



DATE: November 16, 2020

TO: Transportation Authority of Marin Citizens' Oversight Committee

FROM: Dan Cherrier, Principal Project Delivery Manager

SUBJECT: Safe Routes to Schools Evaluation Report and COVID Impacts (Discussion), Agenda Item No. 6

RECOMMENDATION

This item is discussion only. No action by the COC is required.

BACKGROUND

Established in 2000, Marin County's Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) Program is an award-winning program designed to reduce congestion around schools, while instilling healthy habits in children and creating a safer and cleaner environment for all. The Program consists of classroom education, special events, infrastructure improvements, and other strategies that aim to increase the number of non-motorized (walk and bicycle) and high occupancy vehicle (carpool and transit) trips to and from schools.

Marin's SR2S Program has been in operation for 20 years and with the passage of a dedicated funding source from the ½-cent transportation sales tax, TAM became the administrator of the program in 2005. Under TAM's administration, the Program has expanded to include over 50 schools and involvement of over 25,000 students.

The SR2S Program has continued in a virtual format since the COVID-19 related shelter in place began this past March. The schools have worked with the SR2S team to allow for the educational programs to continue without interruption. Several schools have recently announced plans to return small cohorts of students to in-person instruction. The SR2S team is currently determining if some of the educational program should return to an in-person format or continue in a virtual format.

The Program is managed by a team led by Parisi Transportation Consultants (PTC). PTC is entering the third year of a three-year contract with options for two additional years. Sub-contractors include the Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC) and Kallins Consulting.

The SR2S Program is continually evaluated to determine the growth and effectiveness of the program. Program evaluation efforts that occur on a regularly scheduled basis include:

- Surveys are provided to determine "before and after" changes in school-based travel
- TAM and SR2S staff meet quarterly to review and assess the current program elements.
- TAM and SR2S staff meet periodically with local elected officials to discuss program work elements and current efforts local elected officials are engaged in.

During these evaluations, the SR2S team responds to lessons learned and best practices that emerge throughout the implementation of the program. A comprehensive evaluation report is developed every three

years to detail many of the trends that have occurred during the time period and to develop new strategies for meeting the Program's goals. The evaluation report has changed over time. In 2007, the first program evaluation report was prepared, providing details on the results of student and parent surveys, and recommendations for future program development. Updated reports were developed in 2011, 2013 and again in 2016, providing a robust and detailed comprehensive report on program changes, effectiveness and recommendations to be integrated into the overall program. The 2020 program evaluation serves as an update to these reports. Please note, the data in this report is from 2016 through Summer 2019, well before the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting school site shut-downs.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The program evaluation report serves as a key management tool to assess the impact of the SR2S Program and to plan for continued success in delivering a world class SR2S program. In addition, this report serves as a key source of data and support for continued funding decisions made by the TAM Board. Key findings and recommendations from the report are highlighted in the attached presentation.

During the development of the evaluation report, TAM staff worked with SR2S Program staff to develop an evaluation protocol that highlights the robust data reporting effort on local trip making behaviors. "Green Trips" to schools have been tracked over time to show historical trends, including program growth, enrollment growth and the relationship to the SR2S Program participation at individual schools. In addition, the relationship between the level of school involvement and geographic/infrastructure improvements has been measured to assess the impact of these program factors on resulting "green trips."

Significant changes in the new evaluation report include updates to the individual elements of safe routes, including the 6 E's of Education, Encouragement, Equity, Engineering, Enforcement, and Evaluation. Additional information provided in the report includes funding discussions and new reporting on primary factors that encourage green trips to schools.

The Marin County Safe Routes to Schools Program Evaluation – 2015/16 Through 2018/19 School Years, along with its Appendix that provides detailed information on individual schools, can be located on the TAM website under the SR2S Program Section or use the link located in the Attachments section below.

