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(Draft) MEMORANDUM

TO: Tabitha Kappeler-Hurley, Santa Clara Unified School District;
Maria Gomez Cambra, VTA

FROM: Christopher Kidd & Lauren Ledbetter, Alta Planning

CC: Brett Hondorp, Alta Planning

DATE: December 6, 2012

RE: Santa Clara SR2S Poster Contest

Rationale for a Poster Contest

This memo recommends the launch of a citywide SR2S poster contest in the winter/spring months of 2013. Such a poster contest could help fill a gap in scheduled SR2S programming, build partnerships with public organizations, raise the public profile of the SR2S program, and bring the SR2S message to Santa Clara schools and students not yet participating in the program.

The major events for the Safe Routes to School program primarily take place in October and May, leaving a gap in programming for winter months. In order to keep up momentum for the Safe Routes to School program and keep the messaging of the program fresh in the minds of students, we propose holding a citywide SR2S poster contest for all elementary and middle school students in Santa Clara. Participation in the contest will be voluntary, with staff working individually with school administration to appropriately promote the contest.

Launching a Citywide poster contest could provide a number of other benefits to the program. A citywide event could draw media attention and publicity to both the Safe Routes program, but also the organizations that sponsor the contest. The poster contest can function as an opportunity to work closely with county stakeholders, such as VTA, and secure their support for the SR2S program in future years. Opening the contest up to all SCUSD schools in Santa Clara can also help expand the SR2S program to schools that are not part of the current SR2S program, encouraging participation in future years.

Schools:

All elementary and middle schools in Santa Clara Unified will be invited to participate in the poster contest. Staff will first coordinate with SCUSD staff directly (Tabitha) to secure approval before working with school principals to promote the poster contest. While not all schools in SCUSD are currently participating in the SR2S pilot program, the contest will be opened to all schools.

The poster contest will be launched and managed entirely by Safe Routes staff. This will minimize the level of commitment necessary for school staff, making school participation more attractive. For participating SR2S schools, staff will engage School Champions and Parent Champions, reducing the commitment.

Rules:

- Students must submit their poster at an appointed place/box (TBD by participating principal)
- Posters must be handmade – no computers
- Posters must all be the same size (size TBD)
- Winning posters will not be returned

Structure:

No class time is provided for poster-making. Posters are made in the students' free time and submitted at school. Students create a poster that they feel best represents one of 4 pre-selected SR2S catch-phrases. The preliminary phrases are:

- You can't get stuck in traffic if you walk or roll to school.
- Walk, bike or ride the bus to school, the earth will thank you!
- Walking, biking or taking the bus to school is fun, easy, and healthy.
- Get out of your seat and move your feet.

A final set of four key phrases will be determined before the end of the year, requiring final approval from the City of Santa Clara, from SCUSD, and from VTA.

Participating schools will be provided with a stack of 1-page promotional brochures or fact sheets (created by Finger Design) for distribution. The sheets will describe the rules of the contest, the prizes available for the winners, and an outline of the SR2S program. The sheets can be included in take-home packets, so parents can become aware of the contest.

Staff will inquire with participating principals on ways to best publicize the contest among students. This could take the form of announcements, assemblies, or other tactics. Specifics will be different for each school, depending on their capacity to assist in contest promotion. Staff will prioritize contest promotion that requires minimal commitment from principals and school staff.

Poster Judging

The judging of the posters will take place solely on a citywide level. Posters submitted at each school will be collected by Safe Routes staff and judged by a panel in successive rounds.

There will be three categories of posters to judge from, in order to ensure a broad range of winners. The youngest category will be for posters from students grades K-2. The second category will be for grades 3-5 and the third category will be for grades 6-8. In the event of there being a small number of poster submissions, these three categories can be collapsed to two or even one category.

City-wide Poster Contest

The submitted posters will be judged in successive rounds by an appointed panel. Preliminarily, this panel will consist of a representative from VTA, a representative from the City of Santa Clara, a representative from SCUSD, a local artist, and a representative from the SR2S program. There will be two rounds of judging, the first of which will reduce the total pool to nine (9) posters – 3 posters from each subgroup (K-2, 3-5, 6-8). This pool of nine will then be reduced to three grand prize winners, one from each sub-group.

Prizes

As the poster contest is not expected to have a prohibitively high number of submissions, all students submitting a poster should receive at least some sort of prize. Students with posters selected in the first round should receive a second tier of prizes, while the grand prize winners should receive the best prizes. Staff should consider assembling age-specific prize packets as part of the contest promotion.

All submissions:

- A certificate of congratulation
- Small SR2S swag (stickers, pencils, etc)

1st Round winners:

- A certificate of congratulation
- Better SR2S swag (bike lights, bracelets, sunglasses, etc)

Grand Prize winners:

- Posters displayed at City Hall, libraries, etc.
- Posters featured in news stories by local media (requires coordination)
- City Council recognition & certificate for city-wide winners
- Biggest prizes (bikes, camelbacks, etc.) – make sure prizes are age-appropriate for winners
- Posters displayed on VTA buses (see below)

VTA Poster Prize

SR2S staff is in the process of reaching out to VTA about placing winning posters on VTA buses, bus stops, and/or kiosks. If VTA chooses to participate, they would identify unsold ad space on bus shelters and kiosks within Santa Clara for placing posters, as well as unsold ad space on buses used primarily for routes within the City of Santa Clara. SR2S would be responsible for printing out all posters for use by VTA. If VTA chooses to participate in the contest, they would be offered a seat on the City-wide poster selection committee.

Selection Structure



Schedule

December – Bring concept to VTA, SCUSD. Get buy-in for contest. Meet with principals and secure participation from as many schools as possible, craft promotion that works for each school. Secure a location at each school for a “poster drop-box”.

January – Continue meeting with principals on poster contest. Reach out to parent champions at SR2S participating schools to craft outreach. Reach out to leadership class at Cabrillo Middle to promote contest.

February – Finalize the schedule for launching the contest. Develop print promotional materials for the contest. Introduce promotional material near the end of the month.

March – Launch the contest in early March. SR2S staff will collect all submissions at the end of the month.

April – All poster judging takes place in the first week of April. Winners announced in the second week of April. Winning posters then go out for printing and distribution. SR2S staff prepares for unveiling of winning posters on Bike to Work Week in May. SR2S staff works with City staff, SCUSD staff, and VTA staff to organize a press conference with winning students to unveil posters. SR2S staff works with City staff to get recognition of the poster winners on the City Council agenda for either late April or early May.

May – The winning posters will be unveiled at a press event during Bike to Work Week, the first week of May. Posters will be installed that same week. The press event could be combined with other Bike to Work Week press events, if so deemed appropriate.