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**Novato SR2S Task Force  
Meeting Notes  
Thursday May 12, 2022**

**Attendance:**

Wendi Kallins- Safe Routes to Schools- Program Coordinator, Gwen Froh- Safe Routes to Schools Program Director, Peggy Clark- Safe Routes to Schools, Diane Gasson - School Board Trustee, Leslie Benjamin - School District Communications Director, Jennifer Schriber- Parisi Transportation Engineer, Pat Eklund- Novato City Council, Monica Liefer- Safe Routes Bi-Lingual Coordinator, Rene de Bos- Parent Pleasant Valley, David Hoffman- Parisi Transportation, Joakim Osthus - Parent and Novato Complete Streets Pathways Oversight Committee, Manijeh Larizadeh - DPW Assistant Engineer, John Neville - County of Marin Traffic and Transportation, Stacey Pogorzelski - Parent Pleasant Valley, Kevin Lee ( wife is Robin Lee)- Parents Novato Charter

**Pleasant Valley Map**

Parents from the school met in April and discussed elements of the “[suggested routes to school DRAFT map](#)”. A good deal of information was presented and it is included in this DRAFT map. During this meeting members were encouraged to provide feedback; individuals not able to attend the meeting are requested to send comments to: David Hoffman at [dhoffman@parisi-associates.com](mailto:dhoffman@parisi-associates.com).

Wendi will schedule a meeting with the group of parents that provided information to review the draft and comments provided at this meeting.

Once the map is approved by the DPW departments the district has offered to make it available to students at the start of the 2022/2023 school year.

Safe Routes will also be looking at developing maps for Olive, San Ramon and Loma Verde schools next school year. Joakim Osthus offered assistance with the development of the Olive School map.

This map has three elements:

Recommended; walking routes = orange routes, cycling routes= green routes and the location of crossing guards.

The radius circles provide an approximate distance from a school. It is assumed that most kids can walk a mile or more and they can bike a mile or two without much difficulty.

Comments Made:

Keep the route(s) marked that access the school from the front and rear. Some students live off of Sutro and make use of Center to access the rear of the school; there is no good crossing on that busy roadway. A caution symbol will be added to identify intersections that require additional caution.

There are three Crossing Guards by Lu Sutton and Sinaloa Schools to be updated on the map.

### **Upcoming Safe Routes Activities**

Leslie Benjamin support has been instrumental in sharing information about the resources available from Safe Routes this school year again.

#### Safe Routes Education and Encouragement Spring 2022

[Safe Routes to Schools](#) has launched its new website (the web link has not changed).

The improvements include; better navigation, Spanish translation option; archived pages have been removed, improved access to Task Force group information, newsletter publications, ongoing encouragement activities and education resources. If you have not received it, please email [peggy@marinbike.org](mailto:peggy@marinbike.org)

#### [J.E.D.I. Challenge April 13, 20, 27, May 4](#)

The J.E.D.I Challenge is a four-week contest to help reinforce the habit of walking, rolling, carpooling and taking the bus to school. Participating schools : Rancho, Loma Verde and Pleasant Valley valued parent volunteers hosted welcome tables.

During the four week challenge.

#### [Bike to School Day- May 4th](#)- "May the 4th Be With You"

This national annual event supports walking, biking, skating, scooting and strolling to school! Participating schools had welcome tables and handed out (donated) JAMBARs to our walkers and rollers. Pleasant Valley had a huge turn-out and the Principal from Rancho reported an increase with students walking and rolling to the school. Olive,

Lynwood, Lu Sutton and Novato Charter also participated. San Ramon and Hamilton schools were the only ones who did not participate.

### **Graphic Art Talent at White Hill Middle School**

The flier for BTSD was designed by a middle school student. Safe Routes web site has a gallery displaying all of the submittals by the middle school students. This was supported by the school teachers.

### **Annual Bike Hero AWARD- – Coming This May**

**(Check the [Safe Routes to Schools website](#) to learn more and nominate a hero)**

Seeking Bike Heroes – students who are stellar “roll” models by biking to school frequently while *following the rules of the road*. In May, parents, neighbors, friends, teachers and administrators are encouraged to nominate a Bike Hero from their school worthy of receiving this county-wide award.

### **Safe Routes Education Update**

This year principals, new and returning PE teachers have been very supportive in making efforts to have the pedestrian and bicycle safety education classes for their students. Lynwood and Lu Sutton hosted pedestrian ed classes for the first time in many years.

### **Surveys- Student Travel Survey**

The Safe Routes to Schools student travel survey is required for program funding. The survey measures the number of students traveling to and from school by various modes of transportation (bike, walk, carpool or bus). It will be conducted in classrooms during May.

Data was not collected for the 2020/2021 school year. Safe Routes is encouraging all participating schools to conduct it this spring.

### **Surveys- Parent Survey**

Safe Routes conducts this survey every three years at a select number of participating schools. Schools are selected to survey a cross section of the county’s demographics to learn if barriers and opportunities have changed over the years. This survey will be distributed in both English and Spanish to the school district. The format will be in email and text formats.

### **Cory’s Ride Update**

[Cory’s Ride](#) is currently serving students at Sinaloa Middle School. This program is run through the Marin County Bicycle Coalition and is led by the Safe Routes to School Lead Instructor. It is a series of six classes including: classroom presentations and road safety rides. The students have been very enthusiastic.

It was suggested that SRTS approach the local Rotary for possible funding for additional bikes for the program. Pat Eklund requested an approximate cost for funding new bikes for student riders in Novato only. She is a member of the Rotary and could make the ask once she has the needed information.