FISCAL CONSIDERATION

In light of the recent disruptions to school operations, as well as the projected reduction in sales tax revenues as shown in the TAM Board-adopted Strategic Plan update, TAM staff is assessing the financial outlook for the SR2S Program. Overall, staff expects that with modest reductions in program expenditures, sufficient funds exist to maintain the SR2S program for the current school year.

Revenues: The table below shows a 5-year comparison of the sales tax revenue forecast for the SR2S Program adopted in June 2020, with last year's Strategic Plan revenue forecast (adopted in June 2019). The cumulative reduction in revenues for the Program at the end of the 5-year period is more than \$800,000.

Safe Routes to Schools Program Revenues (Measure AA)					
	FY 20/21	FY 21/22	FY 22/23	FY 23/24	FY 24/25
Adopted June 2020	\$664,601	\$623,454	\$603,909	\$585,455	\$607,768
Adopted June 2019	\$729,569	\$751,767	\$774,520	\$797,841	\$876,194
Difference (2020 less 2019)	(\$64,968)	(\$128,313)	(\$170,611)	(\$212,386)	(\$268,429)

TAM has been very successful in obtaining one-time funding for the SR2s Program in the past. Examples include federal and state safe routes to school funding as well as the Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program (NTPP) for Street Smarts. Unfortunately, those funds are no longer available. However, these additional funds have allowed the program to operate at an expanded level for many years and have also helped to preserve the available Measure A/AA funds. The Program has a carryover fund of approximately \$1.4 million as of June 30, 2020.

This carryover fund has allowed the Program to operate in the \$950,000 annual range for the last few years. The carryover fund would have allowed the Program to maintain the current level of service for an additional 5 years or so if the revenue trend continued as expected in June 2019 and the expenditure increase is in line with normal inflation. Unfortunately, the expected reduced revenue level for the next few years has accelerated the need to draw down the available carryover fund level.

Given the updated revenue projections, staff has worked with the SR2S team to reduce some program elements for this year. Two main areas were identified, that are anticipated to allow the program to reduce expenses but still maintain the core school-centered services as well as maintain program staffing. The proposed changes are:

- 1) The Street Smarts Program will not be deployed for the 2020/2021 School Year, and the revenues normally associated with the Program will instead be used for other SR2S services. The Street Smarts Program provided targeted messaging including banners with safety messages, displayed on streets throughout the county during the school year. The Program is in need of an overhaul as the current banners have reached the end of their life cycle, and new messaging needs to be developed. The team is planning to spend this off-year to propose a revised Street Smarts Program.
- 2) Existing SR2S Maps will be updated, but new ones will not be created for this current year.

These changes along with other changes to the SR2S Program are expected to save \$100,000 to \$150,000 for the current year.

Staff is also working with the consultant team to determine what a \$750,000 annual program would look like, in order to better align the Program with expected revenues in the long term. Fortunately, the available carryover fund allows for changes to the Program to be incorporated gradually. The expected usage of the available carryover fund is shown in the table below.

Safe Routes to Schools Program Carryover fund (Measure A/AA/B)							
	FY 20/21	FY 21/22	FY 22/23	FY 23/24	FY 24/25	FY 25/26	FY 26/27
Expected Revenue	\$660,000	\$640,000	\$620,000	\$610,000	\$630,000	\$650,000	\$670,000
Expected Program Cost	\$800,000	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$750,000	\$750,000
Available Carryover Funds (at end of year)	\$1.26 M	\$1.05 M	\$820,000	630,000	\$460,000	\$360,000	\$280,000

Note: expected revenue includes \$25,000 from the Vehicle Registration Fee for the Street Smarts Program except for the current year. The Program costs increase in FY 21/22 is due to the return of the Street Smarts Program.

Using the above projections, the Program is sustainable at about an \$800-850,000 annual level for the next five years. By FY 25/26 the Program will operate at the \$750,000 level that will gradually increase with expected sales tax growth. At that point, the SR2S Program would be operating at approximately 75% of the current level, if no additional funding becomes available. Beginning in FY 27/28 available revenue exceeds the \$750,000 level and no further use of the Carryover fund is expected.

