



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Safe Routes to School Committee

Task Force Meeting Notes
Wednesday, September 6, 2017

Attendees:

Peggy Clark- Safe Routes to Schools, Wendi Kallins- Safe Routes to Schools, Mark Birnbaum- Novato BPAC, Tyler Cantley- Novato PD, Barb Curtice- Parent San Marin High, pat Eklund- Novato Council Member, Paul LaPerrier- San Marin High, Manijeh Larizadeh-Novato DPW Engineer, Monica Leifer-Safe Routes to Schools, Christopher Blunk-Deputy Public Works Director, Penelope Amuyunzu- Parisi Associates, Gretchen Schubeck- Lynwood School, Mark Silva-Novato School District, Shannon Nakooka-parent, Dina Gibbons-parent, Italo Caro- Novato Charter School, Ken Tashian- resident, Rene DeBos- resident, May Ann Ellison- resident

Infrastructure updates

DPW projects planned for 2017.-

Pedestrian Access To Transit & Crosswalk Improvements CIP Project #18-002.

1. Novato Boulevard at McClay Road;
2. DeLong Avenue at Sherman Avenue;
3. Diablo Avenue at George Street (Safeway);
4. Redwood Boulevard at Rush Creek Place and
5. Alameda del Prado at Posada del Sol.

Vineyard Road

Vineyard Resurfacing Project is a road resurfacing project that is ready to move forward with the appropriate approvals. The project would include a class 2 or 3 bike lane in areas where the required amount of space is available. The DPW would like to get the current concept going understanding there are outstanding issues on this street that can be researched in the future with the community.

Community members have expressed their objections and support to the city regarding potential road and sidewalk designs including the removal parking and using private land for street improvements.

A few homeowners have objected to new sidewalks. The current DPW Director has reviewed emails and meeting notes from meetings in past years. The city would like to obtain current information from the community.

Mark reported the section of road between Eucalyptus and Sun Lane is very dangerous for students. This issue was presented to the City over 12 months ago. The last public meeting regarding Vineyard Road was in 2012. At that meeting the Novato BPAC understood the City owns the property from Wilson to Sutro and could build the sidewalk and class 2 bike lane. The safety of the roads and streets are for the benefit of the entire community not just a few that do not want safety improvements.

Many task force members including the Novato BPAC believe the road conditions on Vineyard are extremely dangerous and need to be addressed by the city as soon as possible. With so many years having passed it is time for the city to take action.

Students, parents and PTA groups are making efforts to promote safe and green travel to schools. The road conditions make it very difficult to encourage green and healthy travel options.

The DPW is proposing the resurfacing and striping project move forward under the current scope. The next phase is to schedule community meetings and develop design concepts for additional approval and funding. The DPW is concerned the federal funding could be lost if the current scope of the project does not move forward.

The Town Council has the power to veto or approve improvements to the Vineyard project. If the scope of the project were to change it would have to come from the City Council not the DPW and additional funding would need to be identified. If the project was to change the city would need to get additional community input.

The meetings in the past have been heavily attended by neighborhood members opposed to improvements. This can influence the decisions made by the town council. More members in support of Safe Routes to School projects must attend meetings and speak to the council. The PTA announces the meeting along with Next Door posts. When community members attend meetings and stay involved good things happen.

Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) offered to conduct a bicycle and walk audit with the DPW to observe road and sidewalk conditions. Community members/neighbors would be invited too. Then the SR2S engineering consultant would present design concepts to the city engineers. SR2S can only offer recommendations; the city council makes the final decision.

Possible funding could be obtained via Safe Pathway grants. If additional funding is still needed TAM and State ATP grants can be applied for.

Project grants tend to be approved when all phases of a project are presented in the application.. Task Force members proposed the city develop a five year plan including project phases. The SR2S walk audit would help to identify the issues with the community developing the vision. The plan could also include suggested safe routes to all schools in the area.

Novato Charter

Representatives from Novato Charter School are very concerned about the safety issues on sections of C street without sidewalks. Vehicle drivers conduct unsafe behaviors including mid-block u-turns while students are crossing the street. Portions of the street are in the school district and cities jurisdiction. Currently there are no updates, ;however the issues are on the school district radar.

There are no sidewalks at intersection of Main Gate and C Street. It is a very dangerous intersection with several reported collisions. Community members have signed letters addressing the many dangers. More students are using the intersection to reach the library. The vegetation on C street needs to be cut back to increase the site line for vehicle drivers as they are pulling into the crosswalk to see the street.

Safe Routes to Schools did conduct a walk audit over 6 years ago. At the time the Charter School chose not to participate the Safe Routes program so there was no follow up. Safe Routes will review the audit notes to determine if a new audit is warranted. If a new audit is needed the DPW, Hamilton and school representative will be invited.

South. Novato and Midway (new issue for agenda)

Students attending Lynwood School use this intersection. A parent attending the meeting described how her children were almost hit by a vehicle on several occasions. Drivers tend to stop in the middle of crosswalks and travel at unsafe speeds.

