



# Pleasant Valley Elementary School

## Travel Plan



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# 1. Purpose

## 1.1. SR2S Planning, Implementation and Monitoring

The Pleasant Valley Elementary School Travel Plan is the blueprint for identifying and prioritizing Safe Routes to School (SR2S) programs, resources, and capital improvements. The Travel Plan also documents program activities and impacts on school-related travel that can be used to assess the success of the SR2S program over time, and important school-specific transportation policies and operations.

The Travel Plan differs from most plans in that it is not a snapshot in time but a living document; one that is repeatedly updated and modified to reflect school staff, community, and parent input along with technical information and lessons learned. This input is primarily captured by a SR2S task force that meets periodically to identify and address new concerns. For more information on Safe Routes to School partnerships in Marin County, visit [www.saferoutestoschools.org](http://www.saferoutestoschools.org)

## 1.2. Marin County Measure A

The Transportation Sales Tax Measure Expenditure Plan approved by voters as Measure A in November 2004 dedicates an estimated \$332 million in local sales tax revenues to transportation needs in Marin County. Approximately \$36.5 million (11%) of the sales tax expenditure has been earmarked to reduce school related congestion and safer access to schools. These funds are allocated to three sub-strategies, or programs:

- Safe Routes to School (SR2S)
- Crossing Guards
- Safe Pathways to School

The Safe Pathways infrastructure program is integral to the success of the overall strategy; it is the capital improvement element of the Safe Routes to School program. As a stated policy in the *Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) Measure A – Transportation Sales Tax Strategic Plan Update (2009)*, all projects eligible for Safe Pathways funding must be identified in Safe Routes plans. The Pleasant Valley Elementary School Travel Plan qualifies as such a plan and identifies potential capital projects eligible for Safe Pathways funding.

## 2. Pleasant Valley Elementary School Profile

### 2.1. School Location

755 Sutro Avenue  
Novato, CA 94947

Principal: Pam Conklin

### 2.2. Enrollment and Demographics

**Table 1** shows the enrollment by grade at Pleasant Valley Elementary School for the 2008-09 school year. **Table 2** shows the enrollment by ethnicity.

*Table 1: Enrollment by Grade, 2008-09*

Grade Level	Enrollment
Kindergarten	75
Grade 1	80
Grade 2	60
Grade 3	60
Grade 4	57
Grade 5	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>
<i>Source: California Department of Education</i>	

*Table 2: Enrollment by Racial and Ethnic Subgroups, 2008-09*

Racial and Ethnic Subgroup	Number of Students	Percent of Students
African American	4	1.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0.0%
Asian	18	4.7%
Filipino	4	1.0%
Hispanic or Latino	23	6.0%
Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
White (Not Hispanic)	317	82.8%
Multiple or No Response	17	4.4%
<i>Source: California Department of Education</i>		

## 2.3. Existing Conditions

### Entrances to School

- **Primary School Entrance:** Sutro Avenue
- **Pedestrians & Bicyclists:** Information not obtained.
- **ADA Access:** Information not obtained.

### Cross Streets

- **Cross Streets:** Meissner Drive, Vineyard Road and Center Road.

### Traffic Controls

- The intersection of Sutro Avenue and Vineyard Road is stop-sign controlled at all three legs.
- Sutro is intersected by several side streets, all of which are stop-sign controlled at the side-street approach. Streets include Casual Court, Oak Valley Drive, Meisner Drive, Dominic Drive, Stasia Drive, Gertrude Lane, and Gustafson Court.
- The Sutro Avenue/Center Road intersection is an all-way stop.

### Crosswalks

- Sutro Avenue/Vineyard Road: white transverse crosswalks on east and north legs
- Sutro Avenue/Oak Valley Drive: yellow transverse crosswalk on west leg
- Sutro Avenue/school entrance: yellow ladder crosswalk (midblock)
- Sutro Avenue/Meisner Drive: yellow transverse crosswalk on east leg
- Sutro Avenue/Dominic Drive: yellow transverse crosswalk on east and north legs
- Sutro Avenue/Stasia Drive: yellow transverse crosswalk on west leg
- Sutro Avenue/Center Road: white transverse crosswalk on all four legs

A pathway provides access to the school from the north and crosswalks are marked at the following roadway crossings:

- Center Road and pathway crossing: yellow transverse crosswalk (midblock)
- Stasia Drive and pathway crossing: yellow transverse crosswalk (midblock)

### Crossing Guards

- **Location of School Crossing Guards:** Sutro Avenue and Meisner Drive and Sutro Avenue and Dominic Drive

### Transit

- **School Bus Availability:** None
- **Public Transit Availability:** None
- **Special Transit Needs Offered:** Yes

### Bike Racks

- **Location of Bike Racks:** In the breezeway
- **Number of Bike Spaces:** 60
- **Rack Condition:** Good condition

## 2.4. Policies

A summary of school policies are provided below. **Appendix A** provides the full policies as outlined in the school handbook.

