

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

Wednesday, January 17
5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

[View recording](#)

Participants

- Leslie Benjamin – NUSD Director of Communications
- Lisa Clarke – Sustainable Marin Schools
- Erin Compton – Lou Sutton & Sinaloa parent, PTA president/member, North Marin Council of PTAs President
- Sarah Donelson – Novato HS parent
- Gwen Froh – SR2S/MCBC
- Diane Gasson – School Board Trustee, Novato HS parent
- Lou Goodwin – SR2S
- Wendi Kallins – SR2S
- Manijeh Larizadeh – City of Novato PW
- Monica Leifer – SR2S Bilingual Coordinator
- Eric Lucan – District 5 Supervisor
- Lori Nuno – Olive Principal
- Joakim Osthus - Complete Streets Oversight Committee, Olive parent
- Sgt. Pourfarani – Novato PD Traffic Sergeant
- Gretchen Schubeck – Novato Sustainability Coordinator
- Jeff Shankle – Rancho parent
- Jen Shriber – SR2S/Parametrix
- Casey Ward – Complete Streets Oversight Committee, San Ramon parent
- Brian Whitlock– Rancho parent and volunteer
- Grace – NUSD parent

Poll

The group was polled on whether they would like to meet online or in person for the spring task force meeting. 50% could go either way, 33% prefer virtual, and 17% wanted to meet in person. Based on the poll the next meeting will remain virtual.

Safe Routes Presentation (Gwen Froh, SR2S/MCBC)

See the [attached presentation](#) on walking and bike buses and park and walk.



Discussion (Wendi Kallins, SR2S)

Student Tally Surveys

The most recent student tally results for each school can be found on the [Safe Routes website resources page](#).

Sinaloa had the highest percentage of green trips (52%) and active green trips (41%) of any Novato school. Rancho also had a high rate non-vehicle trips: 49% green trips and 43% active green trips, followed by Lynwood (47% green trips and 40% active green trips). Schools with a low percentage of green trips included San Ramon, Olive, and Loma Verde.

The baseline rates against which current rates are compared were measured when school bus service was running; a lot of parents started driving once this service went away. School buses were eliminated due to budgetary reasons and lack of ridership (which was due to the cost of using the bus)

Parent Survey Results

The working group conducted a parent survey in December and January. The survey was sent to all elementary schools and received 692 responses. Approximately 35% of respondents live more than one mile from school, and 24% live between one half and one mile from school. Parents' main concerns about allowing their students to walk to bike to school were speeding cars (51%) and dangerous intersections (44%)

The working group will determine the best use of the survey results and will share more results at the next task force meeting.

Opportunities

The upcoming mapping workshop will help identify park and walk locations. These are locations where people can park safely to walk with younger students and/or drop off older students. See Updates section below for more information on the mapping workshop.

Safe Routes can help identify park and walk locations for each school. When organizing park and walk locations, it is important to be mindful about moving congestion from one location to another. This could be mitigated by assigning locations to people based on where they live or the direction from which they're coming.

Some parents can't take on organizing a group by themselves; it would be easier for multiple people to share the responsibility. Facilitating connections would help, and perhaps principals or PTAs could assist with this. Erin can bring this up at the February North Marin Council of PTAs meeting. Another idea would be to make coordination part of Back to School night to catch people before they start their yearly routines with sign-up sheets and maps for interested parents.

Park and walk, bike trains, and walking school buses can start small and let things build organically – e.g. start with one day per week and see if anyone wants to take on additional days

Students can also get involved in organizing bike trains and walking school buses, particularly at schools that lack enough parent volunteers.

Spreading the word can help raise awareness of biking and walking opportunities. Leslie can include photos on social media and in the superintendent's newsletter.

Updates

Education & Encouragement (Gwen Froh, MCBC/SR2S)

A number of spring activities are planned, and more information can be found on the [Safe Routes website](#). These include Walk and Roll Wednesdays, Rainbow Quest Challenge, National Bike to School Day on May 8, and the Bike Hero contest in May.

The parent volunteer luncheon will be held on January 25 from 10:30-12:30 in San Rafael. RSVP to Mira@marinbike.org.

E-bike safety messaging and guidance can be found on the Safe Routes website.

Mapping Workshop February 1 (Working Group)

Novato's staff-level working group is sponsoring a workshop on February 1 at 6 PM at the school district (room 107) to create route maps for all schools in Novato. Volunteers, CSPOC, school ambassadors, and Parametrix staff will be invited to attend. Parents are welcome to attend, particularly those who already walk and bike to school, to provide their input on suggested routes to schools.

New Issues

- None

Next Steps

- Work with PTA to help set up walking school buses
- Mapping workshop February 1
- Look into having maps at Back to School Night and invite organization of walking or biking school buses
- Send photos and other communications about existing efforts to Leslie
- Report out on parent survey data at next meeting

Next Meeting Date

- April 24 at 5 PM