### **Helmet Need for elementary schools**

Safe Routes instructors have presented “on the bike” classes on campus this month. It was noted that several students came to school without helmets. On occasion students have helmets they just do not understand their safety needs. It was proposed funds be identified to purchase helmets to distribute in Novato schools and have the student sign-off on an acknowledgement they will use it when riding.

SRTS has worked with the Family Liaison at Lynwood to distribute helmets to students who need them. SRTS can work with other Liaisons in the school district to distribute them once they are purchased. Funding to be identified.

### **Crossing Guard Program Update**

The crossing guard program is managed and funded by The Transportation Authority of Marin. It is up for renewal this year. This evaluation process will be examined including the scoring process used to evaluate where a guard is to be stationed.

The three changes will include:

1. Safety: it will be weighted as a score of ten versus five.
2. The definition of TK will be redefined to include this age group.
3. The definition of speed limits by school will be updated.

The actual speed of drivers will be evaluated to understand the safety needs at a crosswalk.

The evaluation will be conducted at the start of the next school year, in the fall. A report will be developed and presented in the spring of 2022 to the Board. The updated list of crossing guard locations will be implemented in the fall of 2023.

Crossing guard positions are available county wide. People interested should contact Dan Cherrier, TAM Crossing Guard Manager at [dcherrier@tam.ca.gov](mailto:dcherrier@tam.ca.gov).

### **Travel Plans**

[San Rafael Safe Routes to Schools Goals and Objectives](#)

Safe Routes is preparing travel plans for all school districts. This document has been presented to other Task Force - School District meetings; that feedback has been included in the current document. *Novato Task Force members are requested to review the document and provide comments to Wendi as soon as possible.*

Comments:

Clarify that “congestion” refers to “traffic congestion”

### **Safe Routes to School- Novato School District Policy**

Safe Routes presented a policy to the school district eight to nine years ago. Leslie confirmed a SRTS policy is recognized with the district.

### **Objectives**

The objectives are the mechanisms of how we will achieve the goals that can be measured. The first three of the most important: each school to increase their green and active trips by at least 1% every year, maintain an average of 50% green trips every year for elementary, 60% for middle school. In addition; the task force role is to identify infrastructure issues that are barriers to students walking and biking to school.

Novato School District is looking into developing funding for students to have access to bus transportation. They are researching options; the goal is to provide transportation to the students that need it. It will be a challenge for the district to get the funding.

### **Town Updates**

The DPW did not have specific SRTS project updates. There are a few crosswalks that will be improved (locations not known during this meeting).

Pat Eklund reported the DPW has done a great job to address the terrible safety issues on Novato Blvd from Diablo to 7th Street. The EIR was approved; the next step is for the city to start the acquisitions of properties to widen the roadway to include a bike lane and improved sidewalks. This project will help students that need to walk or bike along Novato Blvd. to school.

In addition, near Olive School improvements are planned from Redwood Blvd to Railroad Ave. This will benefit the students too. This is a project under review by SMART and the City has wanted to see safety improvements near the railroad tracks for some time. A pedestrian warning is needed for the students.

The DPW did present projects including the CIP; the location above is included. Design concepts are being developed.

## **County Updates**

There were no specific updates. The DPW wants to be present at meetings to keep up on issues and developments. The County DPW has limited staffing currently to address projects.

## **Issues list Update**

### [Novato SR2S Issues list](#)

Last summer Safe Routes met with the Novato BPAC. The BPAC issues are now included in the SR2S Issues list. A column has been added identifying the priorities for the BPAC. The Bike/Ped plan is set to be presented this summer and approved. The issues presented last summer from Safe Routes have been included in the Bike/Ped plan; no additional changes/issues have been added.

This Issue List is a living document and will be updated as projects are completed and added.

**N-4** County comments: Alameda De La Loma was paved about 13 years ago. At that time the County reached out to the community. They proposed striping bike lanes and removing parking, or connecting through all the sidewalks along Alameda De La Loma. The neighborhood unanimously voted for sidewalks and keeping the parking.

Students riding on the sidewalks (14yr and under OK) in that area seems to be the norm and no one complains.

### **New Issue:**

Pleasant Valley School has noticed that the Walk N Roll Days are well supported; yet the other days of the week are not. ST2S proposed random days be included to support more weekly participation. Safe Routes will work with the parent volunteer to strategize how to build a stronger culture either on a specific calendar or something that would be supported for the school year. These resources do work but they require a strong parent volunteer base to implement. On occasion teachers and upper grade level students can assist.

### **New Issue:**

Parent volunteers learn that many families cannot join a bike train due the unsafe condition at Bel Marin Keys overpass of the freeway going east and west. Some parents parked and rode; however, it involved a good deal of planning for a short ride. This is an issue on the SRTS issues list. A CalTrans study for freeway interchanges includes this overpass. It has not been determined if it will be included in the initial phase. Currently SRTS is waiting to learn what interchanges will be addressed from the study.

A stand-alone bridge for bikes and pedestrians would require ADA access ramps. Obtaining the real estate for the ramps would be expensive.

### [Park & Walk | Park & Drop](#)

Is an SRTS program that encourages families that live too far to walk and roll to park at a reasonable distance and walk to school. Safe Routes staff can help support this program. Contact [cooper@marinbike.org](mailto:cooper@marinbike.org) to learn more.

Another option is to consider working with the school administration to consider closing off the drop-off to the front of the school area to encourage more families to park and walk if it would not impact the community in a negative manner.

### **Next Zoom Meeting**

Thursday, September 1, 2022 at 5:00pm