

Novato Unified School District
Safe Routes to School Task Force Meeting Notes

Thursday, August 31

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

To access recording contact Jen Shriber <JShriber@parametrix.com>

Next meeting date

- Wednesday, January 17 at 5 PM

Participants

- Leslie Benjamin – NUSD Director of Communications
- Lisa Clarke – Sustainable Marin Schools
- Sarah Donelson – Novato HS parent
- Gwen Froh – SR2S/MCBC
- Diane Gasson – School Board Trustee, Novato HS parent
- Wendi Kallins – SR2S
- Manijeh Larizadeh – City of Novato PW
- Courtney Larson – San Ramon parent
- Monica Leifer – SR2S Bilingual Coordinator
- John Matern – Sinaloa Assistant Principal
- John Neville – Marin County DPW
- Lori Nuno – Olive Principal, Olive parent
- Joakim Osthus - Complete Streets & Pathways Committee, Olive parent
- Sierra Pope – Sinaloa parent
- Gretchen Schubeck – Novato Sustainability Coordinator
- Ed Schulze - Complete Streets & Pathways Committee
- Jen Shriber – SR2S/Parametrix
- Kelly Smith – Loma Verde/Novato HS parent, parent volunteer
- Casey Ward – Complete Streets & Pathways Committee, NUSD parent
- Christopher Whitlock – Marin Transit
- Mira Brownfield – San Ramon Office Manager, NUSD parent



Safe Routes presentation (Jen Shriber, SR2S/Parametrix & Gwen Froh, SR2S/MCBC)

[See the attached presentation.](#)

The presentation included excerpts from the 2023 evaluation report showing progress countywide in maintaining and increasing active and shared trips to school. It then showed results from Novato, comparing the percentage of students walking and biking to the percentage of students that live within walking and biking distance. At schools throughout the City, there is opportunity to encourage students living near school to walk and bike. At Lu Sutton, 81% of students live within one mile but only 19% walk or roll to school. At Loma Verde, 70% live within one mile but only 24% use active transportation to get to and from school. Overall Lynwood has the most positive results, with 58% green trips, followed by Sinaloa (47%) and Rancho (46%). Lu Sutton has the lowest percentage of green trips (26%), followed by Pleasant Valley (32%) and Loma Verde (36%). See the [presentation](#) for full details for each school

Discussion (Wendi Kallins, SR2S)

Strategies to maintain and/or increase green trips

General

Completing suggested route maps for schools that do not currently have them is a high priority for SR2S.

There are new principals at Lynwood, San Jose, and Novato HS, and a new Assistant Principal at Hamilton Meadow Park. These can be seen as opportunities to engage further with the schools.

Infrastructure improvements could encourage traffic calming along routes to school. More involvement by the police is necessary. Police can be more involved for education and enforcement, particularly at the beginning of the school year.

School-specific working groups could help find solutions to area-specific challenges. There is a need to leverage local enthusiasm and knowledge about the particular school sites. We can capitalize on where we can leverage community goodwill and unified school district.

The Complete Streets and Pathways Oversight Committee should be more involved with SR2S. Currently there are no planned meetings for this committee. Members would like to participate in the Safe Routes efforts.

The monthly transportation committee that was organized by Gretchen Schubeck, Novato Sustainability Coordinator, in the past could be reconvened. This would present an opportunity to organize the mapping and development of strategies for the whole city.



Loma Verde

Ignacio Boulevard is a big barrier, particularly during the morning commute. There is a lot of potential to walk given the percentage of students who live close to school. A suggested route map would be useful to parents. There are multi-use paths along the routes that could be utilized.

Lu Sutton

Center Boulevard is a barrier to walking and biking. An upcoming paving project on Novato Blvd. will greatly impact Center Blvd.

Olive

Fewer cyclists because Olive is a challenging street for students to bike on, primarily between Redwood Boulevard and the railroad tracks where there is higher opportunity for cyclists if conditions improve. Plum Street is very difficult for parents to park and drop off students. Kindergarten students are dropped off here but a lack of parking causes a lot of frustration. Park and walk could be a good strategy here as a number of students live farther away.

Rancho

The District is looking into working with TAM to get a crossing guard at Cambridge and Arthur. On Arthur cars back up into the intersections at red lights.

San Ramon

Neighborhoods are well-designed for students to walk to school. A suggested route map would be helpful to remind parents of this.

San Jose

The school is organizing a 3-day park and walk event with the leadership class next week.

Sinaloa

Opportunity for infrastructure improvements outside of school. Bushes obscure the bike lane in some places, and some parents park in the bike lane. Enforcement would help here. Opportunity to add a bike path on the Wilson field.

Novato HS

Could policies be enacted to discourage driving? E.g., parking for seniors only, parking fees, etc. Redwood HS has a parking policy that could serve as an example. Sarah offered to get a group together for Novato HS; this group could coordinate with Rancho as well.

Updates



Street Smarts (Jen Shriber, SR2S/Parametrix)

The next Street Smarts rollout will be from October 2 through November and will feature educational messaging on banners, signs, and social media to promote safe driving, walking, and cycling behaviors. Visit www.streetsmartsmarin.org to download materials or learn where to get a yard sign.

Bus schedule changes (Christopher Whitlock, Marin Transit)

Since the pandemic, Marin Transit has experienced driver shortages that have resulted in service cancellation. Some changes to route schedules have been made. Routes 251, 257, and 651 have been discontinued. The Sinaloa route (654) has been maintained. In place of 251 and 257, route 49 has been extended to San Marin HS and route 57 has been created to serve Hamilton Theater, IVC, San Jose MS, Novato HS, and the SMART station. Parents with issues or suggestions should email school@marintransit.org.

Schedules are only posted at timed stops, not at every stop; this is an issue for some students. It would be particularly helpful to post schedules at stops where the schedules have changed. All scheduling information is available online.

Climate Action Plan (Gretchen Shubeck, City of Novato)

The City of Novato is updating its Climate Action Plan. The update is taking place over the next eight months and includes a number of workshops held at Sustainability Commission meetings in September, October, and November. The August workshop focused on transportation and provided feedback on draft transportation sector actions to be included in the plan. Gretchen will post draft transportation sector actions next week and will share them with Wendi ahead of the Sustainability Commission meeting on September 21 at which the actions will be discussed by the Commission.

Visit www.novato.org/climateaction for more information.

Next steps

- Discuss reinstating monthly school transportation meetings; develop a work plan to present to the City
- Conduct outreach at schools with new principals/assistant principals
- Ensure police participation in future task force meetings
- Develop suggested route maps for schools that do not have them with a priority to Loma Verde and San Ramon. Identify issues along routes and determine locations for walk audits and identify park and walk locations.



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- January 17 at 5 PM

