



Rancho Elementary School Travel Plan



SAFE ROUTES
TO SCHOOLS
MARIN COUNTY



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1. Purpose

1.1. SR2S Planning, Implementation and Monitoring

The Rancho 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

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 Rancho Elementary School Travel Plan qualifies as such a plan and identifies potential capital projects eligible for Safe Pathways funding.

2. Rancho Elementary School Profile

2.1. School Location

1430 Johnson Street
Novato, CA 94947

2.2. Enrollment and Demographics

As of the 2006-2007 school year, approximately 500 students were enrolled in Rancho Elementary School. Enrollment by grade is outlined in **Table 1**. **Table 2** shows the ethnicity of the student population in 2007-2008. Nearly 80 percent of the student population is White (Non-Hispanic), seven percent is Asian, three percent is Hispanic or Latino, and one percent is African American. Over 10 percent of respondents either responded with multiple answers or did not respond.

Table 1: Rancho School Enrollment by Grade, 2006-07

Grade Level	Enrollment
Kindergarten	80
Grade 1	80
Grade 2	80
Grade 3	80
Grade 4	90
Grade 5	90
Total	500

Table 2: Rancho Racial and Ethnic Subgroups, 2007-08

Racial and Ethnic Subgroup	Number of Students	Percent of Students
African American	6	1.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	N/A
Asian	37	7.4%
Filipino	N/A	N/A
Hispanic or Latino	17	3.4%
Pacific Islander	N/A	N/A
White (Not Hispanic)	389	77.8%
Multiple or No Response	51	10.2%

2.3. Existing Conditions

This section describes the physical conditions around Rancho Elementary School, including school entrances, traffic controls, crosswalks, crossing guards, transit, and bicycle racks.

School Entrances

- **Primary Entrance:** Vehicular traffic enters at the Johnson Street entrance.
- **Non-Motorized Entrances:** Pedestrians and bicyclist may enter the school site from the south and west from pathways in Arroyo Avichi Park.

Traffic Controls

- **Johnston Street/Adams Street Intersection:** This is four-legged intersection, with one crosswalk on the south leg.
- **Cambridge Street/Harrison Court Intersection:** This is a T-intersection and is stop-controlled on the Harrison Court approach.
- **S. Novato Boulevard/Yukon Way Intersection:** This is a signal-controlled four-legged intersection.
- **Arthur Street/Cambridge Street Intersection:** This is a four-legged intersection, stop-controlled at all four approaches, with a crossing guard

Crosswalks

- **Johnston Street/Adams Street Intersection:** Yellow transverse crosswalk (south leg)
- **Cambridge Street/Harrison Court Intersection:** Yellow transverse crosswalk (west leg)
- **S. Novato Boulevard/Yukon Way Intersection:** Yellow transverse crosswalks (north and east legs)
- **Arthur Street/Cambridge Street Intersection:** Yellow transverse crosswalk (all legs)

Crossing Guards

- **TAM Funded Crossing Guards:** There are two TAM-funded crossing guards stationed in the vicinity of Rancho School, at the intersections of Arthur Street/Cambridge Street and S. Novato Boulevard/Yukon Way.
- **School Funded Crossing Guards:** Currently, there are no school funded or volunteer crossing guards. During the 2006-2007 school year, parents volunteered as crossing guards on Wednesdays (Walk and Roll Day) at the intersection of Johnson and Adams Streets. The volunteer hours were too demanding to continue, and program was suspended. An additional TAM funded crossing guard at this location is recommended.

Transit

- **School Bus Availability:** School buses are not provided.

- **Public Transit Availability:** Golden Gate Transit Routes 51, 52, and 54 stop at S. Novato Boulevard and Arthur Street.
- **Special Transit Needs Offered:** Information is not available.

Bike Racks

- **Location of Bike Racks:** Bicycle racks are located along the walkway before lower grade playground and at Babe Silva Little League Field.
- **Number of Bike Spaces:** Information is not available.

2.4. Policies

Pick Up and Drop Off

- **Location:** Student drop-off and pick-up occurs on the driveway loop off Johnson Street.

Parking

- **Staff parking:** On-site parking accommodates about 85% of the daily staff demand. Staff also park off-site and walk to campus.
- **Public Parking:** Public parking is available in the main parking area, located along the southeast border of the site. Additional parking is located along the entrance driveway off Mohawk. Adjacent to the school office are four 15-minute visitor parking spaces.

2.5. Student Surveys

Spring and fall student surveys have been conducted since the 2003-2004 school year. Each spring and each fall, students are asked by their teachers how they got to school on that day. **Table 3** shows the survey results for 2003 through 2010.