### Pick Up and Drop Off

- **Location:** The white zone in the front of the school is designated for passenger loading only.
- **Policy:**
  - **Morning Drop-Off:** Supervision of the yard begins 15 minutes before the start of school.
  - **Afternoon Pick-Up:** Students must be picked up, or go directly to their after school location, promptly after their dismissal bell. Supervision ends 10 minutes after each dismissal bell.

### Parking

- **Staff parking** is available in front of the school and the school parking lot.
- **General Public Parking** is on the street.
- **Parking Policy:** We encourage parents to park a short distance from school and walk up the path to pick up children. Please follow these guidelines when dropping off or picking up your children at school:
  - Pick your children up only at curbside; do not double park or stop in the middle lane to load or unload passengers.

- When waiting in the white zone, keep alert to drive forward as the vehicles ahead of you also move forward. Please make every effort to avoid cutting in front of vehicles moving forward.
- Do not pass a school bus with red lights flashing.

### *Bicycle Policy*

- Bicycle helmets are required equipment for all bicycle riders.
- Students must park their bicycles and lock them in the bicycle racks.
- Students must walk their bicycles onto school grounds.
- Skateboards, roller-blades, or scooters are not allowed at school at any time.

## **2.5. Classroom Education**

Pleasant Valley participates in the Safe Routes to Schools education program. Yearly classes taught include:

- Stop Look and Listen (2<sup>nd</sup> grade)
- Walk Around the Block (2<sup>nd</sup> grade)
- Helmet Safety (4<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Traffic Safety Game Show (4<sup>th</sup> grade)

## **2.6. Encouragement Programs**

The school participates in the following encouragement programs:

- Pleasant Valley has participated in International Walk to School Day since 2004.
- For two years Pleasant Valley had weekly walk to school days on Wednesdays and utilized volunteer crossing guards on those days. This program has not operated since 2006. The intention is to start up monthly walk to school days again.
- Pleasant Valley participates in the Frequent Rider Miles contest each spring.
- There is also an interest in doing Walk and Bike Across America in the future.
- Promotion for contests and events is done through school newsletters, posters, flyers and banners.

## 2.7. Student Surveys

Pleasant Valley Elementary has conducted spring and fall student surveys since the 2003-2004 school year. Each spring and fall, students are asked by their teachers how they got to school that day. **Table 3** shows the survey results for 2003 through 2010. Blank entries indicate that the information was not collected.

*Table 3: How Students Got To School*

	Fall						
Year	Walk	Bike	Bus	Transit	Carpool	Drive Alone	Other
2003-04	13%	1%	2%		12%	72%	
2004-05	15%	3%	2%		8%	72%	
2006-07	16%	4%	6%		5%	69%	
2007-08	12%	5%	3%		8%	70%	1%
2008-09	17%	8%	6%	0%	9%	60%	1%
2009-10	14%	10%	3%	0%	12%	59%	3%
2010-11	15%	8%	1%	0%	8%	66%	2%
	Spring						
Year	Walk	Bike	Bus	Transit	Carpool	Drive Alone	Other
2003-04	25%	7%	0%		13%	55%	
2004-05	54%	13%	1%		13%	19%	
2006-07	12%	4%	4%		9%	71%	
2007-08							
2008-09	19%	11%	3%	0%	10%	55%	2%
2009-10	14%	4%	3%	0%	13%	64%	2%
2010-11							

**Figure 1** charts the information in **Table 3**. Over the course of the survey years, the most children were driven alone in a family vehicle. The percentage of students walking and biking to school has remained relatively steady, although rates generally tend to be higher in the spring. Starting in 2007, “other” were provided as a travel mode choice, with “transit” being added in 2008. One to three percent of students indicated using these travel modes.

