



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Novato School District
Safe Routes to School Task Force
Thursday Jan 14, 5 pm
Join Zoom Meeting

Attendance: Wendi Kallins- Safe Routes Projects Coordinator, Peggy Clark Safe - Routes to Schools, Gwen Froh Safe Routes to Schools- Education & Encouragement Director, Monica Leifer- Safe Routes to Schools Bi-Lingual Coordinator, Pat Eklund -Novato City Mayor, Matt Farber- Safe Routes Lead Instructor, Leslie Benjamin - School District Communications Director, Manijeh Larizadeh - Novato DPW Assistant Engineer, Christ Blunk -Deputy Public Works Director/City Engineer, Dabney (DJ) Smith-Resident, Joakim - Osthus BPAC, Catherine Nam-Rancho Principal

New Lead Instructor for Safe Routes to Schools

Matt Farber will be developing and delivering curriculum for 1st-12th grade students, focused on the importance of bicycle safety, healthy lifestyles, active transportation and the environment.

Safe Routes Curriculum

Safe Routes to Schools pedestrian and bicycle safety revamped curriculum is available for live instruction virtually and for remote learning students. Safe transportation education continues to be an essential need especially now that students are traveling to and from school in the morning, mid-day and afternoons with hybrid schedules. Contact peggy@marinbike.org for more information.

Classes have not been conducted in any Novato school this school year. The district was asked if the Superintendent could share a message to encourage classes this year to the principals. Details will be sent to Leslie.

Two of our on-line classes feature drone footage for a Virtual Walk Around the Block and Virtual Bike Rodeo. Local students filmed and role played cycling and crossing intersections while practicing skills learned in Safe Routes classes.

[Pedal Playground](#) and [Chalk-N-Walk](#) encouragement resources are available to all schools in the county- Check Them Out!

Return to School schedule and protocols

T-K and 5th returned to campus in October and 6th grade students returned in November. As of the date of this meeting some COVID positive cases had been present since the holiday break. It is going well for the students and teachers so far.

The hybrid schedule is very challenging and hard for the teachers. They are managing remote learners and in-person students. The teachers have been AMAZING!

Rancho School has been experiencing some positive changes regarding walking and rolling to/from school. Parents are parking off campus and walking to the school campus. There are multiple entrances to the campus; students are spread out and there are less students on campus at any one time. One day only 12 vehicles drove to the campus with 100 students at the school. The width of the driveway into the campus is narrowed with cones to provide more space for students to walk and less space for a vehicle.

Park and Walk promotion (P&W)

Rancho's success could be a great example for other Novato schools to follow. The principal feels more families participate when the process is more fluid vs having designated locations that parents are suggested to use. Participation is high as a result of encouraging social distancing as students/families approach campus. The locations were provided using videos, at the start of the school year. This was done at each Novato school.

Members discussed how the shift of parents working from home has enabled them to spend more time with kids. Families can now walk or park and walk to school because they no longer have to factor in commute time. This is a positive result many hope will not change in time.

Leslie offered to help with messaging to parents; school principals are just too busy right now to promote P&W. She can communicate with each school addressing their unique situations. Safe Routes has promotional materials that can be customized for Novato, that can be shared with the school district.

A consideration was proposed to increase the window of time students could be dropped off/picked up at school. To encourage more parents to walk/roll to school they need more time on the back end to get to work. This would not require infrastructure; it would require school personnel to be on campus earlier to watch the students. This would require additional funding.

Possible Park and Walk locations

a. Loma Verde – Mall in Ignacio; Wallace Park; Calle de la Silva

b. Lynwood – Lutheran Good Shepherd

A Park and Walk or drop-off and walk location was identified in a cul de sac at Sunset Parkway and Greenwood Drive. Safe Routes would like support from the school to encourage families to use this location.

c. Rancho – Unity Church, Arthur and Novato

d. Pleasant Valley and Lu Sutton – Latter Day Saints church on Center

e. Hamilton – Smart Station.

The Department of Public Works has been focused on COVID related resources. The department is supportive of Safe Routes to School efforts and will assist when available for pop-up facilities. If there are trouble areas, please let the DPW know where they are, what the safety issue is and what resources are needed.

San Jose Middle School (only 6th grade is on campus) has on street parking at the curb on Sunset and a bike lane just outside of the vehicle parking. If additional space was needed a consideration was to flip the parking lane and the bike lane, providing more space for sidewalk users. The challenge with this concept is students exiting vehicles would open the door into the bike lane.

San Marin Grant Application update (Active Transportation Grant)

The city applied last September and is waiting to learn if they will be awarded funding for the San Marin, Suito and Novato Blvd. Improvement Project. The project includes improvements for the intersection and closes a sidewalk gap along Suito Ave toward Pleasant Valley School.

A federal stimulus package may also be presented to the city. It may include funds for transportation projects. If so, the DPW would direct funds for this project.

[Safe Routes to School E-news](#)

[Link to Spanish Newsletter](#)

The newsletter is now available in Spanish too. Safe Routes would like the school district to help distribute to the Novato community via text. Leslie offered to send it out for Safe Routes. *Thank You Leslie!*

Other Issues

The Novato DPW has done a great job staying on top of Safe Routes to Schools issues. The DPW is planning to resurface almost all of San Marin Drive from Redwood Blvd to San Marin High School. They are communicating with the principal and are focused on completing the project before the start of the next school year. It will be an opportunity to restripe the roadway including bike lanes. The DPW does try to include "complete streets" when re-striping. Traffic calming infrastructure was under consideration. San Marin Drive is a fast and wide roadway. Safe Routes would like the DPW to consider adding more safe space to address the crosswalk at San Ramon Elementary School during the repaving project.

Next Zoom meeting

Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 5:00PM