Table 3: How Students Got To School

Year	Fall						
	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Transit	Carpool	Drive Alone	Other
2003-04	11%	1%	0%		31%	57%	
2004-05	11%	2%	1%		23%	63%	
2006-07							
2007-08	10%	2%	1%		24%	62%	0%
2008-09	12%	2%	1%	0%	27%	58%	1%
2009-10	10%	2%	0%	0%	25%	63%	0%
2010-11	10%	2%	1%	0%	22%	64%	1%

Year	Spring						
	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Transit	Carpool	Drive Alone	Other
2003-04	5%	1%	0%		29%	65%	
2004-05	13%	2%	0%		31%	53%	
2006-07	10%	2%	1%		30%	57%	
2007-08	13%	2%	1%		29%	55%	0%
2008-09	14%	2%	0%	0%	27%	56%	1%
2009-10	11%	1%	0%	0%	27%	61%	0%
2010-11							

Figure 1 shows how children got to school from 2003 through 2010. Information for fall 2006-2007 is not available. Over the course of the survey years, the majority of children were driven to school. Carpooling was the second most common way to get to school.

The ways children travel to school has remained relatively consistent during the survey period, although walking and carpooling rates appear to be higher on average in the spring.

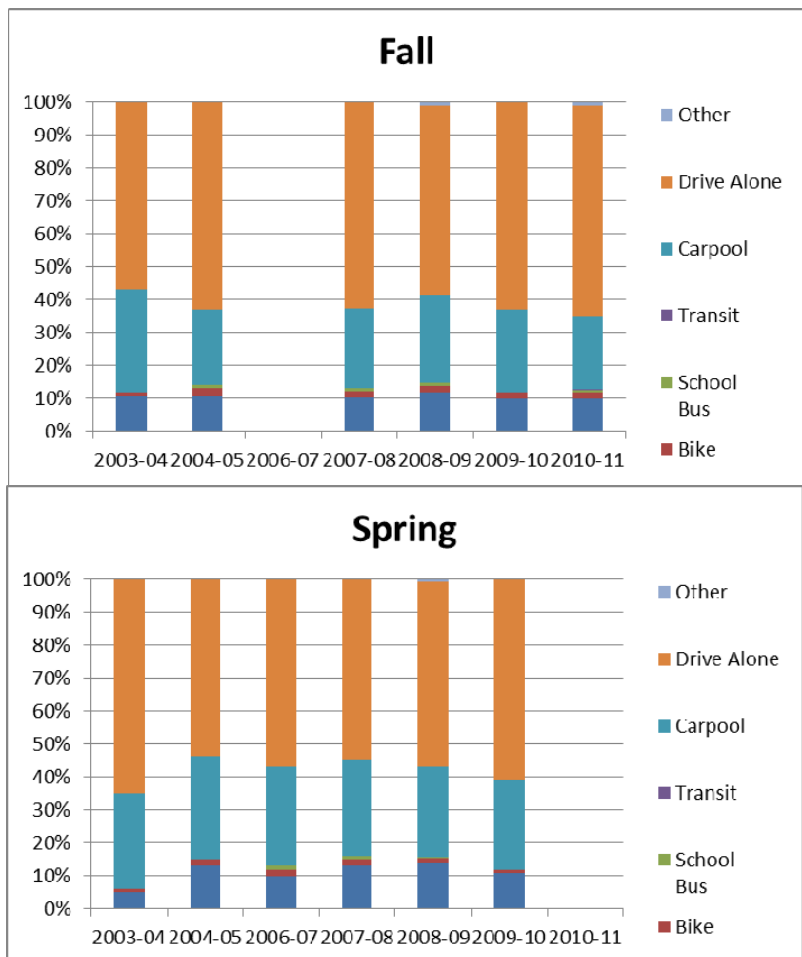


Figure 1:
How Children Got To School

3. Barriers and Opportunities

3.1. Parent Survey

Team leaders administered volunteer parent/guardian surveys as part of the 2007-2008 travel plan process. The survey was distributed at school. Parents and guardians could either return the completed survey to the school or complete it online through a link on the Transportation Authority of Marin homepage.

Concerns

When asked “Why you drive your child to school (check all that apply)” the top responses cited included “it’s too far” and “child is too young.” **Table 4** lists parent concerns from most to least common. Many concerns can be mitigated through a Safe Routes Implementation Program. Potential solutions include carpooling, transit, crossing guards, intersection improvements, education for youth, supervised walking and biking and traffic calming along school routes.

