

CITY/SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMITTEE

Thursday, March 16th, 2023, 10:00 – 11:30 AM

Zoom Registration Link:

<https://cityofpaloalto.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYqce-vrzgsEtAP9aA6itY7ylXal4i9jWvZ>

- A. **Welcome/Introductions/Recognitions/Oral Communications (City/PTA) 5 minute**
- B. **Administrative (City/PTA) 15 minutes**
 - 1. **City of Palo Alto/Palo Alto Bicycles E-bike Discount Program** [\[LINK\]](#)
 - 2. **PAUSD Community Advisory Committee Sweetheart Award**
 - 3. **Palo Alto Link Q&A with Nathan Baird** [\[LINK\]](#)
- C. **Engineering/Planning (City/PAUSD) 45 minutes**
 - 1. **City Engineering**
 - i. **E-bike in Open Spaces Policy**
 - ii. **Alma/Churchill Safety Project Schedule**
 - iii. **ECR Repaving Schedule**
 - iv. **Charleston/Arastradero/El Camino Signal Schedule**
 - v. **Quiet Zone Study Meeting - March 23** [\[LINK\]](#)
 - 2. **PAUSD Engineering: Measure Z**
 - 3. **Safety Concerns Success Stories**
 - i. **El Carmelo**
 - ii. **Escondido**
 - iii. **Online FAQ Resources** [\[LINK\]](#)
- D. **Encouragement (PTA) 10 minutes**
 - 1. **Upcoming meetings: City Council and CSLC**
 - 2. **Walk and Roll Week School Event Report-Out**
- E. **Engagement (City): Collision Report 5 Minutes**
- F. **Education (City) 1 minute**
 - 1. **Adult School Bike Safety Education Classes [Family Cycling March 22 and 25 Class** [LINK](#);
Adult Safety April 23 Class [LINK\]](#)
- G. **Evaluation (City/PTA) 9 minutes**
 - 1. **22-23 Preliminary Travel Tally Data**
 - 2. **How can we improve these numbers? Program Support? Walk and Roll Week?**

Next CSTSC Meeting: Thursday, April 20th, 2023, 10:00 AM -11:30 AM

Agenda Item Requests: Please email saferoutes@cityofpaloalto.org **by 5:00 PM, Monday, May 1st , 2023.**

CITY/SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes

Thursday, March 16, 2023

10:00 a.m.

Zoom Virtual Meeting from Palo Alto, California

Present: Jessica Asay, Nathan Baird (staff), Ben Becchetti (PAPD staff), Arnout Boelens, Juan Caviglia, Rachel Croft, Rudy Esquivias (PAUSD staff), Eric Holm (PAUSD staff), Joslyn Leve, Jess McClellan, Rose Mesterhazy (staff), Jose Palma (staff), Rachael Panizzo, Amy Sheward, Sylvia Star-Lack (staff), Ashley Tseng

Guests: Penny Ellson, Linda Henigin, Reid Kleckner, Arthur Liberman, Shree Sandilya, Keri Wagner

Rose Mesterhazy called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

A. Welcome/Introductions/Recognitions/Oral Communications

The Palo Alto Weekly wrote about the Black History Month Celebration Rides. Arnout Boelens commented that he was very impressed and proud of the team who organized the ride. He loved participating on the El Carmelo route. They visited some important locations with respect to Black History Month. There was a great turnout even though it was raining. It was a huge success and will be expanding to other schools next year. Rose Mesterhazy commended Rachel Croft and Linda Henigin for their work with regard to the Escondido and Duveneck Celebration Rides, respectively. Keri Wagner remarked that the Black History Month Celebration rides were impressive, and she learned a lot about black history in Palo Alto. Ms. Mesterhazy thanked Ms. Wagner and the PTAC for their visibility and commitment. Ms. Henigin expressed her thanks to Ms. Mesterhazy for her energy and inspiration. Ms. Croft thanked Ms. Mesterhazy for her role in organizing the Celebration Ride as well as those who worked on the Escondido ride. Ms. Mesterhazy thanked everyone involved in the Celebration Rides. Sara Woodham-Johnsson spoke at Greene Middle School about the renaming of the school.