A crosswalk is need at Cambridge and Midway for students too. There is a stop sign for vehicles on Cambridge but not for Novato Blvd. Many drivers do not stop at the stop sign; they roll through it. Parked vehicles block the sidewalk at the intersections too. There is a day care in the area and drivers tend double park and block the sidewalk during drop off.

A pedestrian flashing beacon was request of the DPW on Midway. The DPW will have a traffic engineer review this intersection. If a crosswalk is the best recommendation it will be added to the crosswalk project list and made a priority. They are also looking into issues at Novato and Diablo. The police will take action on speeding vehicles.

Updates from SR2S

Class schedules- The following schools have been or will be scheduled this school year: Lynwood, Rancho, Sinaloa, Pleasant Valley, Olive, Our Lady of Loretto. Lu Sutton has not scheduled classes since 2013, Loma Verde has not scheduled classes since 2011.. San Jose MS has expressed interest this year.

Safe Routes to Schools does have a bilingual coordinator to assist parents with events and encouragement programs. Many schools in Novato need Team Leader support . Rancho, Olive, Hamilton and Novato Charter need Safe Routes volunteers.

The PTSA can help by asking for parent volunteers. The back to school night did not have a sign-up sheet for Safe Routes to School this year. Parents at the meeting would like to see this be part of each year, each school's annual Back to School nights.

School District representatives have attended task force meeting in the past. A representative is requested at all Novato SR2S Task Force meetings.

San Marin Drive-

DPW report attached: Evaluation of Novato Boulevard West of San Marin Drive-Sutro Drive

Chris has been collecting information on issues reported and reviewed by the previous DPW engineers. The attached memorandum was submitted in July 2017. it lists observations, recommendations. Recommendations are prioritized by scope of work from medium to long term.

1. Reduce the speed limit from 45 to 40 mph in warranted locations within the city limits.
Pat requested the 25mph and the new 15mph in school zones be considered.
2. Tree removal is under consideration an arborist was requested and the DPW will work with the school district to schedule this project.
3. A work order has been submitted for reflective pavement markers for the center line on Novato Blvd, West Sutro and San Marin.
4. Traffic signs will be reviewed and updated as recommended. Speed reduction and speed feedback signs are to be installed.
5. A pathway study is planned for Stafford Lake.

Appreciation was expressed to Chris for taking action on this very big and vital safety project.

Task Force members expressed concern for the width of the street that can make it prohibitive for pedestrians from getting across the street to avoid vehicles. Also the pathway (city property) on the south side weaves in and out of trees making it a narrow route. If a path was added to one side of the street, students could cycle in a predictable manner

Paul LaPerriere suggested that since the intersection of San Marin/Sutro/Novato Blvd. solution won't be achieved for up to five years we asked for two interim considerations:

consider completing cross walks to the remaining two streets at the intersection: Novato Blvd. south side and the other at Sutro. Chris agreed to review this suggestion.

Welcome to Novato sign The sign is in Chris's office and he will speak with Russ about possible options to get it posted. A crosswalk is to be installed; it is a priority to the city. In the future the city will consider a reconfiguration for a traffic circle or traffic lights.

Task Force members requested at least 2 crossing guards for this intersection as one would not be productive or safe. TAM does not fund crossing guards for high school zones. TAM does not count high school students in the crossing guard studies. There are some crossing guards near high schools because they are near an elementary or middle school also. TAM funds 70 crossing guard locations of the 120 recommended locations. Mark Silva was asked go back to the NUSD and ask Superintendent Jim Hogeboom to consider funding the guards. Mark agreed to bring this message back.

Chris reported the DPW is waiting on a general plan in 2018. The next step is to identify a Capital Improvement Project, obtain an environment evaluation, collect community input, then present to the City Council. This could take 5 to 10 years to be approved and funded.

Pat reminded the task force these issues were identified 5 years ago and it is disappointing it could take 5 or more years. Chris expressed his concerns and stated the low to medium cost issues will be address soon. The high items will be address when the next road upgrade is funded.

Arthur and Cambridge Streets

Ken Tashian reported on his request to the city to address the hazards the ballards present to pedestrians. The city engineered a sidewalk/crosswalk that turned into a pedestrian tripping hazard. This is a high foot traffic area and poses big safety and possible lawsuit to the city. There were a number of other similar facility improvements that turned out well and this one did not.

Chris did review the conditions and agreed the project was not designed correctly and it does need to be fixed. This facility was installed during a pavement resurfacing project. The sidewalk and drains would need to be redesigned. The DPW will consider short term improvements.

The full project would require a new project be approved and funded. The estimated cost is \$100,000. SB1 will make state funds available but it is not clear on how the funds will be distributed. The DPW has a list of 23 projects to be funded.

Ken expressed his concern of a potential one year delay. He suggested the city insurance company would require the improvements be made before a person is injured

Next meeting- Wednesday, Jan 10, 2017 at 6:00pm