



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Novato Task Force

Meeting Notes

March 19, 2012

Present (7)

Wendi Kallins – Program Director for Safe Routes to School; Laura Kelly – Volunteer Liaison for Safe Routes to School; Michael Hanlon – Novato Public Works Department; Oliver North – City of Novato Police Department; James O’Brien – TAM Crossing Guard Department; Marla Fields – Parent Volunteer for San Jose Middle School; Miguel Villarreal – NUSD Breakfast Campaign; Bonnie Neer – Consultant for Novato Wellness Initiative with Miguel.

Police Update

School Fuel is scheduled for Saturday, May 5th on Sherman Avenue. Oliver is working on obtaining a permit for the event and coordination booths. The YMCA is having a fundraiser on the same day where they expect 100 people to participate, but this is not a major conflict. Wendi said the School Fuel event is an opportunity for Safe Routes to Schools to get involved and offer our bike blender, which makes smoothies, and also set up a kid table for bike mobile art. Wendi noted that May 5th is also the week before the first-ever National Bike to School Day, which is May 9th. The event builds on the popularity of International Walk and Roll to School Day, which is celebrated across the country – and the world – each October.

The Mobile Food vending law went into affect on February 10, 2012. The law says that mobile vendors are not allowed to park closer than 1,500 feet from a school. The main violation has been operating without a permit or parking too close to the school. The Novato Police Department is now working through an education component of the new law. Additionally, vendors are not allowed to sell their products one hour before or after school is out.

Student Travel Surveys Results for Novato Schools

Wendi distributed a copy of the Novato school results from the classroom travel surveys that were conducted in October 2011 for all schools that participated in the SR2S program. This chart shows the comparison between Fall 2010 and fall 2011 survey results.

	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other	Baseline green trips
All Schools Fall 2011								
Hamilton	21.5%	6.0%	3.0%	56.0%	12.0%	0.0%	2.5%	45.0%
Loma Verde	12.0%	2.5%	0.5%	57.0%	18.0%	0.0%	9.0%	42.0%
Lu Sutton	17.0%	4.0%	2.5%	63.5%	12.0%	1.0%	0.7%	37.2%
Lynwood	20.5%	5.5%	7.5%	54.5%	10.5%	0.3%	0.3%	44.6%
Olive	10.5%	3.5%	0.4%	70.0%	15.0%	0.3%	0.8%	30.5%
Our Lady of Loretto	5.5%	2.0%	0.0%	82.5%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	17.5%
Pleasant Valley	12.5%	7.5%	1.5%	64.0%	10.5%	0.8%	2.0%	34.8%
Rancho	10.5%	2.5%	0.4%	63.0%	23.0%	0.2%	0.5%	37.1%
San Jose	14.5%	5.5%	2.0%	34.5%	21.0%	3.5%	0.3%	46.8%
San Ramon	17.5%	3.5%	5.5%	57.5%	15.0%	1.0%	0.6%	43.1%

	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other	Baseline green trips
All Schools Fall 2010								
Hamilton	23%	7%	1%	52%	13%	1%	3%	48%
Hill Middle	32%	3%	0%	42%	17%	2%	4%	58%
Loma Verde	16%	4%	0%	60%	17%	0%	3%	40%
Lu Sutton	19%	6%	4%	56%	13%	0%	2%	45%
Lynwood	35%	5%	1%	46%	11%	0%	1%	53%
Olive	14%	6%	2%	59%	17%	1%	0%	41%
Our Lady of Loretto	4%	0%	0%	75%	21%	0%	0%	25%
Pleasant Valley	15%	8%	1%	66%	8%	0%	2%	33%
Rancho	10%	2%	1%	64%	22%	0%	1%	36%
San Ramon	17%	2%	3%	59%	16%	1%	1%	40%

Safe Routes to Schools Updates:

Embedding Safe Routes to Schools as part of all Marin School Districts

Wendi shared that the Mill Valley School District recently passed a policy, which officially establishes the Safe Routes to Schools program and encourages all Mill Valley schools to embrace the Safe Routes to Schools program. Nothing so comprehensive has ever been passed by school policy. Stephanie Moulton-Peters, Mill Valley Town Council member and the Mill Valley Task Force chair, assisted School Board member Raoul Wertz in developing and getting the guidelines incorporated into policy.

Safe Routes to Schools is now striving to create similar policies in other Marin school districts, and eventually see it passed in all the districts. The other goal is to get Safe Routes to Schools embedded as part of every school's PTA. This will assist Safe Routes to Schools in the process of recruiting a new parent Team Leader for every school, because we will be inside the leadership circle.

Safe Routes to Schools' Report Card

As a way to measure progress and set goals, a new report card has been designed by Safe Routes to Schools, which will be provided at the end of the academic year to every school in Marin. Each school will be given a green level by Safe Routes to Schools based on the school's percentage of green trips. The report card will reveal ways to boost your school's standing. 55% green trips is an automatic SR2S green school. All Team Leaders and principals will receive the report card in the fall, 2012. Michael suggested that we publish the rankings, and possibly grant awards. Wendi said that is important that every school be acknowledged for their efforts.

