

Foothill Elementary Traffic, Safety and Recreation Stakeholder Work Group

Final Report

January 28, 2010

On January 20, the Foothill Elementary Traffic, Safety and Recreation Stakeholder Work Group held its last meeting, wrapping up the process approximately 3 months ahead of schedule. The 18-member group of representatives from various transportation interests such as families who drive, bus, walk and bike to school, school staff, District administration, City of Boulder Transportation and neighbors had been meeting since last July to jointly address the traffic safety issues that have been an issue for the school for a number of years. This work group was created in response to the conflict in the school community last spring over a traffic loop and parking lot that were proposed to be constructed as part of the school's Bond Program. The District hired The Keystone Center to facilitate the process.

At the outset, the group was tasked with developing a plan which would balance a wide variety of community interests such as safety, traffic congestion, sustainability, parking and recreation (see appendix for a full list). The first task of the group last summer was to develop strategies which did not involve construction and could be used to change behavior during drop-off and pick-up times to increase safety. The group developed a list of over 40 non-construction strategies for consideration, such as changing traffic signage, rerouting pedestrian and vehicular traffic, encouraging more alternative transportation and implementing a student reward program, to name a few. In general, the group agreed the non-construction strategies to be implemented initially would include having more crossing guards who are better trained, creating a 'Hug and Go' lane on the north side of Hawthorn along the school property and a significant education campaign. These strategies were implemented at the start of the school year.

The work group met again in the fall and winter to assess how well these strategies addressed the issues, make adjustments and build agreement on construction strategies and next steps. Overall, the group felt the increase in crossing guard training and numbers and the Hug and Go lane were working well to reduce the safety hazards and that no other non-construction strategies were needed. According to work group member Bill Cowern, who is a traffic engineer with the City of Boulder, the situation is better than he has seen it in 16 years.

From a list of seven proposed construction strategies the group agreed three options would improve safety further—wider sidewalks along the Hug and Go lane and at the bus drop off, redirecting drainage from the kindergarten playground, and additional bike racks. Therefore, through the Bond Program, the District will widen the sidewalk in two different locations: along the Hug and Go lane and in front of the Kindergarten playground. The widened sidewalks will help tremendously to ease sidewalk congestion and improve pedestrian flow along the sidewalk and Hug and Go. The drainage issue will be addressed through the sidewalk widening project. Also, the District will work with the school to create facilities for additional bicycle parking.

Four different subcommittees have been formed to address some of the outstanding items that the non-construction and construction strategies did not address and carry the work of the group forward: a

permanent education committee to continue to refine the strategies to educate families about transportation safety and protocols; an ad hoc bicycle committee to continue to improve bicycle ridership, flow and safety around campus; a permanent staffing committee to recruit and train crossing guards and Hug and Go volunteers; and an ad hoc parking lot committee to address unauthorized parking in the staff parking lot.

The group put in a significant amount of work over the last seven months and should be applauded for their efforts and commitment to the process and working together to improve the situation. At the conclusion of the final meeting, members commented on the success of the process and expressed satisfaction with the outcomes. Members also expressed appreciation to each other for working together toward a solution and to the District for committing to and supporting the process. The group can be proud of what it has accomplished—its work has truly made a difference in improving safety for Foothill families and it has taken great strides toward mending damaged relationships in the community. This is a commendable example of a divided community coming together to solve a problem collectively.

Detailed meeting minutes can be found online at:

<http://bvsd.org/bondproject/schools/Pages/foothill.aspx>.

Appendix A: Approved List of Interests for the Foothill Stakeholder Working Group

- 1. Safety**
 - 2. Congestion**
 - 3. Parking**
 - 4. Rules**
 - 5. Recreation**
 - 6. Integration**
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The below is a list of interests generated from public comments and revised at the public meeting on May 19, 2009.

1. Ensure the safety of the children
2. Provide for increased traffic mobility
3. Maintain green space for recreation and physical education
4. Encourage other modes of access to school
5. Provide for additional parking
6. Avoid detrimental environmental impacts
7. Meet all existing rules and regulations
8. Be timely and efficient; take advantage of
 - ◇ Available funding
 - ◇ Currently disturbed area
 - ◇ Contractor already onsite
9. Plan for the future as well as for the present
10. Maintain neighborhood quality and property value
11. Meet requirements of Bond
12. Encourage health and outdoor physical activity
13. Balance the cost of resources spent/lost (\$,land) with magnitude of the problem (duration and frequency)
14. Address needs of mobility of disabled
15. Sustainability
16. Responsible and appropriate use of tax dollars
17. Increase visibility between drop off and the building
18. Reduce need for cars to back up
19. Provide safer bike flow
20. Improve access from north side of Broadway
21. Respond to clearly articulated safety issue
22. Provide adequate parking for staff within a reasonable distance