Table 4: Parental Concerns

Concern	Percent
It's too far	70%
Child is too young	44%
Stranger Danger	40%
Dangerous intersections	39%
Speeding cars	32%
Unsafe or lack of sidewalks and/or bikeways	26%
Weather	21%
Too much to carry	21%
Running late/tardiness	16%
On the way to work	11%
It's too steep	10%
Scary dogs	4%
Bullies	3%
Child won't follow safety rules	3%
Lack of safe bike parking	2%
<i>Source: Parent Survey, 2007-08, 185 Responses</i>	

Potential Opportunities

When asked under what circumstances they would allow their child to walk or bike to school, top parent and guardian responses were: if the child was “accompanied by other parents,” “when he/she is older,” and “crossing guards at dangerous intersections” (**Table 5**). These responses deliver some of the solutions to the issues described above. Significantly, 21 percent of the respondents stated they would never allow their child to walk or bike to school.

Table 5: Potential Opportunities to Increase Walking and Bicycle Among Children

Opportunities	Percent
Accompanied by other parents	35%
When he/she is older	28%
Crossing guards at dangerous intersections	25%
Cars slowed down	24%
I would never allow my child to walk or bike to school	21%
Accompanied by other children	17%
Park and walk locations where we could walk part way	15%
More police enforcement	15%
Improved sidewalks and paths	14%
Improved intersections	14%
Safety training was provided for students	9%
Secure bike storage was available	9%
Other (please specify)	9%
Route maps were provided	3%
<i>Source: Parent Survey, 2007-08, 185 Responses</i>	

3.2. Walkabout Notes

Walkabouts were held in 2003 and in 2007 at Rancho Elementary School. At the 2003 walkabout teachers, parents, and students cited several issues including speed of cars and the lack of curb ramps. A speed limit sign and a painted centerline were suggested as improvements on Johnson Street. Curb ramps were suggested in several intersection locations including Adams and Johnson Streets, Cambridge Street and Harrison Court, and Cambridge and Arthur Streets. Other suggested improvements include a 15 mph warning sign at the curve before the entrance to the school and sidewalk widening on the parkway entrance.

A second walkabout was held on December 10, 2007. The following issues were identified:

- **Parking Lot Entrance:** The entrance is difficult to cross.
- **Taft Court:** Parents use Taft Court as a drop-off zone. Seniors who live in the area are concerned about traffic congestion, emergency vehicle access, and general blocked access.
- **Adams Street and Johnson Street Intersection:** The intersection is difficult to cross and does not have curb ramps. A crossing guard and crosswalk were identified as needed improvements.

- **Cambridge Street and Harrison Court Intersection:** This intersection does not have curb ramps.
- **Arthur Street and Cambridge Street Intersection:** This busy intersection also serves Novato High School and lacks curb ramps on two corners.
- **Yukon Way and S. Novato Boulevard Intersection:** This intersection may make a good drop-off site if crossing improvements were implemented.
- **Johnson Street adjacent to the Novato Methodist Church:** Johnson Street does not connect through to South Novato Boulevard. Suggested improvements include an ADA accessible pathway connecting Johnson Street to South Novato Boulevard. Another suggested improvement is a vehicular connection to South Novato Boulevard.
- **Arthur Street at Johnson Street:** Vehicles turning from Arthur onto Johnson backs up traffic. A suggested improvement was to add a right turn lane on Arthur Street.
- **School Traffic Circle:** Recommended improvements on the traffic circle include striping separate drop-off and passing lanes.
- **Johnson Street:** The school Principal noted that cars come around the curve on approach the school circle too quickly.
- **Access to School:** At the walkabout, participants expressed a need for bussing, even with small shuttles and vanpools.

4. Programs and Projects

4.1. Engineering Design Concepts

A series of design concepts were developed based on the Task Force meetings and the walkabout. The concepts are summarized below and are illustrated in **Appendix A**.

Johnson Street School Pathway

The Johnson Street School Pathway is aimed at improving access to the school from the remote drop-off zone at the Church. Recommended improvements include the construction of a pathway between the church parking lot and Cambridge Street. Additional improvements include installation of bollards to prevent motor vehicle access on the pathway, the addition of a fence on eastern entrance and the shortening of an existing fence on the western entrance.

Harrison Court and Cambridge Street

Harrison Court at Cambridge Street is a stop sign controlled intersection and improvements are designed to facilitate pedestrian crossing. The intersection improvements include the installation of curb ramps on the northwest and southwest corners.