B. Administrative

1. City of Palo Alto/Palo Alto Bicycles E-bike Discount Program
2. PAUSD Community Advisory Committee Sweetheart Award
3. Palo Alto Link Q&A with Nathan Baird

The City of Palo Alto is offering electric bike discounts through Palo Alto Bicycles through March 22. The link to the discount program is:

<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/March-E-Bike-and-EV-Discount-Campaigns.html?soid=1138677836951&aid=OYdCtMVGn2k>

E-bikes have a minimal carbon footprint as well as save time and money. Ride and Drive Clean link: <https://rideanddriveclean.org/ebikes/>

The City School Transportation Safety Committee received a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for Special Education in Palo Alto - Sweetheart Award for promoting a two-year Adaptive Cycling Rodeo pilot. Jose Palma commented that he is grateful for the opportunity, and it changed how he looks at transportation for all. Rose Mesterhazy remarked that it is a statement of our commitment to equity within our Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program to include children with exceptional needs. When we support infrastructure and programs for people with disabilities, we support all road users. Our contracted partners wrote a report about the Adaptive Cycling Rodeo class outcomes. There will be a meeting this summer to address our partnership with PAUSD in moving the adaptive cycling program forward. The March 10 Superintendent e-news included

congratulations to the SRTS program for their CAC award.

Nathan Baird, Parking Manager for the Office of Transportation in the City of Palo Alto, provided an update about the new transit service, Palo Alto Link. It is an app-enabled, on-demand ride share available Monday through Friday. Rides are free through April 7. Regular fare is \$3.50. Reduced fare is \$1 for seniors, disabled, low income and youth. You need to be at least 13 to ride alone, under 18 requires parental consent, riding under 13 is allowed with a guardian. Riders need to supply their own car seat or booster seat. Palo Alto Link is on iPhone and Android app stores. Schedule a ride through the app or call (650) 505-5772. Information is on our website: cityofpaloalto.org/paloaltolink

Arnout Boelens asked if you can select which vehicle you need via the app, either accessible for wheelchairs or with a bike rack. Mr. Baird replied that you could designate in the app if you need a wheelchair-accessible vehicle. All the fleet has bike racks except for the three wheelchair-accessible vehicles, so you do not need to note that you need a bike rack.

Mr. Baird addressed the question if it was possible to use Palo Alto Link to go to big box retailers outside of Palo Alto, such as Home Depot, Costco and Target or was the service area map a hard limit. Per the terms of our VTA grant, it is only for internal trips throughout most of Palo Alto, not including the Baylands or Foothills. In the future, the service area may expand with additional partners and funding.

Based on less than one week of data, over 800 unique riders have taken a trip. The app has over 2500 sign-ups. There were 100 rides on the first day, increasing to 200 rides yesterday. Estimated wait times are usually 10-12 minutes but last week's average was about 9 minutes.

Ms. Mesterhazy reiterated that PAUSD is a green school community. Walking and biking is encouraged whenever possible, especially for trips two miles or less.

Visit Palo Alto Link website to learn more by using the following link:

[https://city.ridewithvia.com/palo-alto-](https://city.ridewithvia.com/palo-alto-link?af_channel=Google&c=CAL_AlwaysOn&af_adset=Brand&keyword=palo%20alto%20link&campaignid=19769733531&adgroupid=153527609664&gclid=Cj0KCQjwIPWgBhDHARIsAH2xdNeGkGcxDpPUdv-uaZuh0_VVGORxbTQ4NsqbP5mwAyRGRSSRMSNYUaAtdzEALw_wcB)

[link?af_channel=Google&c=CAL_AlwaysOn&af_adset=Brand&keyword=palo%20alto%20link&campaignid=19769733531&adgroupid=153527609664&gclid=Cj0KCQjwIPWgBhDHARIsAH2xdNeGkGcxDpPUdv-uaZuh0_VVGORxbTQ4NsqbP5mwAyRGRSSRMSNYUaAtdzEALw_wcB](https://city.ridewithvia.com/palo-alto-link?af_channel=Google&c=CAL_AlwaysOn&af_adset=Brand&keyword=palo%20alto%20link&campaignid=19769733531&adgroupid=153527609664&gclid=Cj0KCQjwIPWgBhDHARIsAH2xdNeGkGcxDpPUdv-uaZuh0_VVGORxbTQ4NsqbP5mwAyRGRSSRMSNYUaAtdzEALw_wcB)

