



**Dixon Safe Routes to School Community Task Force  
City Hall Back Conference Room  
March 5, 2020, 1:30-3 pm**

**Members**

Joe Leach	Public Works Director/ City Engineer	City of Dixon
Jenna Cameron	Sgt., Community Liaison	Dixon Police Department
Officer Malone	School Resource Officer	Dixon Police Department
Sandra Newell	STA Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC)	Dixon Representative
Rayito Farris	Principal	Anderson Elementary
Lloyd Nadal	Program Services Division Manager	SR2S/STA
Betsy Beavers	SR2S Program Coordinator	SR2S/STA

Additional Members in contact but unable to attend: Councilmember Jim Ernest (City of Dixon), Mark Monachello (Dixon Unified School District), Shantel Livingston (Solano Public Health), Ben Ernest (Dixon Montessori Charter School), Karin Bloesch (SR2S/STA)

**Meeting Goals**

1. Seek input from the Community Task Force in order to set priorities for future infrastructure projects to include in the Safe Routes to School Plan Update.
2. Provide an update on current program initiatives and projects in the city of Dixon.

**Agenda**

**I. Introductions and Overview  
Safe Routes to School Update**

Lloyd Nadal provided an overview of the Safe Routes to School (SR2S) Program, now 10 years old and shared the role of the Community Task Force (CTF) with the goal of meeting regularly, and that the Dixon CTF had not met recently. Mr. Nadal shared the purpose of the meeting is to set priorities for identified ATP bike and pedestrian projects around Dixon schools, to hear from community members and city entities about their priorities and issues that need to be addressed. Once projects are identified and prioritized, they will be included in a SR2S Master Plan, then STA can seek funding for the city to complete the projects. Each CTF will prioritize the projects for their city.

Since the Safe Routes program began, 29 SR2S projects across the county have been completed including projects in Dixon at Anderson and Tremont schools, the installation of green bike lanes and the West B St. under crossing.

**II. Dixon Police Department Update**

School Resource Officer (SRO) Malone updated the group about traffic issues at Dixon schools. He highlighted some areas of concern at the following locations:

- Dixon HS – High school drivers themselves are a concern

### **Dixon Police Department Update (cont.)**

- Anderson Elementary/Maine Prairie – parents turning and not stopping at the 3-way stop at the intersection near the 2 schools. This area is already congested and will increase with John Knight Middle School opening in fall.
- CA Jacobs – Congested with a lot of traffic.
- Tremont – Parents not stopping at the 4-way stop at the school and not following the parking/loading zone signs. Students are let off and are entering the street between cars.
- Gretchen Higgins – Speeding is the larger issue with drivers; only one location with a stop sign and crossing guard.
- Dixon Montessori – Traffic congestion due to everyone arriving at same time. Crossing guards are stationed at 2 intersections. Drivers get impatient and try to drive around cars.

Officer Malone mentioned that the elementary schools and CA Jacobs have crossing guards provided by the district. The Police Department works to ensure crossing guards are wearing vests and using stop signs. He reported that the district has been responsive about having proper equipment and encouraging crossing guards to use the proper gear and equipment. Officer Malone shared that a main problem at most sites is double parking in loading zones, parents are parking and get out, leaving no room for other cars to park; and also kids are jumping out between cars.

Sandy Newell (PAC Rep.) asked Joe Leach about previous city discussions about a potential stop sign at 4<sup>th</sup> and East A Street. The Dixon Transportation Advisory Commission previously recommended a 4-way stop for that location to increase the safety of those crossing A St. from the south neighborhood. Mr. Leach mentioned that it is unknown how the traffic loading/pattern will be with the addition of the new school. The City plans to evaluate that location next Spring. Another area of concern is speeding from Pedrick Rd. to 1<sup>st</sup> St. The posted speed is 35 mph, but cars coming into town are going 40-45 mph and still going 35 – 40 mph by the time they get to Anderson/Maine Prairie. Mr. Leach identified the need for the city to look at driving speeds and work with the PD for speed enforcement at this location before installing a stop sign. This includes studying the traffic patterns at the schools. Without this information it could be problematic during drop-off/pick-up; how drivers queue on A St. could affect traffic at the A St. intersection due to the closeness of the locations.

