



**Safe Routes to School Task Force Committee  
Wednesday, October 3, 2018  
Meeting Notes**

**Attendance:**

Christopher Blunk- Engineer DPW, Debbie Butler- Novato School District, Pat Eklund-V=City Council, Gwen Froh- Safe Routes to Schools, Dina Gibbons- Pleasant Valley Parent, Paul LaPerriere- Resident, Manijech Larizadeh- Asst Engineer DPW, Gretchen Schubeck-City of Novato, Shelly Scott-Novato School District, Mark Silva-Facilities Novato School District, Dabney Smith- Resident, Michelle Tjosvold- Resident Loma Verde, Reza Pourfarhanie- Novato Police Dept., Maricruz Bayona-Parent Lynwood, Elizabeth Ramos- Parent Lynwood, Erika Suastegui- Parent Lynwood, Wendi Kallins- Safe Routes to Schools, Peggy Clark- Safe Routes to Schools, Cindy Leonard- San Marin High Parent

**Safe Routes Updates**

**Park and Walk Program:**

Safe Routes to Schools is promoting a new initiative to promote green transportation around schools. This past summer all school principals (prior to the start of school) were provided safety and encouragement tips to identify authorized “park and walk” locations. SR2S is encouraging students and families to reduce congestion around schools by utilizing park and walk locations. Libraries, churches, shopping centers, and parks are options to explore for safe park and walk locations. When students experience walking with parents and in groups they develop a greater awareness of independence and healthy habits.

SR2S encourages younger grade level students/families to park and walk; (with 1 adult for every 6 students) a minimum of 3-5 minute to campus. Schools that provide valet greeting to drivers on campus are not encouraging green transportation.

Please contact [Gwen@marinbike.org](mailto:Gwen@marinbike.org) to learn more about Safe Routes to School Park and Walk

### **San Marin Program**

Gwen reported SR2S Teen program has recently partnered with San Marin High School with support of a Spare the Air Grant. The high schools education program has identified numerous examples of unsafe behaviour on and near campus.

Ashley Leonard as part of her Girl Scouts badge certification has been volunteering with the Novato DPW and taking a lead role with the San Marin Wellness program. The freshmen have been tasked with developing several safety PSAs. They will be reviewed soon and some will be selected for presentation to the school community. These will be presented annually to encourage safe behavior on campus. The content will include examples of students demonstrating safe behaviors. Part two of the program will be to identify and present a student encouragement program..

A suggestion was made to have PSAs played on the Novato TV station, School District web site and at all elementary and middle schools. Younger students tend to pay attention to upper grade level students.

### **Iwalk Day 2018**

Is on Wednesday, Oct 10<sup>th</sup>. At least 55 schools in Marin County will be participating in Safe Routes to School efforts. School Board members and Pat offered to participate on Oct 10.

### **Report Cards**

Wendi reported the recalculating for the report cards countywide has been updated. Many schools have been participating in the program since 2000. Those baselines have been pushed up to 2009 to create a more level grading formula. The reports measure green trips and active participation in Safe Routes to School programs. Report cards do not present a pass or fail grade; they are developed to determine what progress a school is making. If progress is not demonstrated, Safe Routes to School can offer support to improve green transportation at individual schools. Report cards can be updated if information/data was not accurately reported as a result of missing information.

School Board members and Pat requested copies of the report cards for Novato schools.

### **Measure AA**

#### **attachments**

Measure AA is on the November ballot. It will support the continued funding of crossing guards. The attached documents can be used by schools, PTA groups and the community to inform voters about the measure and how it supports schools.

## **Updates**

### **Lynwood Crosswalk**

Referenced Documents:

[Novato Leafwood Notice 8-21-18](#)

[Novato- 2018-19 Neighborhood Crosswalk List](#)

Chris reported the DPW has continued to develop solutions to raise the planned crosswalk 3 inches, include curb ramps and creative crosswalk striping along with other traffic calming facilities.

This has been an involved process due to the road conditions including the sloping road and drainage conditions.

The DPW did meet with the new school principal to observe current condition and discussed proposed facility changes. The goal is to increase driver and pedestrian awareness for road conditions to increase safety.

Pat requested she and the residents be given the opportunity to comment on the draft design. The residents prefer the crosswalk include a floral design vs tiger stripes to encourage students and adults to use the crosswalk.

The spring/summer of 2019 is the projected date for final design and improvements to be scheduled/completed. The Leafwood crosswalk is one of many crosswalks ([Novato- 2018-19 Neighborhood Crosswalk List](#)) requiring improvements.

The DPW understands the challenges with the crosswalk and others throughout Novato. It is their responsibility to serve all residents of Novato. They are working toward improvements; it can take time to complete the analysis, design and to obtain bids. "The Lynwood community has the full attention of the DPW" Chris commented.

Red curbs have been painted near the crosswalks. Where and how much of a curb is painted is influenced by the site lines for all users. Residents are still seeing vehicles parked in the red zones; they would like to have a barrier installed to prevent vehicles from parking any time.

Parents submitted a letter on behalf of the community stating safety issues and requesting support. Residents have offered to purchase crossing guard attire to support students crossing the streets.

Pat reported the letter has not been presented to the City Council as of this SR2S meeting.

The DPW mailed 600 flyers ([Novato Leafwood Notice 8-21-18](#)) to residents of Lynwood School that included safety crosswalking tips. Several of the parents attending the meeting did not know or receive the flyer. They offered to go door to door to distribute 50 printed flyers.

Lynwood parents expressed frustration with the long process to improve safety at this street/crosswalk. They have been attending meeting for two years. They need help now to slow down traffic. They suggested an increase in police presence, crosswalk flags for pedistion to use prior to entering a crosswalk and other small (low cost) options to increase safety as soon as possible. They would also like the speed limit reduced.