C. Engineering/Planning

1. City Engineering
 - i. E-bike in Open Spaces Policy
 - ii. Alma/Churchill Safety Project Schedule
 - iii. ECR Repaving Schedule
 - iv. Charleston/Arastradero/El Camino Signal Schedule
 - v. Quiet Zone Study Meeting – March 23
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Jose Palma delivered a slide presentation on City Engineering. The Open Spaces e-bike policy might affect how families enjoy access to recreational biking in the Open Spaces areas. Link to the Palo Alto Weekly article regarding City Council's vote to ban e-bikes on unpaved routes in the Baylands: <https://www.paloaltoonline.com/news/2023/02/28/palo-alto-backs-e-bike-ban-on-baylands-trails>

Open Spaces allows regular bikes. Arnout Boelens asked if he could use his e-bike in Open Spaces with electric assist turned off. Sylvia Star-Lack thought Arastradero Preserve might

enforce the ban or that rangers might assume it is an e-bike even if the motor is turned off when they see the battery.

The Alma/Churchill Safety Project is beginning later this year. Mr. Palma highly encouraged subscribing to the project's newsletter through the following link:

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAPALO/subscriber/new?topic_id=CAPALO_258

The preliminary schedule for the El Camino Real repaving project is March through mid-October. Dates will be more specific as plans finalize.

It is important to provide input for future El Camino Real improvements in the upcoming Bike and Pedestrian Transportation Plan (BPTP) update. Mr. Palma asked if there would be a web page for BPTP. Ms. Star-Lack responded that they are in contract negotiations with the vendor. The contractor will develop the website as soon as possible.

The newsletter has a lot of information regarding the Charleston/Arastradero/El Camino signal schedule that might not be on the project web page, so Mr. Palma encouraged signing up to the newsletter if you travel through those areas. The bad weather impacted the installation of signals. The next signal activation will be at Wilkie Way.

A Quiet Zone is a stretch of track where the train is not required to sound the horn at each street crossing except for emergencies or construction. There is a Quiet Zone Study hybrid meeting on March 23 at 6 p.m. This meeting is an opportunity for you to review and comment on concept plans and any bike or pedestrian facility changes. Information about the Quiet Zone Study and a link to the Zoom meeting:

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Transportation/Transportation-Projects/Quiet-Zone-Study-Palo-Alto-AvenueAlma-Street-Crossing>

Rose Mesterhazy encouraged people to learn about the Quiet Zone and its impacts, although the impacts are currently only focused around the Alma/El Palo Alto neighborhood.

Eric Holm spoke about PAUSD Engineering: Measure Z projects. Hoover is moving this summer. Palo Verde will move back to its home campus. A walk and roll suggested route path will be determined for the Hoover community to update the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) map. Maria Abilock will have a bike class on April 15 at 10 a.m. in the Greendell Multipurpose Room, which is open to everybody.

Mr. Holm remarked that the goal is to have the updated SRTS map ready in the spring so families can practice the routes during the summer. Mr. Holm agreed to Mr. Palma's request to send him the updated map for posting on the website.

There was a presentation regarding Escondido's success story addressing their safety concerns.

Ms. Mesterhazy made the following transportation safety recommendations: Weekly e-news messaging reminding parents that U-turns and double-parking around the school perimeter compromise student safety. Share Walk and Roll Suggested Routes Maps in Friday folders to help parents identify routes. If school staff observes U-turns or double-parking and they have a good relationship with the driver, they can provide courteous on-site reminders that this behavior is not permitted. Parents should avoid direct confrontations. Request the PAPD and principal to be on-site to remind drivers about illegal and unsafe parking maneuvers.

If the issue is on campus, document it via Let's Talk and/or notify Mr. Boelens at srtsptac@paloaltopta.org. Submit a 311 if there is debris in the bike lane or sidewalk, or for tree trimming, visibility, missing signage, speeding, traffic signal issues and potholes. Include photos and your observations. There is a backlog of requests. Bring larger issues to the CSTSC.

Mr. Palma asked if parents or Transportation Safety Representative (TSRs) should be encouraged

to reach out to their principals or if Let's Talk was sufficient. Mr. Holm explained that Let's Talk is generally for district issues. Let's Talk is the best way to send your message to Mr. Holm. Talk to your principal and document it in the Let's Talk for Mr. Holm to follow up if the principal does not contact him directly.

