

Esko Safe Routes to School Kick-off Meeting Summary

Thursday, April 23, 2009 7:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. in the Esko School District Board Room



Present: Kathy Hammerlund, Cathy Erola, Deb Holte, Lynn McComber, Loretta Peterson, Brooke Pfister, Greg Hexum, Brian Harker, Mary Siptroth, Ruth Janke, Aaron Fischer, Bill Blom, Julian Bertoglian, Jeff Salor, Phill Powers, Ellen Pillsbury and Mark Plotz

The meeting began with attendees observing the student drop-off with specially attention to the area behind Winterquist Elementary. Attendees then discussed the safety issues observed with Mark Plotz, NCBW facilitating.

General safety issues identified:

- Open enrollment increases traffic
- No bicycling policy for elementary students
- School zone 25 mph not always followed
- 30 mph into town too close to township line
- Students arriving late after patrols leave at 8:10am
- In winter-student patrol on snow banks (County plows Highway 61)

Safety issues identified by location:

Around the intersections on highway 61

- Crossing guards are sometimes ignored
- Increasing traffic
- Logging trucks
- Most dangerous crossing by Ram and school zone

Bus Zone in front of Winterquist and Lincoln schools

- Drop off and cars mixing
- Drop off on Highway 61 shoulder near temporary traffic cones
- Notices to parents with drop off zone information not observed
- Busy parents mean unsafe driving
- Report parents who drive through flags to County sheriff or local officer
- Township and County law enforcement need to have a bigger presents
- Adult safety patrol organized a year ago

Drop off behind Winterquist school

- No sidewalk on adjacent streets/Lincoln Ln
- Double parking
- Crossing median
- 2-3 lanes of parking
- Drop-off at any point
- Five minute parking sign
- Truck delivery during peak drop off/pick up times
- Biking and walking on Lincoln Ln
- Parking by playground

High School Drop off area

- Busier in afternoon
- Double parking
- Full parking lot-student park along westside of Thomson Rd
- Emergency vehicles can not reach door if car parked in front
- Would like to see a widened parking restriction area on Thomson Rd

Mark Plotz presented an overview presentation on Safe Routes to School nationwide with common issues and barriers and possible solutions. Afterwards attendees brainstormed possible solutions with a focus on low-cost solutions.

Possible Solutions:

- Lions Club- bike safety program
- Bike drive for students who need bikes
- Painted school zone on Highway
- Involve local law enforcement-write tickets, come to meetings
- Bike/pedestrian facilities along highway 61 towards midway development
- Add sidewalks
- Flashing light on east side of Highway 61
- Bus line along southside of high school

Lower cost Solutions:

- Redesign and configure school signage
- Repaint curbs
- In street signage
- Look at decreasing bus stops-merge stops in subdivision
- Bring the bus drop off to 10-15 minutes
- Educate on the drop zone times
- Walking school bus
- Engage students
- Elementary orientation-give out notes on parking zones

Next Steps

Ellen Pillsbury presented the SRTS planning process and reviewed the Parent survey and Classroom student tally which are produced by the National Center for Safe Routes to School.

1. Parent survey distribution is scheduled for the week of April 27 with a return deadline by May 15th. Mary Siptroth is coordinating distribution
2. Classroom tallies will be conducted during the week of May 4th.
3. Esko SRTS website will be created by Ellen Pillsbury
4. Survey data will be entered into the National Center for SRTS data base.
5. Next meeting to review survey results is scheduled for **Thursday, May 28th 8:15am.**