They know there have been more un-reported incidents with students crossing the street than reported. They invited school board members to come to observe the daily vehicle and pedestrian close calls.

Chris and the attending police officer reminded meeting members that for the speed limit to be changed a speed survey needs to be conducted. If the median speed is higher than posted it is possible the speed limit could be increase not decrease at residents may prefer ([85% rule](#)). The DPW suggests waiting until the traffic calming improvements are completed; then conduct a survey as it is more likely the speeds will be reduced then when there is data to support lowering the speed limits in area.

Wendi reported Sacramento lawmakers are forming a committee to consider addressing Vision Zero which would include re-thinking the 85th percentile rule. .

Novato PD currently has an OTS grant to enforce crosswalk safety. Officers are using the crosswalks to monitor vehicle behavior. Pedestrians must continue to use crosswalk legally and give motorists time to stop before entering a crosswalk. Students nor adults can walk out into a crosswalk at anytime just because it is a crosswalk. Pedestrians also have responsibilities when crossing a street safely.

Law enforcement will continue to place the speed radar feedback/recorder in the Lynwood neighborhood. Data supports drivers slow down when it is present. It cannot stay in a location too long or people stop paying attention.

### **Novato Charter**

No representatives attend this meeting. The city is planning on improving the crosswalk at Main Gate and C street installing yellow school style crosswalk across Main Gate Rd, modifying existing median nose to add a pedestrian refuge area and adding curb ramps and appropriate signage. This will be part of a larger crosswalk improvement program slated for next spring.

There are other recommendations that we have made to the city, but given that there is a development proposal pending they want to see how our suggestions could coincide with that.

### **Merritt Drive**

#### [Dabney's notes presented at Task Force meeting](#)

Dabney reported the many issues regarding Merritt Drive have continued. The communications with the school parent community is not working. When the police are contacted regarding an illegally parked vehicle either blocking a driveway or double parking the driver has already left when they arrive. Her understanding is the Vice Principal does not want to contact the police on these issues.

The DPW changes to the bike lane were intended to create a more safe environment. There is still room for improvement regarding the circulation of traffic by the school. The school's campus was originally designed to accommodate school buses not vehicle drop off.

The DPW is available to help identify safe and approved student drop off locations for walking to school. The school is proposing voluntary compliance by families.

Task Force members proposed a district wide announcement be drafted addressing traffic at schools. Several members volunteered to support a committee to develop a safety campaign outside of the SR2S Task Force. Along with the help of the DPW they can identify specific issues; develop a strategy, provide tools and education resources specific to each school. This committee would not address engineering they would focus on education. The police department would confirm the information provided by the committee follow the vehicle code.

Committee volunteers:

Gretchen, Wendi, Pat, Gwen, Mark, Michelle, Dina and Dabney

### **San Marin Dr./Novato Blvd**

Paul has been supporting the efforts of the DPW. Since the last task force meeting the city and school district professional examined the condition of several trees. Four massive trees have been removed and many have been pruned at the cost to the school and school district.

Paul also reported Ashley Leonard was awarded a "gold award" by the Novato BPAC. She has been a huge support and gained a great deal of experience for all her efforts on collecting data for this project. She will be finalizing a capital improvements request document soon. The next steps will be to collect pedestrian counts. Once all the information is collected and the DPW is

ready a presentation will be made at a planning commission meeting. It was also suggested Ashley present to the school board.

Chris reported the intersection of Novato Blvd., San Marin Drive and Sutor Ave has gone from not being on an issues list to being one of the worst intersections in Novato. The DPW is reviewing options from new signal to a designing a roundabout road facility. Funding will need to be researched; this could be a 5 year project before completed.

In addition the DPW may consider a mid-block crosswalk on Novato Blvd near the dog park. A pole mounted speed feedback sign is also proposed on San Marin Drive headed into town. There are 69 homes in the vicinity; they want to encourage people to walk to the park vs driving. With the proposed changes driver speeds made slow down.

The School District weed whacks the path on an annual basis and has removed or trimmed the trees per the city arborist report

### **Vineyard Road**

The DPW had this project out to bid and had received at least four bids. There was a compilation with the bidding process. The DPW had to reject the bids. They will be putting the project out to bid again soon with the intention of collecting additional bids. They hope to award a bid by November 13; this project will not take place during the winter months. .

The most significant update to the project is the “pork chop” sidewalk at Mill Road where there were plans to create a better pathway, is a now categorized as a bid alternate.

### **Crossing guards**

TAM Board approved a budget to step in and cover expenses until the January. It was going to drop to 58 positions at the start of this school year. If future funding is approved through the renewal of the sales tax, 96 crossing guard positions could be funded after November 2018.

### **Mapping**

Not address at this meeting

### **Loma Verde Traffic issues**

The school traffic is impacting the streets near the school so much so emergency vehicles access is impacted; blocking them from entering a street due to double parked and illegally parked vehicles. Drivers have been seen driving on the wrong side of the street to pass the parked vehicles on Alameda De La Loma. The resident at 407 has reported this problem to the County DPW and the police.

Wendi will contact the county; she will look into any past Walk Audit notes if they have been conducted in past year. She will also work with the Team Leader and residents to evaluate options for Park and Walk locations.

Wendi stated that in her 20 years of working with local DPW's she has rarely had such a positive and responsive DPW as Chris has been to SR2S issues. SR2S is very pleased to be working with Chris and his team.

**Schedule next meeting**

Feb 6, 2019 at 6:00pm. A request was made to add time frames to agenda items.