. Mx. Ogren clarified that there is not currently a SRTS task force in Rohnert Park, which Ms. Panza confirmed. Ms. Shartin also noted that while efforts are being seen to get students biking to school more, the idea of parent/community champions is very critical. Mr. Keith commented that his experience in E Section with Evergreen Elementary was that the school was trying to mitigate traffic by putting up signs for stopping/dropping off students, a hazard that would have been a unique opportunity to encourage students to utilize the path next to the school. Ms. Panza noted that students that live more than ½ a mile away from the school do not bike/walk and usually cite time as an issue as they don't have the additional 25-30 minutes to get to school in the morning without a vehicle.

Mr. Gutierrez asked why schools have opted both in and out of the program. Ms. Panza explained that schools would enroll because there was a committed principal, teacher, or parent that had the buy in from school administration. Ms. Panza noted that without support from the school principal, the program is not successful. Ms. Panza also emphasized the importance of the survey being

distributed. Ms. Johnson said that the survey data could be important, especially if it is reflective of the state of the trails in the area.

6. Trail to Crane Creek Update

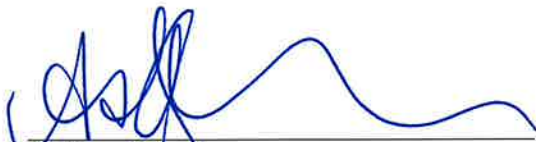
Ms. Cotter provided a timeline for this project – estimated completion is June, 2024. The project does require a great deal of interagency coordination, but it is underway. The estimated date of completion is only an estimate, pending contractor efficiency and weather conditions. Ms. Cotter suggested a field trip to the new trail in Summer or Fall of 2024. Mx. Ogren commented that maps of the area would be helpful. Mr. Keith added that this project has been in the works for almost twenty years. Ms. Shartin asked who was taking the lead on this project, Ms. Cotter responded that the City is the primary on this. All BPAC members agreed it would be great to have the project engineer present at a BPAC meeting to review the project in more detail.

7. New Matters for Future Consideration


BPAC members wanted to agendaize a presentation from the trail to Crane Creek project engineer. Mr. Keith commented that a presentation from Mr. Sampietro regarding Camino Collegio would be beneficial. Mx. Ogren commented that they biked south of E. Cotati, and that it is actually a two directional bike path that is not marked and in need of signage. Mr. Keith commented that he biked the whole route (1.5 mi), and there are multiple changes throughout, and in some areas, cars are parked almost covering the entire bike lane. Ms. Shartin commented that it's not wide enough as is. Mx. Ogren also commented that agendaizing Sunrise Park would be nice. Mr. Keith also added that the SRTS task force should be agendaized in the future as well. BPAC members also agreed that a list of updated items would be appreciated at future meetings as a recurring item for members to review.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Gutierrez moved to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Johnson seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:47pm.



Ashley Cotter, Recording Secretary
Rohnert Park Bicycle and
Pedestrian Advisory Committee



Gary Gutierrez, Chair
Rohnert Park Bicycle and
Pedestrian Advisory Committee