Cambridge Street and Arthur Street

Improvements at the intersection of Cambridge and Arthur Street are designed to improve crossing. The proposed improvements include bulb-outs on all four corners. Other improvements include relocation of drainage inlets and lines to facilitate the bulb-out construction.

4.2. Classroom Education

Rancho Elementary participates in the Safe Routes to Schools education program. Classes include:

- Stop, Look and Listen
- Walk Around the Block for second grade
- Helmet Safety
- Traffic Safety Game Show
- Bicycle Rodeo for 4th grade.

4.3. Encouragement Programs

Currently, the school offers the following programs of encouragement:

- **Weekly Walk and Roll to School Days:** This program was reinstated after a crossing guard was stationed at the Johnson/Adams Street intersection and a stop sign was added on Johnson Street.
- **Frequent Rider Miles:** The Frequent Rider Miles program takes place for eight weeks in the spring. The program includes instant prizes for frequent walkers, cyclists and carpoolers as well as raffle tickets for bigger prizes.
- **Pollution Punch Card:** In the 2008-2009 school year, Rancho Elementary participated in this program which rewards students for choosing to walk or bike to school.
- **Curb Your Carbon:** Rancho Elementary participates in the Curb Your Carbon (CYC) program year-round and has weekly reminders of carbon reducing strategies in the weekly Friday Flash. The program distributes coupons including one directly related to encouraging walking, cycling and carpooling to school. Parents have the opportunity to turn in a coupon pledge year round.
- **Carpool Facilitation:** The Student Directory identifies home neighborhood to facilitate easy carpool arrangements. With help from this program, Rancho Elementary has the highest carpool rate of any elementary school in Marin County.

4.4. Program Evaluation

Table 6, provides goals for Rancho Elementary School. The goals were developed with input from the School Task Force members. The table includes current conditions, proposed target rates and due dates for each goal.

Table 6: Program Evaluation Measurements

Goal	Current Conditions	Target Rate	Target Date
Reduce the percentage of students driven to school	63% of respondents	50% of respondents	2010
Remove “dangerous intersections, speeding cars, and unsafe or lack of sidewalks,” from top 10 reasons for driving to school	Dangerous Intersections : 41.2% Speeding cars: 33.9% Unsafe Sidewalks: 27.7%	All under 25% of responses	2010

5. Implementation Matrix

Table 7 lists the goals, activities, responsible parties, timeline and funding sources for the Rancho Elementary School Travel Plan.