In contrast, if no changes are made, at a \$950,000 annual cost level, the Program would draw down the available carryover funds in about four years. In addition, as program costs increase over time, just to maintain the current level of service would require greater than \$950,000 in expenditures in the later years.

NEXT STEPS

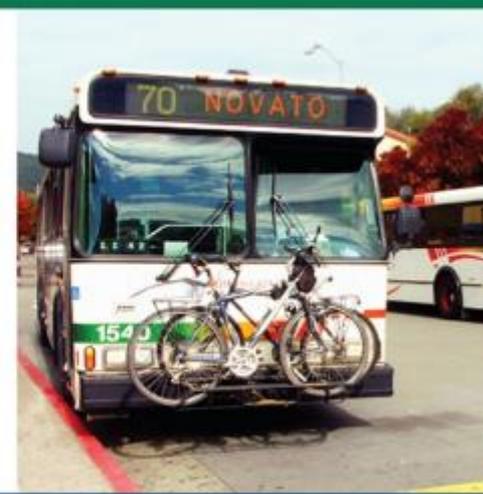
Continue to monitor revenues and costs and explore one-time revenue sources.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Presentation of SR2S Program Evaluation – To be Sent Prior to the Meeting
- B. Presentation of SR2S Program COVID-19 Financial Impacts

Please find full evaluation report and its appendix at the following links. Please contact staff if a hard copy is preferred.

- C. [Marin County Safe Routes to Schools Program Evaluation – 2015/16 Through 2018/19 School Years](#)
- D. [Marin County Safe Routes to Schools Program Evaluation Appendix – 2015/16 Through 2018/19 School Years](#)



Marin County Safe Routes to Schools Program Update on COVID-19 Impacts

TAM Citizens' Oversight Committee
November 16, 2020

Program Summary

- Safe Route to Schools (SR2S) is part of the Measures A/AA Expenditure Plans, with additional funding from Measure B.
- TAM's Streets Smart Program is part of SR2S.
- The SR2S Program has historically operated at the \$950K to \$1 M range annually.
- Program has been very successful in obtaining one-time funding including Marin Community Foundation, Federal Safe Routes, State Safe Routes, One Bay Area Grant, and Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Funding.

Program Funding

- Other funding has allowed for the program to carryover unused Measure money to future years
- Measure funding must stay with SR2S due to voter approved expenditure plans
- Current carryover funds are approximately \$1.4 M
- Historic one-time funds have been expended



COVID-19 Revenue Impacts

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Short-Term Financial Impacts

- Revenues reduced by ~\$800,000 over next 5 years.
- Program expected to be sustainable, but due to long term concerns and COVID-related operational changes, SR2S Team led by Parisi Transportation Consulting (PTC) will reduce expenditures in the current year by up to 20%:
 - Work hour reductions due to limited operations at school sites
 - Deferring installation of Street Smarts Program and development of new Route Maps.

Long-Term Financial Impacts

Safe Routes to Schools Program Carryover (Measure A/AA/B)

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Expected Revenue	\$660,000	\$640,000	\$620,000	\$610,000	\$630,000	\$650,000	\$670,000
Expected Program Cost	\$800,000	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$750,000	\$750,000
Available Carryover (at end of year)	\$1.26 M	\$1.05 M	\$820,000	\$630,000	\$460,000	\$360,000	\$280,000

Long-Term Financial Impacts

- SR2S will experience decreasing revenue for the next five years
- Program changes can be made gradually to reduce costs, while continuing to monitor revenues
- Program may eventually decrease to about 75% of the past level, if no changes to revenues
- Reductions will stabilize beginning in FY 2026.

Next Steps

- Continue to seek other sources for SR2S funding
- Work with SR2S team to determine scope of reduced Program as needed
- Monitor Sales Tax Revenues for possible early economic recovery and adjust Program as appropriate



Questions?



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