



DATE: October 23, 2013

AGENDA ITEM # 5

TO: Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Commission
FROM: Cedric Novenario, Staff Liaison
SUBJECT: School Commutes – Report from Sub-Committee

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive information from BPAC School Commutes Sub-Committee.

BACKGROUND

At the June 2013 BPAC meeting, a sub-committee of BPAC members was formed with the intent to further develop the objectives, agenda, and conduct of a school commutes study session. The sub-committee is comprised of members Suzanne Ambiel, Bill Crook, and Wes Brinsfield.

The most recent meeting of the sub-committee was on October 11, 2013. Staff invited Mr. Randy Kenyon of the Los Altos School District to represent the LASD point of view. Mr. Kenyon invited Ms. Margie Suozzo to the meeting to provide perspective from a parent representing Egan Junior High School and GreenTown WoW. This staff report provides a summary of that meeting.

DISCUSSION

During the August meeting of the sub-committee it was determined that a meeting with representatives of the LASD was crucial to understanding the District's current school commutes programs, and to gain District support – and, preferably, ownership – of any revision to and continuing monitoring and implementation of a school commutes program. (It is understood that the District does not represent all schools for which school commutes should be considered; e.g., private schools are not represented by the District. However, the District represents the majority of schools within the Los Altos boundary, and thus is considered the primary stakeholder for purposes of this discussion.)

At the October meeting of the sub-committee, Mr. Kenyon presented the position that school commutes programs are designed and implemented by the individual schools. The

District provides whatever support it can, as requested, but does not have an overarching program or template that is used by the individual campuses.

Ms. Suozzo, who stated she was representing PTA as well as GreenTown Los Altos perspectives, stated that GreenTown has identified Walk or Wheels (WOW) “champions” for many schools. The champion serves as a focal point for bicycle and pedestrian issues for the school, and helps to organize education sessions, bike rodeos, and the like – working with the school’s PTA and principal. Ms. Suozzo also reminded the sub-committee that GreenTown had modified the City’s suggested route to schools maps (now several years old), based on input from GreenTown members and parents of the schools. At this point, Staff reminded Ms. Suozzo that the City could not accept responsibility for those maps (and thus would hold no liability for any incident reported to be associated with the maps). Ms. Suozzo acknowledged this, and stated that the maps have been pulled from the GreenTown web site.

Mr. Kenyon asked the sub-committee to define “the end game” for the school commutes discussions. Before answering, the sub-committee reminded everyone present the BPAC works as an advisory committee to the Council, and has no decision making powers. However, BPAC and Staff believe that there are three broad objectives:

- 1) Establish a process that the City can use to monitor and manage the suggested routes to school program, including (but not limited to) identifying “triggers” that would lead to reviews and modifications of existing maps, etc.
- 2) As an outcome of #1, existing suggested routes to schools maps should be updated to reflect current conditions and school needs, as supportable by the City (i.e., as supported by City-maintained infrastructure).
- 3) Increase communication to the population at large (but specifically to the school communities) about the suggested routes to schools (school commutes) program and maps, including the City’s role, the District’s role, the Police Department’s role, the role of individual schools, and rules and regulations governing items affecting the commutes (e.g., crosswalks, crossing guards, accident statistics, and so forth).

After more discussion regarding these objectives and the LASD’s role, the following action items were identified:

- 1) Staff to provide the current set of maps to Mr. Kenyon, who will then communicate them to the individual schools
- 2) Staff, with BPAC support, will prepare a 1 to 2 page “primer” as to the current and potential future look and feel of the school commutes program, including roles and responsibilities, etc.