



DATE: December 19, 2013

AGENDA ITEM # 3

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 December 6, 2013, with Mr. Crook, Mr. Brinsfield, and Mr. Novenario in attendance. This staff report provides a summary of that meeting.

DISCUSSION

Staff reported that the Los Altos School District (LASD) was not in a position to take a leadership role in the school commutes program, but would provide support and coordination activities as possible for the schools within the District. As a result, the Sub-Committee recommends that the idea of a “community meeting” be put on hold until a later date (if at all). Instead, it is suggested that school commutes programs focus on individual schools – with the understanding that such an approach may take longer to completely implement among all LASD schools.

The Sub-Committee suggested that data gathering (regarding routes taken, mode of transportation, times, numbers, obstacles, etc.) may be most appropriately accomplished by (spearheaded by) school PTAs, with support from/agreement from the school principals. With data collected, the City (with BPAC) can proceed with reviewing transportation infrastructure and revising, as necessary, the “suggested routes to school” maps.

The Sub-Committee further suggested that BPAC (Sub-Committee) develop a “data gathering template”, that would be provided to each school. This would promote consistency among the types and formats of data collected, facilitating the City’s ability to compile that data into a single source file. Individual members of BPAC would be “assigned” to each school within LASD, to assist the school and its PTA (or other designated body) with implementing and completing the data gathering effort.

As there are more schools than there are BPAC members, and given the expectation that this approach will require time to schedule meetings with the schools, this approach will be an ongoing and long-term evolution. However, it is hoped that this approach will allow for comprehensive data to be gathered by the most important stakeholders (i.e., the students, parents, and staff of the schools), such that the schools will take on and appreciate the ownership of the programs and information.

To implement this approach, the Sub-Committee recommended that Staff approach the LASD Superintendent (or appropriate executive management) to explain the plan and to seek support at the LASD level. Then, an individual school (e.g., Covington) would be contacted – first, the principal, and then the PTA. The objective is to allow the PTA to understand the commutes program, to offer feedback, and then to gather and report that data. Ultimately, each LASD school would be scheduled to participate, with a BPAC representative providing assistance and a go-between between the school and the City.

Although this approach focuses on the LASD schools, it is intended that non-LASD schools, including private, would benefit from the information gathered – especially as routes to those schools overlap with routes to the LASD schools. As the program gathers momentum and becomes refined, and certainly at the impetus of the private schools (e.g., if they approach BPAC), non-LASD schools can be explicitly included in the program.

ACTIONS:

- 1) Seek full BPAC approval for this recommended approach.
- 2) Review with LASD.
- 3) Develop data gathering template for use at each school.
- 4) Seek a pilot school (e.g., Covington).
- 5) Assign BPAC representatives to schools.
- 6) Contact pilot school, review program with principal.
- 7) Modify program/template based on feedback from LASD and principal.
- 8) Contact pilot school’s PTA, assist with implementation of data gathering.
- 9) Modify program/template based on experience of pilot and feedback.
- 10) Schedule and implement at other LASD schools (may be multi-month, multi-year effort).
- 11) Update maps and publish.
- 12) Repeat.