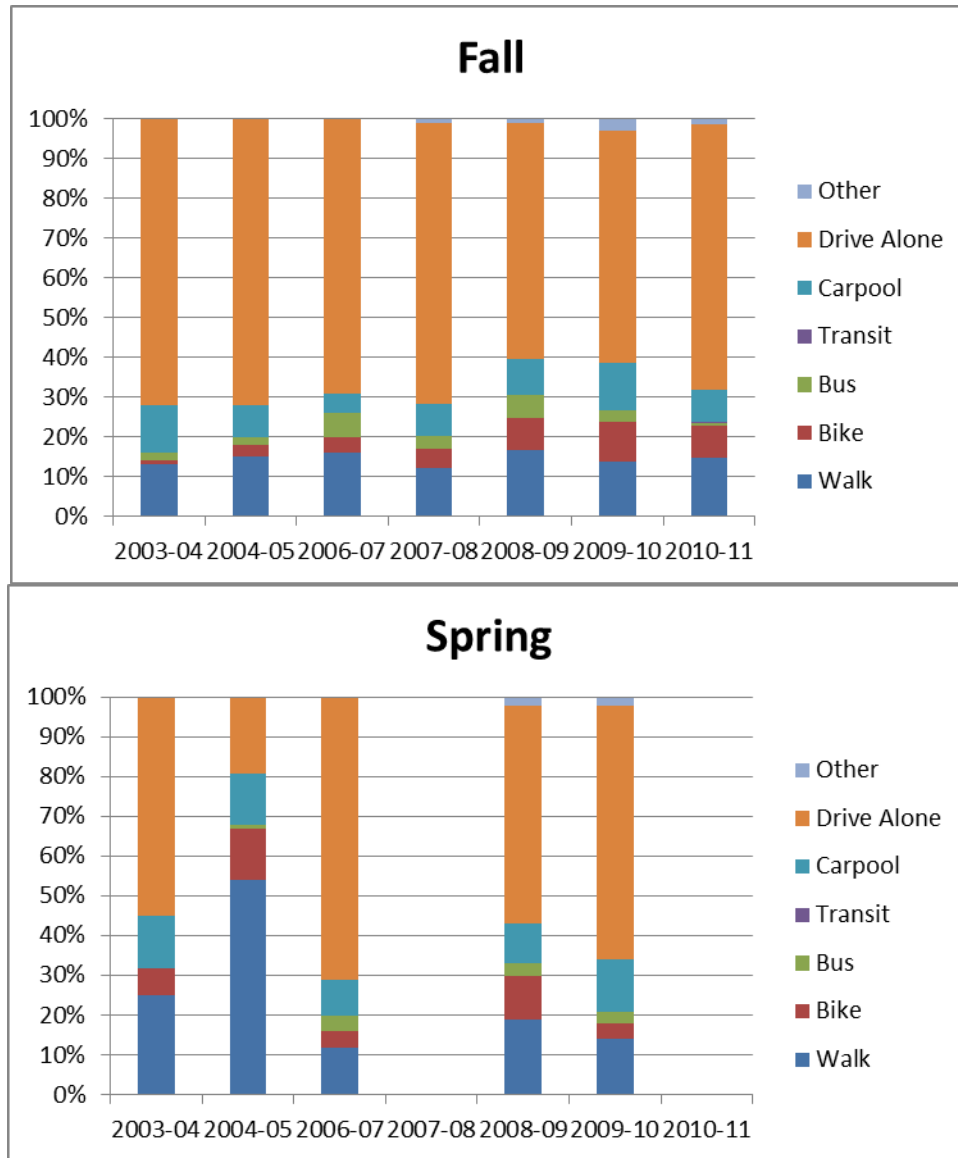


Figure 1: How Children Got To School

## 3. Barriers and Opportunities

### 3.1. Parent Survey

Team leaders administered voluntary parent/guardian surveys as part of the travel plan process. The survey was distributed at the school and could be returned to the school or completed online through a link on the Transportation Authority of Marin homepage. Pleasant Valley School

distributed the surveys between September 2004 and January 2005 and collected 319 completed surveys.

*Travel Behavior*

**Table 4** shows the total percent responses for each travel mode during morning and afternoon. Parents were able to select more than one mode choice for morning and afternoon trips, based on frequency. For example, a possible response is biking to school in the morning 3-4 days per week and walking 1-2 days per week. For this reason, the total percentages in each column may not add to 100 percent. Driving to school is the most popular mode choice, with approximately 80 percent of parents doing so. The second and third most popular choices are walking and bicycling, respectively.

