

Vienna Elementary School PTA Safe Routes to School Committee

2010 Survey Results

Introduction

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) administered Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program provides funding to build sidewalks and other infrastructure. The first phase to any funding request is a School Travel Plan which includes the identification of safety and other barriers to walking and bicycle travel to and from school. A parent survey is a key component to the Travel Plan. This year's survey was sent home with Vienna Elementary School (VES) children with their back to school information packets with instructions to return one survey per household.

The Response

There are 301 households in the VES community and we received 134 survey responses including one from a family with children that live in the VES walking area but do not attend VES. These households represent 287 school age children and 188 of VES's 385 students. With this level of response, the survey reflects the opinions of the VES community within a 6.3% margin of error at 95% confidence. There is also some margin of error associated with households that may have returned more than one survey. The survey was anonymous and so there is no way to determine to what extent, if any, this happened.

Highlights

More than 50 households commented on 18 specific pedestrian safety issues which are detailed in a separate section. There was a near unanimous consensus that sidewalks are needed on at least one side of the road throughout the VES walking region and that adjacent neighbors should not be able to stop their construction. There was also very strong support for the same level of sidewalks all over town:

97% support a sidewalk system on at least one side of the road in the VES walking area

75% support a sidewalk system on at least one side of the road in the town of Vienna

97% did **not** agree that the construction of sidewalks should be able to be obstructed by a majority of the adjacent homeowners.

40% of those surveyed identified unsafe routes to school or nearby amenities.

There was strong support for more walking and biking related special events at VES:

46% would like to see more walk and bike to school days

40% would like to see a bike bus (chaperoned biking groups)

Missing or Unsafe Sidewalks Mentioned By Name (** VES Walkers)

Cherry St SE **
Desalle St SE **
Electric Ave SE
Spring St SE **

Cottage St SW **
Hillcrest Dr SW **
Meadow Lane SW **
Plum St SW **

Ayr Hill Rd NE
Beulah Rd NE
Center St N
Creek Crossing Rd NE
Lawyers Rd NE
Park St NE (Ayr Hill to Church)

Safety Related Comment Frequency by Topic

17 households mentioned missing sidewalks or “sidewalks to nowhere”.

12 households mentioned speeding and the need for more speed enforcement or traffic control devices.

9 households would like to see more crosswalks, special interest in the fire station crossing.

8 households would like to see a crossing guard or light at a Park St crossing.

2 households commented on the condition of the sidewalks.

2 households commented on the fact that drivers don't pay attention.

Raw Data and Surveys

The VES SRTS committee will make the raw results of the survey and the surveys themselves available to the school system or Town of Vienna if either body would like to analyze the data further. The raw data and survey comments will be reviewed with the Vienna Department of Public works to go over specific safety issues.

Conclusions

The lack of sidewalks in the VES walking region poses a safety risk that needs to be addressed. There is near unanimous support among the VES parents that sidewalks are needed nearly everywhere that students are not provided bus service and that pockets of neighborhood opposition should not stop the construction this necessary infrastructure. VDOT SRTS program funding may be able to help fund some sidewalks, but a review of a map of Vienna shows that there are too many missing sidewalks to expect SRTS funding to address all of the students' needs. Any serious effort to provide safe routes to school for all our

children will require aggressive action at the town level.