

Larchmont/Mamaroneck Safe Routes to School Committee

- *To promote health and fitness among youth by providing safe walking and biking routes to Larchmont/Mamaroneck schools; and*
- *To facilitate the development of programs that will reduce traffic congestion and air pollution in the vicinity of our schools.*

September 10, 2015 Meeting Notes

Attendees:

NYS Senate: Roz Weinstein; Hon. George Latimer

NYS Assembly: Lisa Urban

Village of Mamaroneck: Det. Maresca, Det. Jaeger

Board of Education: Nancy Pierson

MHS: Kim Larsen

Murray: Rebecca Mintiens, Jennifer Golden, Jennifer Helgesen, Paul Tortorella

Central: Nova Cutler

Chatsworth: Karen Hall, Carolyn Lee

Rye YMCA: Denise Woodin

L/M Sustainability Collaborative: Lisa Boillot

The role of the SRTS committee is to ensure that all **5E's** of a successful SRTS program are addressed: to ensure that **E**ducation and **E**ncouragement programs take place along side the **E**ngineering and **E**nforcement initiatives undertaken by the municipalities. **E**valuation of these programs will also be part of the committee's mandate as a way to demonstrate changes in behavior and attitude.

Village of Mamaroneck

Nova Cutler noted that Old Boston Post Road was repaved and a nice, wide pedestrian walkway was striped on the left hand side. Nova will follow up with the Village Manager regarding stenciling (of a walking figure) in the walkway and to ensure that snow removal includes this pedestrian area. Two areas need sidewalks: (1) Old Boston Post Road from the McDonald's exit to the Post Road; and (2) Orienta Avenue from Rushmore to #360. The traffic commission approved these projects in February. Last spring, Dan Sarnoff said that the Village is obtaining estimates for the projects, will then get Board approval, and will send the job out for bids. Kim and Nova will follow up and get an update.

In April, Dan Sarnoff mentioned that the Village hired an engineer to help improve safety on the streets behind MAS. This area has been noted as a dangerous area for years with cars, buses and pedestrians creating many problems. Det. Maresca verified that new lanes were painted and signs installed to improve safety at drop off and dismissal.

Town of Mamaroneck

The Town of Mamaroneck was awarded TAP funding to install a sidewalk along Weaver Street from Murray Avenue to Bonnie Way. The Town has 3 years to complete the project. The Town just signed a formal agreement with NYSDOT and has begun working with Verizon & ConEdison to relocate 7 utility poles. A consultant engineer will assist with design and bid development. Right of way acquisition for land on four properties will begin shortly. Construction will likely not begin before spring 2016.

Village of Larchmont

Karen Hall reported that there are three vacancies on the traffic commission. Anyone interested should contact Karen. It is important to have advocates for alternative forms of transportation (walk, bike, public transport) on local traffic commissions to ensure decisions represent all residents' interests.

Elementary School Programs

PTA representatives shared ideas for Walk to School Week (October 5 - 9):

- Murray deemphasized giveaways for spring WTSW. Instead of “getting” the focus was on “giving.” Some ideas: bring a thank you note to the crossing guard, count your steps (PTA will donate a penny per step to a charitable organization), “funk up your feet” sneaker decorating, used shoe drive. While there was some initial skepticism, the change was well received.
- During spring WTSW, Chatsworth tracked daily walking by classroom. The grade with the most days of walking received popsicles. This fall, students may be asked to bring a can of food for the Food Pantry. Chatsworth will also focus on safety: safe crossing at intersections, no parking in crosswalks, more officers enforcing laws.
- Central received \$25 Zappos gift certificates in the spring. Each day during WTSW walkers received a raffle entry. Participation grew throughout the week because of this incentive.

Spring Walk to School Week 2016 is April 18 – 21 (schools are closed 4/22). Although this is a short week, it was the best option to accommodate test dates without waiting until mid-May.

All four elementary schools held bike safety events last spring which were deemed incredibly successful, with approximately 100 students participating at each. Safety stations (helmet adjusting, seat height, etc.) were much appreciated by parents. Kiwanis generously donated helmets to the PTAs. Students were impressed by police officers and EMS technicians on bicycles who visited the events. AAA resources were terrific. All three local PBAs donated funds to the elementary schools. PTA reps used the funds to purchase re-usable vinyl signs saying “May is National Bike Month.”

Hommocks Middle School

In partnership with law enforcement, a new drop off/pickup lane was painted at the front of the school, along with a lane for cars exiting the parking lot. The changes are expected to improve safety and keep traffic moving. School administration may have to educate parent drivers about the new lanes.

Mamaroneck High School

Last spring, Lisa Urban and Kim worked with MHS video teacher, Emily Dombroff, to host a Safe Routes to School video contest. The theme was distracted walking/biking/driving. Unfortunately, the timing wasn't great and the contest was cancelled due to lack of entries. Kim will speak with Ms. Dombroff about incorporating the contest into the curriculum this winter. Prize money was donated by the Rye YMCA and local PBAs (\$100/\$75/\$50).

Update from Rye YMCA

Denise Woodin showed the group adorable sneaker keychains with a tag saying “it’s cool to walk to school.” Each elementary school will receive enough keychains for about 40% of their student population. The keychains were funded by United Way grant monies. If a school would like to purchase additional keychains, they were about \$1.10 each and the vendor used was:

Elaine Bennett at JEMS Creative Promotions
17 Talcott Road
Rye Brook, NY 10573
P: 914-481-4311; F: 914-481-4313
www.jemspromo.com

Denise may be able to purchase yellow “walking school bus” signs. Please let her know if you are interested in any.

Interesting, fun photos from Walk to School Week are great for publicity and for supporting funding efforts. Please send digital photos to Denise. DeniseWoodin@ryeymca.org

Last spring, elementary and middle school teachers were asked to administer a simple tally sheet during Walk to School Week. Dr. Shaps sent a letter & tally sheet to teachers which likely increased teacher participation. The sheets were collected by the Rye YMCA for data entry. Denise Woodin will send output reports to Kim, who will share with PTA reps and school administrators.

Boston Post Road school zone legislation

George Latimer explained the history of the school zone legislation and the fact that we resorted to legislation because the NYSDOT determined that a school zone was not warranted. The bill has been reintroduced and will remain “live” until December 2016. Lisa Urban expressed Assemblyman Otis’s continued support of the bill. Kim referenced a pedestrian/vehicular accident in front of MHS on 3/18/15 at 7:55am. She received the accident report from the Village of Mamaroneck and will send it to Senator Latimer and Assemblyman Otis. Hopefully, this will validate the need for improved safety in the area. Senator Latimer said that an update on the legislation would be provided in January. At that time, he will let us know whether letters of support (from parents/residents) are needed. Local municipalities and the school board have already submitted letters of support for the bill.

Next meeting: January