*Table 4: Travel Behavior*

<b>Mode</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Afternoon</b>
Drive	84%	78%
Walk	24%	24%
Carpool	7%	10%
Bike	14%	13%
Bus	2%	4%

*Concerns*

When asked “Why you drive your child to school (check all that apply)” the top responses parents cited were “safety,” “age,” and “convenience.” **Table 5** lists the concerns from most to least concerning.

*Table 5: Parental Concerns*

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Safety	62%
Age	44%
Convenience	41%
Stranger Danger	39%
Weather	35%
Too Far	27%
Work	27%
Speeding	25%
Dangerous Crossings	20%
Distance	19%
Backpack	19%
Late	16%
Carrying Projects	14%
Sidewalk	14%
Paths	9%
Steepness	4%
Dogs	4%
Child not following Safety Rules	3%

Concern	Percent
Maps	3%
Bike Storage	2%

### Potential Opportunities

When asked under what circumstances they would allow their child to walk or bike to school, parents' top responses were if the child was "with other parents," "with other children," and "cars slowed down."

*Table 6: Potential Opportunities to Increase Walking and Bicycle among Children*

Opportunities	Percent
With Other Parents	53%
With Other Children	37%
Cars Slowed Down	25%
Better Sidewalks and Bike Paths	20%
Crossing Guard	20%
Paths Separated from Traffic	18%
Safety Training	18%
Bike Storage	4%
Maps	1%

## 3.2. Walkabout Notes

A walkabout was held at the Pleasant Valley Elementary School in 2005. Several issues were identified along Vineyard Road, including narrow pathways and poor pavement conditions. Opportunities to update signage and pavement markings were also identified.

# 4. Programs and Projects

## 4.1. Engineering Design Concepts

Based on the walkabout and Task Force meetings, design concepts were developed. These are summarized below. **Appendix B** provides illustrations of these design concepts.

- Crosswalk improvements were recommended at the following intersections: Sutro Avenue and Vineyard Road, Bear Creek Road and Vineyard Road, and Angelica Court and Vineyard Road. All were constructed. In addition, curb ramps were installed at the northeast corner of Sutro Avenue and Vineyard Road and the northwest and southwest corners of Angelica Court and Vineyard Road.
- Two path options on Vineyard Road were considered: a path along the north side of the road, which was not chosen, and a path along the south side, which was chosen and constructed. The existing south pathway on Vineyard Road was resurfaced and widened in areas without curbside parking to accommodate all users.

## 4.2. Program Evaluation

Information not obtained.

## 5. Implementation Matrix

Implementation plans for the Novato School District are summarized in the District Travel Plan. Please refer to that plan for implementation efforts.

## 6. Appendix A: Policies

### Pick Up and Drop Off

- **Location:** The white zone in the front of the school is designated for passenger loading only.
- **Policy:**
  - **Morning Drop-Off:** Supervision of the yard begins 15 minutes before the start of school. Children may use the playground only when they are supervised; therefore, children should not arrive at school more than 15 minutes before school begins. Please do not send your child to school prior to these times as this creates an unsafe environment. Early arrivals will be monitored and parents will be contacted as necessary. Morning childcare is available at the Novato Enrichment Center adjacent to the campus. Call 897-2711 for information.
  - **Afternoon Pick-Up:** Students must be picked up, or go directly to their after school location, promptly after their dismissal bell. Supervision ends 10 minutes after each dismissal bell. Students who have not been picked up within ten minutes of their dismissal time are asked to wait in the office until an adult arrives. The office closes at 4:00. Parents are strongly encouraged to call the office at 897-5104, when an emergency occurs that precludes a normal arrival at school. In the event that a child is left at school, we make every effort to contact parents and/or the adults listed on a child's emergency card. When we cannot locate the parents/guardians or person(s) listed on the student's emergency card, we will contact the Novato Police Department to assist us.

### Parking

- **Staff parking** is available in front of the school and the school parking lot.
- **General Public Parking** is on the street.
- **Parking Policy**

The school entrance was designed many years ago before large numbers of parents started driving their children to and from school. For this reason, the drive-through can be very congested, especially at dismissal times. Staff and the Novato Police Department monitor the traffic. To avoid congestion, we have staggered our dismissal times. We also encourage parents to park a short distance from school and walk up the path to pick up children. Please follow these guidelines when dropping off or picking up your children at school:

- Drive slowly through the drive-through. Watch carefully for young pedestrians.
- Do not park in the red zones.

