



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Safe Routes to Schools  
Novato Task Force  
Zoom Recording - Meeting Notes  
Wednesday, April 15 10 am

**Attachments:**

**Document displayed during the meeting. SR2S- Novato- Issues from Jan 2020 meeting attached**

Attendance: Peggy Clark, Wendi Kallins, Gwen Froh Safe Routes to Schools, Tony Albion- Novato School District Director of Maintenance, Catherine Nam- Rancho Elementary Principal, Joakim Osthus- BPAC, Carey Lando- Planner DPW Marin County, Manijeh Larizadeh- City of Novato Engineer, James O'Brien- TAM, Diane Gasson-Novato School District, Michelle Camicia Neighbor/ Volunteer- Loma Verde.

**Loma Verde Pathway update and options**

Update from the last Task Force meeting; learn who was responsible for the pathway by the apartment complex. The City of Novato checked the maps, the path was dedicated to the County some time ago and they did not accept it. Therefore the pathway is the responsibility of the complex/property owners.

The county had looked at this area and noted improvements were needed. The property owner is responsible for maintenance. Carey recommended the property owner be contacted to remove the bad weeds that cause damage; ask for cooperation to clean it up. Ask the community to pitch in or

ask the school to contact the property owner. It was suggested the County send a letter to address “code enforcement”.

Diane suggested the school make a softer approach. Have a school official ask the property owner to include it in their regular maintenance. Try not to include the County; heavy hand approach. Diane and Michelle have offered to clean-up the pathway themselves.

### **Other Loma Verde Issues (discussed at last meeting)**

1. “The crossing guard boundaries have changed. Many drivers drive as if students are not present or using crosswalks even when a guard is present. A request was made to ask the police to increase enforcement.” Not an issue with the current school closure- on hold.
2. “Student drop-off at the back of the school: Drivers are conducting U-turns in the middle of crosswalks. A crossing guard is not at this location; a formal request for a crossing guard needs to be made to the DPW. The location will need to be vetted by the TAM crossing guard process to determine if it qualifies.”

Wendi suggested a virtual Walk Aduit. It will not reveal actual traffic behavior, but will provide information on the street layout and conditions. The back of the school is in the County. Carey agreed with conducting an audit now; conditions will change when school resumes. Good time to look at issues now. Wendi will schedule one along with volunteers and school administration. These meeting notes will be shared with the principal at Loma Verde and she will be invited.

3. “Ignacio Blvd at Fairway. Cut through traffic is causing unsafe conditions for students. It was suggested at the last meeting that it be posted “no right turns” off Ignacio onto Fairway during specific times of the day. This is a City of Novato, they will look into this issue; request

to make Ignacio Blvd a not right turn onto Fairway drive during specific hours of the day.

### **Safe Routes to Schools**

Goals for the next several months is to keep up Safe Routes presence in the schools and to keep the momentum going for green travel to schools. Three goals: Focus on safety now and into the summer as more people enjoy walking and rolling in their communities. Provides support to teachers and families and begin planning ahead to when school resumes.

April: [Walk and Roll Art and Poetry Contest](#). This is a fun contest for students to do at home. Safe Routes will award prizes for art submitted and publish it throughout the coming year; students will be recognized for their contributions.

May: Walk and Roll Recess Challenge ( information can be found on the [Safe Routes](#) website)

Students and parents will be tracking physical activity; not just walking and rolling. Many families have challenges getting outside; all healthy activities will be encouraged. Families can email or text in their exercise history to enter the raffle.

Special funding from the Air District. Funds will be used to purchase gift cards from local business.

Remote Learning Classes: Safe Routes to Schools instructors have developed 4 pre-recorded presentations for grades 1-6. These presentations cover the pedestrian and bicycle safety curriculum scheduled in classrooms throughout the year.

[Safe Routes to Schools Remote Learning](#)

These classes are especially important now with so many students outside with their families, in groups or independent. The SR2S safety lessons are being requested from school teachers also.

Currently the schools are being contacted directly to learn if they would like access to the presentations/recordings. Catherine expressed her excitement about the contest and challenges and that the classes will continue to be available. All school districts will have access to the presentations. Peach Jar is the site used by Novato School District.