Mr. Leach and Sgt. Cameron spoke briefly about the Dixon PD system (Frontline?) which provides information on certain areas, tracks how often PD goes to those areas, and citation frequency. Mr. Leach mentioned it's a great way to collect data based on complaints or areas of concern. Officers input and document information (such as warnings, stops, citations, or no violations) after a request for extra patrol is made. Erika McLitus asked if the system syncs with Crossroads, Sgt. Cameron does not think so.

### **III. City Update – Projects**

Mr. Leach reported that most city projects for the next 1 to 1-1/2 years will be slurry seal projects. Mr. Leach mentioned that the effort put into the Countywide ATP Plan has gotten a lot of great publicity within the community, was brought to the Transportation Advisory Commission, that STA and consultants did a good job of ferreting out the priorities and issues, and those priorities were captured in subsequent versions of the Plan.

Mr. Leach mentioned that the City of Dixon has two peak traffic periods, morning and afternoon school traffic. He reported that the city is looking at a solution that incorporates the ATP Plan for pedestrians and bicyclists, and the Redit-Ride transit system with STA help on the Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP). Mr. Leach said the next steps are developing a modified fixed route program/plan, working with a consultant to analyze and start a pilot program (targeting an age group or school) and then rolling it out city-wide.

Mr. Leach reported that the city is looking holistically at how best to help kids and the public get to and from their destinations. One part of moving forward is bike routes and ped gap closures in conjunction with doing something different with Read-Ride.

Lloyd Nadal asked about the numbers for student ridership, Mr. Leach responded that there are more than 80 riders. Mr. Nadal mentioned a project that SR2S worked on with the Benicia Unified School District for Mary Farmer Elementary, that could help determine Read-Ride routes based on student locations. The Benicia USD provided redacted student information to SR2S, and the staff was able to develop heat maps for planning of routes and to help locate potential drop-off or park and walk locations based on where students were coming from. Mr. Nadal suggested working with DUSD to see if they could provide some of this information to the SR2S team, and that it could also be helpful in determining Read-Ride improvements for students. Mr. Nadal also mentioned using these maps and sharing this information with the community to get parent buy-in and provide people with options and alternatives to driving although, recognizing the suggestions may not work for everyone.

#### **V. Active Transportation Plan Process**

Mr. Nadal stated that many of the locations of concern that Officer Malone mentioned previously in the meeting, have been identified within the Active Transportation Plan (ATP – Countywide Plan) process for identifying projects.

Erika McLitus talked about the ATP plan process and the Active Transportation Program (ATP- state level funding). Ms. McLitus mentioned that it is difficult for smaller cities to fund big improvements, so they typically funding from the state or the federal government. These funding programs have long applications and are data driven, and for cities with few staff they can be difficult.

The largest funding source for these types of projects is the statewide Active Transportation Program which is very competitive. Applicants aren't only competing with surrounding counties, but statewide. Ms. McLitus shared that during the last round of funding (Cycle 4), most grant funds went to Southern California. Cities need good data to compete, which was the impetus behind the STA's Countywide Active Transportation Plan. She explained the breakdown of funding available statewide, a minimum of 25% of funding must go to disadvantaged communities, with the actual breakdown for the last round of funding at 75-80% for these communities. Applications are scored with 10 pts/100 given to disadvantaged communities. She explained how different needs are prioritized, such as serving senior centers or schools, even if the community as a whole isn't determined as disadvantaged. Mr. Leach mentioned that the City of Dixon doesn't qualify as a disadvantaged community. It was clarified that schools providing a certain percentage of free and reduced lunches may count as a disadvantaged school, and can be considered and scored as such.

Ms. McLitus said the inspiration behind doing the ATP Plan was to have good data and community outreach in order to be more competitive against other agencies for funding. She said data, such as finding sidewalk gaps is good, but it doesn't tell about behavior, that is why STA wants to partner with schools and communities (people who see the sidewalks and walk them) and get their input, just data-driven analysis isn't enough. The ATP Plan is currently in draft form and open for public comment and the community is encouraged to provide comments. The goal of SR2S and the Community Task Force is to take data and initial community input from the ATP Plan and transition it into a Safe Routes to School Plan that prioritizes the projects around schools.