- Pick your children up only at curbside; do not double park or stop in the middle lane to load or unload passengers.

The white zone in the front of the school is designated for passenger loading only. Please do not park or leave your car unattended in the white zone at any time:

- When waiting in the white zone, keep alert to drive forward as the vehicles ahead of you also move forward. Please make every effort to avoid cutting in front of vehicles moving forward.
- If you cannot get into the white loading zone on the first pass, circle around to follow behind the vehicles moving forward.
- Never leave your vehicle unattended.
- Do not pass a school bus with red lights flashing.
- Follow the directions given by staff or police officers assisting with traffic.

City traffic regulations will be enforced for double parking. Double-parked cars will be ticketed. Please do not block neighborhood driveways or park on the sidewalks. Information on city traffic regulations and fees will be sent home in the Friday Folder at the beginning of each school year.

### *Bicycle Policy*

Bicycle racks are provided at school. Bicycle riders are bicycle drivers. Riders must exercise good sense and safe-riding habits at all times or lose the privilege of riding to school. We urge you to remind your children of the following guidelines and the State of California traffic laws:

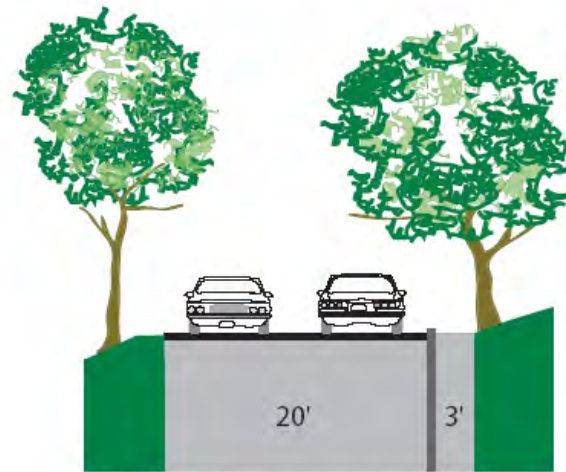
- Bicycle helmets are required equipment for all bicycle riders.
- Students must park their bicycles and lock them in the bicycle racks. They should leave the rack area immediately. Bicycle racks are off limits during school hours.
- No one may touch another person's bicycle unless the owner is present and permission has been given.
- Students must walk their bicycles onto school grounds. When school is out, bicycle riders must go directly home.
- Skateboards, roller-blades, or scooters are not allowed at school at any time.

We suggest that expensive accessories be removed before bicycles are brought to school.

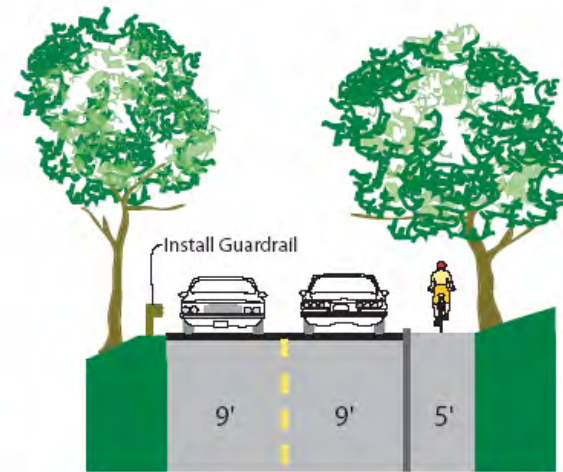
## Appendix B: Engineering Design Concepts

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VINEYARD ROAD PATHWAY IMPROVEMENT - NORTH SIDE OPTION



① Existing Cross Section



① Proposed Cross Section



Vineyard Road, looking west

DRAFT  
JANUARY 2005

PLEASANT VALLEY SCHOOL  
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Parisi ASSOCIATES  
transportation consulting



Figure 2: Vineyard Road Pathway Improvement North Side Option

### VINEYARD ROAD PATHWAY IMPROVEMENT - SOUTH SIDE OPTION



Vineyard south side path: 6' wide adjacent to parking



Vineyard south side path: Poor pavement condition



Vineyard south side path, looking east: Existing sidewalk is 4' wide

DRAFT  
JANUARY 2005

## PLEASANT VALLEY SCHOOL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN



Figure 3: Vineyard Road Pathway Improvement South Side Option