Michell suggested SR2S encourage students/families to practice walking to school now while practicing social distancing. One idea was to promote “make believe it is a school day”. The students could take snacks and eat once they arrived- make it fun!

### **Fall 2020- How will School Resume**

If and when school resumes SR2S is concerned many will believe it best to drive students to schools vs. walking and rolling under the specific guidelines to be determined late this summer.

Now would be a good time to encourage students/families to walk. Understanding their route will be a plus to keeping green travel thriving. Traffic conditions will vary with the “stay in place”; however the practice will be beneficial.

Michelle suggested the Novato School District consider “year-round school”. The district is evaluating the many, many unknowns such as equity and home life for many is not the safest place for all students.

One to World resources have been presented to all grades 3 and up. The 2nd grade students may have received computers too. Internet service has been made available. Free food is available; unfortunately, many are driving to the schools. The school district has made great efforts; they had many of the resources already in place. The teachers have been doing a

fantastic job supporting the students. Parents have been amazing. People are coming together as a community!

Diane has also observed students out on the sidewalks and roadways. Many are not paying attention to other users; now is time for more education if they are going to be outside while school is out. She as a parent can see it as something she would use.

Task Force members agreed encouraging driving students to school would not be good for many reasons.

#### The City of Novato Update

The building dept., inspectors, code enforcement and all the maintenance staff are working. The City's newsletter is very helpful to all.

#### **San Marin and Novato Blvd grant opportunity**

Caltrans- Active Transportation Program (ATP) - Cycle 5 call for project due June 15, date could be moved to Sept 15, 2020 (TBC). One project for Novato is the San Marin Drive and Novato Blvd. Manijeh will contact her director to confirm the DPW Director is aware of the call for projects. SR2S staff could be of assistance for the application. The intersection improvement is the focus for SR2S issues. Pathway improvements were also on the list; the intersection is a higher issue for SR2S.

The Novato BPAC did discuss applying for a grant. Joakim will check with the BPAC to clarify what grant(s)/funding the City is going to apply for this year.

Note: Novato DPW has confirmed it is applying for a grant for the intersection.

#### **Mapping Options**

Rancho School: The process had begun before the school closure. Wendi suggested she would work with Katherine to select a few parents that travel

to the school from different neighborhoods. They would be asked to identify the routes they use and mark them on a map.

The City of Novato had dedicated resources to develop some base school route maps. Manijeh will share them with Wendi; Safe Routes will take the next steps to developing the suggested route maps. It will take time to design a final route map per school. It was suggested that the optimum goal for fall 2020 would be to have a “base maps” to provide families with resources for walking and rolling to school. If bus use is restricted due to the virus; maps would be very helpful resources.

### **Crossing Guards**

TAM has the list of guard placements for Fall 2020. Once the county has a plan for school resuming TAM’s crossing guards will resume jobs. The guards will need to have support and follow protocols for social distancing.

### **Novato BPAC**

The BPAC’s next meeting is scheduled for May. BPAC was planning to have a booth at the Tour of Novato which has been rescheduled for the fall of 2020. The BPAC will work on an informal/ budget version of the City’s Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan. The city does not have the budget to hire a consultant to update the plan. The city is supposed to update the Master Plan every five years; 2020 is the year for Novato.

### **Other Issues**

Community organizations around the country have been talking about developing temporary popup infrastructure to address the number of people social distancing when walking and cycling. Making use of the roadways with less traffic.

The City of Oakland has closed off approximately 70 miles of roadways to provide a safe space for people to walk. This may be something Novato can consider. Task Force members agree; this is a good time to test out

road closures for future needs. The BPAC will supply Wendi with a list of recommended locations for pilot/test infrastructure pop-ups.

A suggestion was made to cone off areas by schools to prevent vehicles driving to campus; thus providing students and families space for social distancing. Some schools already restrict cars to campus. This is tricky; it may be an option for some schools to consider if they must social distance when traveling to the schools in the fall.

The school district is constantly monitoring and actively discussing what it would need to return to school in the fall. Transportation is a key component. The transportation of the students before and after school and how this will impact working parents is very important and challenging. The county is also looking into daycare options to assist families (essential workers).

### **Next meeting**

Meetings will be on-line until further notice. Thursday, Sept 3, 2020 at 5:00pm.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83178526835>

Meeting ID: 831 7852 6835

669-900-6833