Principal Rayito Farris (Anderson Elementary) said that her school is a Title I school with about 75% of students receiving free or reduced meals. As a Title I school, it receives federal funding and is recognized as a disadvantaged school; Gretchen Higgins is a Title I school also.

## **VI. Identify Other Project Ideas/Needs**

Mr. Nadal explained that projects around schools are to be considered and included in the Safe Routes Plan to get funded. Ms. Farris provided input from Anderson Elementary, identifying two areas of concern – in front of and behind the school. At the back gate on East D St., where kids leave, people double and triple park, and students on foot weave in/out of traffic to get to their car. In front of the school, where parents drop off and kids exit the school, parents park right in front at the stop sign and kids go around parked cars. She said there's no place for cars to turn around coming from downtown and cars make lots of U-turns at East C St. and North 5<sup>th</sup> St.

Ms. Farris explained her suggestions for projects to remedy these situations.

1. Install a drop-off/pick-up zone on 5<sup>th</sup> St. to allow parents to safely get their students to/from school. The proposed area is not being used by students.
2. Install a roundabout at the back-gate area (D St. and La Esperanza).  
Ms. Farris used an example from Padan School in Vacaville which has a narrow street with a roundabout to get in/out just past the school to help with traffic.

Mr. Leach asked if there's an opportunity to "carve out" an area behind the school; the discussion brought up that the location may lose play courts behind Maine Prairie. Ms. Farris mentioned that area is unused by her students (Anderson Elementary) and that Maine Prairie currently uses it for PE, but very few students attend. She mentioned that if it was for the safety of students, she felt something could be worked out.

Mr. Nadal asked if REDI-Ride services that area, and Ms. Farris answered that it depends on the day.

Ms. Farris informed the group that many preschool and day care center vans don't have a place to pull in and wait for students after school; and that there is great need for a drop-off location.

Ms. Farris would like to see both projects happen but said most students are dropped off in front of the school, parents park in the school lot across the street and cross, and school traffic will increase when the new middle school (John Knight) opens. Ms. Farris said that it would be beneficial for Anderson to have visitor parking near the existing lot or drop-off zone. She has briefly shared these ideas with the district before, but mostly these ideas have been discussed with SR2S staff. There is an existing building (condemned) in the area for the potential drop-off/pick-up zone, but could be removed to make room for the project.

Mr. Nadal mentioned possibly using Micro Grant money, with \$75,000 available next year (\$30,000 cap per application) for projects. Ms. Farris mentioned that she learned that flashing solar speed signs, cost \$45,000 and the district was interested in one of those.

Mr. Leach asked if a preliminary study is needed to put projects into the plan. Ms. McLitus said that it would be difficult to study a location for safety, if there hasn't been a safety problem and encouraged additional comments during the ATP public comment period, if there are no projects recommended near the school. She said much of the ATP Plan is focused on gap closure or unsafe crossings, (and this is) essentially a car problem but is affecting the safety of kids weaving in and out of traffic. She suggested an argument could be made for

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds, due to kids running in/out of traffic and lack of a safe pedestrian route to get to the parents picking up. This could possibly support the roundabout idea. There is \$250,000 for HSIP funding available for the City, as a pedestrian set aside, and YSAQMD funding; she was not sure if Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds could be used.

Ms. Farris reported that parents and residents on La Esperanza are worried about traffic behind the school. Ms. McLitus said that with multiple people submitting comments for a location to be in the plan, those comments would be taken into consideration. Mr. Nadal pointed out that the district would also have to support the project. Sgt. Cameron said the PD could monitor the amount of complaints for a specific time period in the area; Ms. McLitus stated that complaints and ticket data can be part of an application.

Ms. Farris stated that she feels DUSD would be open to discussing these projects; she has spoken to Brian Dolan, Superintendent, about her ideas and offered to talk to him again about those improvements along with STA's efforts to seek funding. Mr. Leach mentioned that funding these projects could be a concern for the district, but if STA had funding, maybe not.

Ms. Farris said she would prioritize the drop-off/pick-up zone on 5<sup>th</sup> St., since it would affect the greatest number of people. The group discussed the flow of traffic still occurring on C Street towards the drop-off area, Ms. Farris mentioned using a valet door service to keep cars moving.