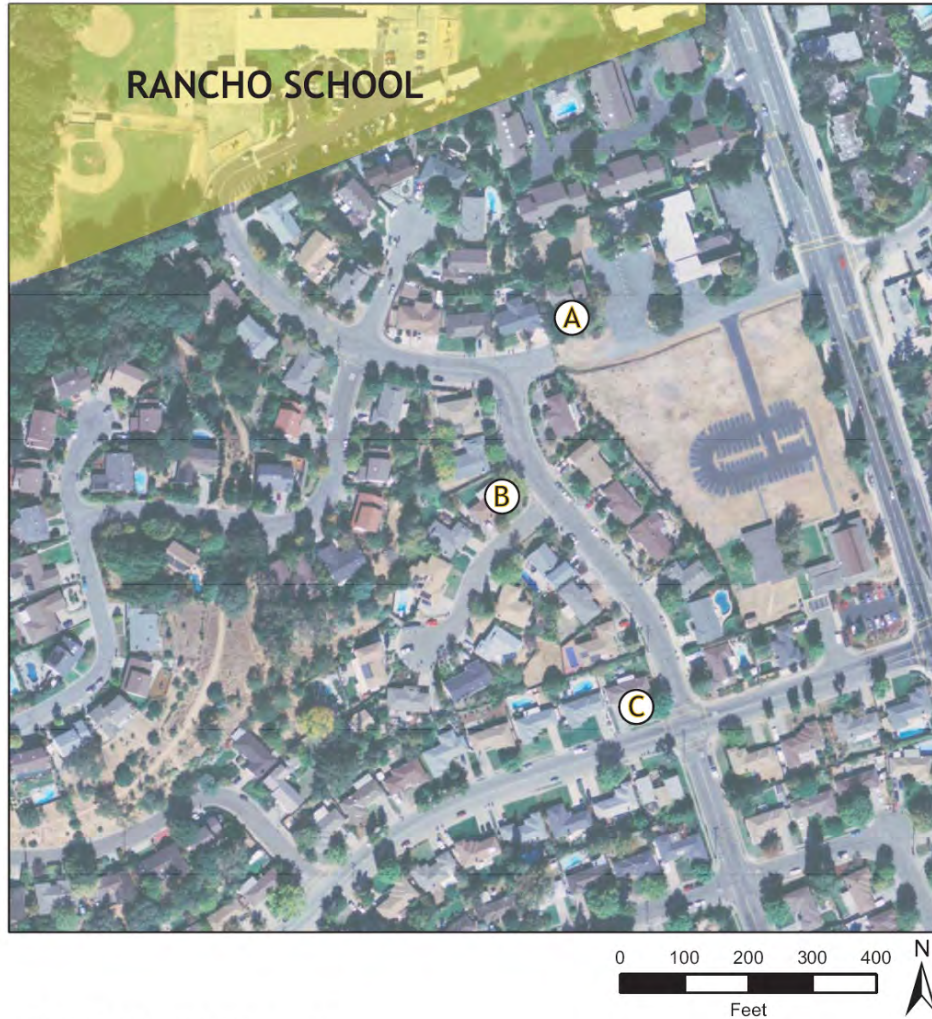
Table 7: Implementation Activities

Goal	Description of Activity	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Funding Source
Decrease speed of cars near school	Take 5 program	Marla Fields	2010	Safe Routes
	Add speed bump on Johnson prior to turn into parking lot	Safe Routes	2010	Safe Routes
Increase Intersection safety at Johnson and Adams St.	Add crosswalk notation, crossing guard, and curb cuts	Safe Routes	2010	Safe Routes
	Add right turn lane marking on Arthur prior to Johnson; add curb cuts to intersection	Safe Routes	2010	Safe Routes
Increase number of students using remote drop off	Construct a school pathway to connect remote drop-off/pick-up zone at local church to Rancho	City of Novato	2010	Caltrans
Decrease number of students driven (not carpool)	Implement Pollution Punchcard Incentive Program to include bike, walk or carpool to/from school	Marla Fields/Safe Routes	2008	Safe Routes

Goal	Description of Activity	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Funding Source
	Review vanpool options from neighborhoods such as Hamilton; Investigate Carpool phone line assistance service	Marla Fields/Safe Routes	2010	Safe Routes
	Add Bike racks to upper play yard	Safe Routes	2009	Safe Routes
	Add “Safe Routes Assembly” educational program to 2008/2009 school year	Safe Routes	2009	Safe Routes

Appendix A: Engineering Design Concept

SCHOOL AREA OVERVIEW



PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

- Ⓐ Construct pathway from church parking lot to sidewalk
- Ⓑ Construct curb ramps at Harrison Court & Cambridge Street
- Ⓒ Construct bulb-outs at Cambridge Street & Arthur Street

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR RANCHO SCHOOL

March 2009

Paris ASSOCIATES
transportation consulting



Figure 2: Improvement Plan

PEDESTRIAN PATHWAY FROM CHURCH PARKING LOT TO RANCHO SCHOOL

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Parents are allowed to drop-off students in church parking lot
- No existing path from parking lot to sidewalk



View from existing sidewalk to parking lot



Existing sidewalk and fence

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS



PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

- Ⓐ Construct 6-foot wide asphalt or decomposed granite path between church parking lot and Johnson Street
- Ⓑ Cut back existing fence at Johnson Street to second post and relocate address plate. Install additional barricades as needed to prevent motor vehicle access.
- Ⓒ Install bollards at path entrance to prevent motor vehicle access
- Ⓓ Consider fence to right of pathway on church property



Existing Conditions
View from church parking lot



Photosimulation
Proposed pathway improvements

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR RANCHO SCHOOL

March 2009



Figure 3: Pedestrian Pathway from Church Parking lot to Rancho School

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS ALONG CAMBRIDGE STREET

CAMBRIDGE STREET & HARRISON COURT



EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Harrison Court is stop sign-controlled
- Existing transverse yellow crosswalk
- No curb ramps

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

- Ⓐ Construct curb ramps on northwest & southwest corners. Accommodate existing valley gutter across Harrison.



Cambridge Street & Harrison Court



Cambridge Street & Arthur Street

CAMBRIDGE STREET & ARTHUR STREET



EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Four-way stop sign-controlled intersection
- Drivers form two lanes during drop-off, limiting visibility
- 40' wide street with 8' on-street parking lane

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

- Ⓑ Construct bulb-outs at all four corners. Bulb-outs should extend a maximum of 6' into roadway to accommodate bicyclists.
- Ⓒ Relocate drainage inlets and modification to drain lines to accommodate bulb-outs

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR RANCHO SCHOOL

March 2009



Figure 4: Intersection Improvements along Cambridge Street