Federal Funding

The Senate has passed a transportation bill, which still includes Safe Routes to Schools as part of the funding. The bill now must pass the House where it has an uphill battle. It is likely that there will be a continuing resolution as the funding runs out at the end of March. (Note: As of today, March 30, the House passed a continuing resolution for 90 days).

Caltrans Grant Application

Michael shared that the following projects were selected and approved for the Caltrans grant application:

1. All components of the Lynnwood Elementary School project (\$100,000)
2. All components of the Sinaloa Middle School project (\$220,000) for infrastructure upgrades
3. Only the sidewalk and pathway infill components of the Rancho Elementary School project (\$100,000)
4. General Fund \$40,000

All other originally identified projects from the application have been dropped due to the funding cap.

Marla said the lack of the Rancho pathway is not keeping anyone from walking. It's currently grass. Marla feels bad that the funding might be bumping something else, such as intersection improvements at Arthur/Cambridge which also serves students from Novato High School. Early teen drivers place children crossing the street at high risk. But Wendi said the intersection costs twice as much. Michael added if you switched, then you probably wouldn't get it. The other project is more complicated, but Michael will look into it. Application for funding is in process. One of the things we will need is letter of support from each of the schools.

(Note: the proposal ended up being for just Sinaloa and Lynwood and was submitted by March 30)

Budget includes sidewalks, drainage and ramps, not ball bouts.

It was noted that the State now has an extra evaluation scoring for low income schools because they often do not have strong advocates lobbying for grant funding. So you now get extra points if you are a low-income school.

The City will be pilot testing the use of pedestrian crossing patterns at the rear entrance to Hamilton School on Tinker Way.

Michael shared that the City has also been working with residents to improve pedestrian crossings along Simmons Lane between Benton Street and Novato Boulevard. Enhanced crosswalks striping and signage will likely be included as part of the upcoming pavement resurfacing program this summer.

Public Works is also working with BioMarin to install a pedestrian activated flashing beacon at a mid-block crosswalk on Galli Drive. It is a first for Novato and may provide us with data and information that can be used in the future for school crossings.

Simmons Lane – Need to gather traffic patterns for Jason.

Crossing Guard Program TAM Presentation

James provided the Task Force with a PowerPoint presentation with an overview of the Marin County Crossing Guard Program. The initial program paid for 54 guards; TAM now has 75 active crossing guards. James distributed to the Task Force the master list used by the county to rank crossing guard locations. A total of 126 locations appear on the list, which was created on December 1, 2011. The top 75 on the list have crossing guards.

The Public Works Director determines location recommendations to forward to TAM for crossing guards. Input is received from towns, police departments, California Highway Patrol, school districts and town public works departments. TAM hires a consultant to conduct vehicle and pedestrian counts and to analyze the data. Scores are assigned to each location. The final data is then ranked and the TAM Board then approves a location assignment list. The next time the list is re-evaluated will be 2014. It is an expensive process to review every location.

The criteria to select locations are based on an individual scoring on each crosswalk. The highest scoring crosswalk is the score for that intersection. Several non-adjacent crosswalks in the same intersection scored relatively high and would have qualified more than one guard for the site. Last month the TAM Board adapted a new policy regarding requests for a crossing guard at a new location, based on changed conditions (school closing, major construction, etc.).

Here is the list of Crossing Guards for Novato areas applied for on December 1, 2011 and their ranking:

7 Center Road /Lehland Drive

10 Paladini /Vineyard

11 Sutron Avenue (in front of Pleasant Valley Elementary) just south of Meisner Drive

12 Alameda Loma & Calla Mesa

16 San Ramon Way & San Benito Way

18 Sutro Avenue/Dominic Drive

23 Olive Avenue (in back of school)

30 One Main Gate Road

35 Arthur /Cambridge Street

41 Adams Street/Johnson
43 Center Road and Tamalpais
53 S Novato Boulevard/Sunset Parkway
57 S Novato Boulevard/Yukon Way (PM only)
62 Center Road/Wilson Avenue
67 Sunset Parkway & Merritt Dr

72 Sunset Parkway/Lynwood Drive
75 Wilson & Vineyard
77 San Marin Drive/San Ramon Way (funded)
81 Wilson Ave at X-walk to field (funded)
84 Sunset Parkway& Ignacio Boulevard (Novato USD guard)
102 Wilson and Hansen (not funded)
113 Tinker Way/Bowling Circle (not funded)
116 Olive Avenue / Summers Avenue (not funded)
120 San Marin Drive / San Carlos Way (not funded)

NUSD Breakfast Campaign

Miguel and Bonnie shared with the Task Force a campaign supported by the Novato Unified School District to help improve the quality of students' choices for breakfast. The goal of the program is to educate students, teachers and parents on what makes a healthy breakfast, and why it is important. The program is targeted for Elementary and Middle Schools. Participating schools will receive healthy tips and education on the importance of breakfast.

The NUSD Breakfast Campaign will set up a booth at School Fuel on May 5. It was also discussed that Safe Routes to Schools would collaborate with this NUSD program and host a special event for Novato SR2S Team Leaders and PTA members. A tentative date of Tuesday night, April 17, is planned for this event encouraged to rally parent leaders at Novato schools to come together on the issues of physical activity, green travel and the importance of breakfast.