D. Encouragement

1. Upcoming meetings: City Council and CSLC
2. Walk and Roll Week School Event Report-Out

The City School Liaison Committee (CSLC) met this morning. In attendance were two council members (Pat Burt and Julie Lythcott-Haims) and one school board member (Shounak Dharap). They each spoke at length about the importance of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) partnership and its importance to mental health, sustainability goals and quality of life. Sylvia Star-Lack thanked Jose Palma for the amazing job he did. She expressed thanks to people who called or logged in.

Eric Holm remarked that his department has a very strong bike focus. They want to improve bike safety and increase bike ridership. Comments to the Council and Board reinforce the importance and value of their work. Please thank the Board for the work they have done to improve bike safety. Continued advocacy is important.

Mr. Palma gave a presentation at this morning's CSLC meeting about last year's SRTS accomplishments. Arnout Boelens encouraged attending the presentation to City Council on May 1, calling in or writing a letter to show support and thank City Staff (Mr. Palma, Ms. Mesterhazy and Ms. Star-Lack) for the great work they do for the SRTS program.

Walk and Roll week is April 17-21. Mr. Boelens is making a list of what the TSRs are doing at their schools. Some of the ideas he heard are family profiles in e-news, stickers, lights, walk and chalk, bike train, bike passports, tropical-themed Walk and Roll parade, 2-mile pledge and an "energizer" station. Write welcome messages on the sidewalk for students. Lights are very important because many students ride without lights in the winter, which is not safe. Please let Mr. Boelens know about your plans. If you have a great plan, we can invite board members and council members to your Walk and Roll event. A successful Walk and Roll event is the best way to get families into the habit of walking or rolling to school. There will be fewer cars on the road if more people walk and bike, which is safer for all our students.

Walk and Roll is the same week as Earth Week. Joslyn Leve advised everyone who is planning a Walk and Roll event at your school to coordinate with your Green Team person or PTA so your events do not conflict. Mr. Boelens added that walking and cycling are the modes of transportation with the least amount of CO2 emissions, so it is a natural fit for Earth Week.

Ashley Tseng shared feedback on how to engage with families. From her experience with families, meeting at the park to walk to and from school, the kids love to play and meet each other. If incoming kindergarteners receive the Walk and Roll Map and information on walking or biking to school, the summertime is a great opportunity to practice and build endurance.

Rose Mesterhazy agreed that parks are a great place to rally. We need more district involvement and support to get the word out to kindergarteners and their families.

E. Engagement: Collision Report

Ben Becchetti from PAPD reported that collisions are about average. In February, there were 33 collisions, two of which were vehicles versus pedestrians and two were vehicles versus bikes. Through March 16, there were 18 collisions, two of which were vehicles versus bikes and zero vehicles versus pedestrians. At least one vehicle-bike collision in each February and March

involved a juvenile. He recalls one collision at Cowper and Colorado; the others were on side streets.

Rose Mesterhazy commented that the number one cause of accident-based mortality for kids ages 5-19 is vehicle collisions according to the CDC, the majority of which are driver-based. We talk about Safe Routes to School (SRTS) from a mental health standpoint and the variety of benefits that walking and biking offer, but we should also raise awareness around the importance of risk reduction. Mr. Becchetti added that it is also important to educate kids to pay attention when they are on their bike and be aware of their surroundings.

Penny Ellson remarked that the majority of the fatalities in those statistics were children who were passengers in vehicles. She advised sharing safety messaging with parents who drive the school routes to remind them that they have an obligation as parents and as adults to take care of the kids in our community.

Ms. Mesterhazy stated that there are FAQ resources provided to TSRs with language you can insert into social media conversations about driver behavior to inform people about our SRTS education program for Kindergarten through 8th grade and how drivers can do their part in sharing the road safely.

F. Education

1. Adult School Bike Safety Education Classes [Family Cycling March 22 and 25 Class; Adult Safety April 23 Class]

Maria Abilock is teaching a bike safety class. If you know of families that are considering walking or biking more, encourage them to attend this class. Ms. Abilock knows everything about every local route, and she is a great educator.

For more information and registration please use the following link:
<https://paadultschool.org/classes/family-cycling/>

G. Evaluation

1. 22-23 Preliminary Travel Tally Data
2. How can we improve these numbers? Program Support? Walk and Roll Week?

We are waiting on Escondido's data but our preliminary driving numbers are up overall this year. Possible reasons are elimination of the city shuttle service, reduced PAUSD bussing, driving habits developed during the pandemic, limited campus access points and reduced PTA volunteer capacity especially for secondary school programming.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.