

Novato Unified School District

Safe Routes to School Task Force Meeting Notes

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

[VIEW RECORDING - 94 mins \(No highlights\)](#)

Participants

- Leslie Benjamin – NUSD Director of Communications & Engagement
- Gwen Froh – SR2S/MCBC
- Diane Gasson – NUSD Board, Novato HS parent
- Dan Hernandez – SR2S/MCBC
- Wendi Kallins – SR2S
- Emma Kyzivat – SR2S/SEI
- Manijeh Larizadeh – Novato Public Works Engineering
- Monica Leifer – SR2S Bilingual Coordinator
- Natalie Levine – SR2S parent volunteer (Lu Sutton)
- John Matern – Sinaloa Assistant Principal
- Gretchen Schubeck – Sustainability Coordinator, City of Novato
- Talia Smith – County of Marin
- Jen Shriber – SR2S/Parametrix
- Gosia Woodfin – Novato Public Works
- Casey Ward – CSPOC, SR2S parent volunteer

Review Overlay Maps (Jen Shriber & Wendi Kallins)

Jen presented the newly created overlay maps, an internal tool combining existing data with task force-identified issues for each school. The maps include data on existing and proposed bikeways, high collision network locations, crossing guard locations, student populations, and suggested walking and biking routes. The tool is intended to help prioritize schools for safety improvement plans and guide long-term planning for improvements. By the next task force meetings, Parametrix will complete the issue prioritization and will provide next steps for the timing of the plan development.

Given that TK is starting at each school next year, the group discussed how often to update the student address data.

Park & Walk Locations (Gretchen Schubeck)

The Safe Travel Working group is planning a pilot program for park and walk locations near elementary schools, starting with Rancho, Loma Verde, and San Ramon. They are considering conducting a parent survey to determine acceptable walking distances and times, as well as addressing concerns about recommending parking in residential



areas. Once confirmed, the locations will be added to schools' suggested route maps. Permission would be required for private locations. Natalie suggested that for Lou Sutton Elementary, parking a couple of blocks away on side streets might be feasible, while Casey recommended focusing on safe routes first and not worrying too much about upsetting neighbors. The group also discusses the idea of "buddy corners" for older students to meet and walk together.

Grants Received (Gosia Woodfin)

Gosia announced that the City was awarded Safe Pathways funding from TAM for construction of two projects. The first is a sidewalk gap closure on Sutro from Center to Anthony Court, which will include high visibility sidewalks. The second is quick build improvements at seven intersections near schools. The improvements will include high visibility crosswalks, yield markings, painted bulb-outs with vertical elements, and signage. Design for the two projects is anticipated to start in July and should take several months.

Report Back on Walk Audits (Jen Shriber)

Two walk audits were conducted in February. Jen discussed the findings of each walk audit and potential improvements, including sight line improvements, high visibility crosswalks, and traffic calming measures. Improvement concepts are currently in development and will be reviewed by the City before being shared with the task force.

Education & Encouragement (Gwen Froh & Emma Kyzivat)

Education & Encouragement

All Novato elementary schools participated in National Bike to School Day, which was a success. At San Ramon alone 80 contest cards were collected.

Nominations for the Bike Hero Award are now open. Parents, administrators, teachers and friends are invited to nominate a student Bike Hero, any student who gets up early to ride regularly, inspires others to bike, and obeys all rules of the road. Two Marin County elementary and middle school students are selected to win a \$50.00 gift card to a store of choice. Last year 150 nominations were received from around the County.

Gwen highlighted the new [Student Tally Dashboard](#), which allows people to see the results of the bi-annual student tally surveys assessing travel modes at each school. Currently only Fall 2024 data is available on the dashboard, but more data will be added in the future. The student tally surveys are typically carried out in September and May.

Around 200 people attended a recent Bike Fest event. Over 40 bike with helmets were given away to students who couldn't otherwise afford bikes; Safe Routes will try to find more gently used bikes to give to students who need them.

Youth Leading Active Communities (YLAC)



Emma gave an update on YLAC activities in Novato. The program supported Walk & Roll events at Lynwood and Lu Sutton. At Hamilton it offered its five-session class to the Children for Change club. YLAC is currently supporting two kindergarten classes and an after-school club. YLAC will work with the same Novato schools next year.

E-Bike Ordinance (Talia Smith)

Talia discussed the increasing number of bicycle crashes involving school-aged youth in Marin County, particularly those related to e-bikes. She highlighted a significant spike in accidents from 2019 to 2023, with a 110% increase among school-aged youth. Talia also mentioned that the crash rate for 10 to 15-year-olds using e-bikes was five times higher than any other age group.

In response to these findings, Assembly Member Damon Connolly introduced a bill in December 2023 to classify Class 2 (throttle) e-bikes in the same category as Class 3 e-bikes, requiring riders to be over 16. The bill was passed as a Marin County-only pilot in March 2025, allowing municipalities to pass ordinances limiting throttle e-bikes to riders over 16. Implementation is planned in the summer to ensure coordinated implementation and messaging from all jurisdictions. The County is also in conversation with various police agencies for coordinated enforcement. Enforcement will be limited to those incidents where students are caught breaking other laws.

Talia also mentioned the formation of a [special committee on youth e-bike safety](#) and a countywide safety campaign to improve youth safety on e-bikes. Materials are currently under development, and a media toolkit will be made available for all schools in mid-May.

The ordinance will go to Novato City Council on July 8.

Next Steps

- Parametrix will finalize overlay maps and issue prioritization and will report back with a timeline and direction for safety plans.
- The Working Group will continue to discuss the park and walk pilot and locations.
- Concept plans from the walk audits will be presented to the Task Force following review by the City.

Next Meeting Date

- September 24 at 5 PM