Mr. Nadal offered to work with the student location heat maps to locate the preferred route to drop-off students; and suggested micro grant-funded signage or educational materials to tell parents which way to go (modelled after other school drop off zones). Mr. Leach asked if the Micro Grant could fund studies, Mr. Nadal said yes along with other smaller expenditures.

There was additional discussion about using the area behind Maine Prairie (on D. St.) as a drop-off/pick-up area or possibly a small parking lot, a potential need with 3 schools in a small area. Ms. McLitus said finding the right funding source for the projects (possibly grants for affordable housing or HSIP) will determine what can be done.

The group also discussed the staggered school start times for John Knight (8:40 am) and Anderson (8:15 am) in the fall; and the WOW Wednesday program at Anderson, which Principal Farris said has a significant number of kids riding bikes and scooters. A Walking School Bus is scheduled to begin soon and will walk students to Anderson from the train station.

Betsy Beavers provided the comments from Principal McCammon at Gretchen Higgins. Principal McCammon supports the improvements in the ATP for Fountain Way and Pembroke Way, and asked for other crossing improvements at Pembroke and Stratford Way (maybe increase to 4 crosswalks); there are currently 2 crosswalks at that location. The intersection of McKenzie and Pembroke might need paint refresh and better visuals (possibly signage), and there are many Gretchen Higgins students walking from that area.

Sandy Newell asked the group to discuss the crossing of SR113 for Anderson. Ms. Farris told the group that she has a crossing guard located at C Street and SR113. Ms. Newell expressed her concerns for a recent biking route that makes cyclists cross SR113 twice. Mr. Leach mentioned a corridor study with RTIF funds in conjunction with Solano County from A St. to Parkway, to look at options to help peds and cyclists once past the cemetery, the City is aware of the sidewalk needs and lack of safe bike infrastructure along that corridor and described the remedy to that corridor for safe cycling is problematic. Mr. Leach did inform the group that the developer for the Valley Glen sub-division is putting in a signalized intersection at Valley Glen and 1<sup>st</sup>

Street, a location with many complaints and reports of concerns for crossings at that location with anecdotal information and near misses. Another signal will be at Chestnut-East and West of 1<sup>st</sup> Street. This will help with the high school traffic from the west side of town and increase safety for those going to Hall Park.

Ms. McLitus mentioned that for ATP Cycle 4 a bus pull-in for Dixon High School was identified to provide a Read-Ride stop near the campus instead of pulling into the campus, unfortunately that application was not funded. Officer Malone said that currently the bus stops outside of the campus on College Way, but there is not a place for them to stop, they are pulling over on the street. Bus stop improvements for this location should be included in the plan as a low priority for now and may be changed to a higher priority as development continues.

## **VII. Next Steps**

STA/SR2S will:

1. Prioritize identifying funding options for the projects at Anderson.  
See if HSIP funding is available (and possibly apply for ATP Cycle 5 and Micro-grant funding for a study).
2. Meet with DUSD and the City to get input and cost estimate for the project(s) at Anderson and additional projects.
3. Identify short term projects/programs that can be implemented by SR2S, DPD, and city to facilitate a strategy for these three schools.
4. Get additional input (potentially a 5 in 5) from other schools to identify additional projects.
5. Vet list to the city PW and DPD, to create short-term and long-term projects.
6. Put the project ideas discussed today into a plan and include feedback and input from the schools.
7. Re-convene with the task force in next 2-3 months to prioritize the projects.

Additional follow-up will include:

- Working to hold a city-wide bike event to encourage kids to bike to school on safe routes, identified and supported by the city (traffic and city public works), similar how a race is held throughout a city. Safe Routes to School could support the event with safety equipment and incentives. Perhaps start with a school first (Dixon Montessori) since it already has a weekly WOW event and event can also celebrate Micro-grant funding for bike racks and signage at the school. The group discussed holding a pop-up ride to school event rotating at each school that is interested. Ms. Beavers will see which schools are interested. The group will try to have an event for Bike to School Day on May 6<sup>th</sup>, working with Anderson and Dixon Montessori. Mr. Leach suggested a "Pop-up" bike lane or infrastructure improvements to try it out, or get people used to the idea.
- Work with Officer Malone to provide bike helmets and bike locks to students, he is working with the schools to provide helmets for students.