



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



**Safe Routes to School Task Force  
July 20, 2020  
Zoom Meeting Notes**

**Attendance:**

Joakim Osthus- BPAC, Manijeh Larizadeh- DPW Assistant Engineer, Wendi Kallins- Safe Routes to School Task Force Director, Peggy Clark- Safe Routes to School, Gwen Froh- Program Director Safe Routes to Schools, James O'Brien TAM Crossing Guard Consultant, Carey Lando- County of Marin Senior Transportation Planner, Tony Nelson- Team Leader Loma Verde School, Patrick Golier- Parisi Assoc Engineer, John Neville- County of Marin DPW Engineer, Dabney (DJ) Smith- Neighbor San Jose Middle School, Leslie Benjamin- Novato School District, Tony Albion- School District Director of Maintenance, Greg Mack - Trustee Novato School District

**Developing Transportation Plans**

Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) team has been working with and attending meetings county wide. School Districts are focused on developing plans to run classes and SR2S is focused on supporting plans to get students to schools safely. Our goal is to assist with the planning when schools reopen to students on campus.

The county has announced that campuses will not reopen to all students until mid-September. The Novato School District will be taking guidance from Marin Public Health. The recommendation is not to consider opening campuses until Sept 8, 2020.

SR2S may be the best resource to support efforts to reduce traffic and encourage walking and rolling to school. The possibility of more families driving students will have a negative impact on safe transportation options for students. When the number of vehicles increases during school hours there will be significant traffic issues, that will have a negative impact on the neighborhoods too.

**Toolkit presentation**

[COVID Back to School Toolkit](#) Power Point Presentation

Please view this presentation used during the Zoom meeting. The notes/comments below refer to the powerpoint slide by title. Not all slides have comments below.

This presentation was scheduled to present ideas and collect suggestions; no confirmed actions have been approved or taken at the time of this meeting.

### Planning for the Fall - 3 Objectives- slide

A transportation committee needs to be created for each school to ensure roadway space using pop-up facilities and park and walk are identified in advance of school reopening. SR2S staff will be available to develop an encouragement plan that will be used; however they cannot be at every school.

Safe Routes to Schools does not have the resources to work with every school in the county. We are asking volunteers to create a temporary committee to take the necessary steps to identify pop-up facilities and park and walk locations. Some schools are located near each other; this can be an opportunity for schools to work together; pooling resources. School administrators/teachers are focused on teaching students; they do not have the staff to support these transportation goals.

### Tools to Consider- slide

**Street Adaptations** are about finding space on roadway networks that lead to schools and to provide additional space for walking, biking while physical distancing.

### Sidewalk Extensions- slide

The advantage of these options is to allow students to spread apart while traveling and waiting to enter a school campus. *The challenges are for vehicle drivers to be aware of these temporary facilities. Proper and effective messaging to all users is very important.*

### Bike and Roll Lanes- slide

These provide dedicated space for students to travel safely on bike routes that are separated from vehicles. These are best used on roadways that have a high volume of students cycling and on current suggested routes to school.

### Slow Street- slide

These facilities are being used throughout the Bay Area and the country. They are used on quiet residential streets that are closed off to through traffic; that still allow access for emergency and local vehicle access. They are typically used in grid roadway networks where drivers can find an alternate route. The materials used are sandwich boards at the end of each block, with signs discouraging through traffic and clear consistent messaging to drivers.

### One-Way Traffic Flow- slide

Good options for residential or local streets that will also include a bike way or if a school is making use of pick-up/drop-off for drivers. Good for roads with parking lanes and without existing bike lanes. Resources are cones and signs and very clear messaging to all vehicle drivers.

### Additional Engineering Tools-slide

The information on this slide is not: temporary, quick build or used in pop-up scenarios. They are engineering tools that may be considered. They may not be appropriate for Novato.

- Pedestrian recall setting The photo was taken in Berkeley; the city eliminated the need at many intersections for the pedestrian to have to push a button to activate the crossing signal. They are now pre-set to display the “walk” symbol.
- Signal timing for active transportation (urban areas)

This may not be appropriate; they are used on city corridors with a high volume of cyclists to manage traffic lights so that they are timed for bicyclists..

- Speed Management/Traffic Calming  
Used to slow traffic to make a roadway safer for all road users including students traveling to school.

#### Pop-Up Considerations- slide

In the lower income neighborhoods where students must walk to school pop-up facilities should be given priority if funding is limited. Some of the resources needed to separate traffic from students that are walking: sandwich boards, cones, planters (long term pop-up use) something that is forgiving (not steel or heavy) yet a barrier.

Predictably is very important. Do not create a bike way going against the flow of road traffic. Cyclists should ride with the flow of vehicle traffic. Establish a complete suggested route network that leads directly to the school(s).

#### Bike Parking- slide

A plan for parking and removing bikes will be needed in advance (in a line/one at a time). If there is an increase in students cycling; will more racks be needed? The health checks may be conducted at the bike parking locations.

#### Park and Walk- slide

SR2S staff are on the Office of Educations - Transportation Task Force obtaining first hand information on continued developments. The guidelines are calling for schools to use multiple entrances/exits; specifying locations for each cohort. The SR2S recommendations of pop-ups and park and walk supports the school's plans to reduce the number of students congesting at the front of a school.

Loma Verde Elementary School piloted a Park and Walk campaign last year. On average 160 vehicles were driven onto campus during drop off; this was reduced to 80 vehicles during and after the campaign. Lawn signs were used to identify suggested parking locations in neighborhoods.

Park and Walk locations provide an opportunity for families with multi age students or cohort carpools that live too far or do not have enough time to walk/roll the full distance to campus. This SR2S program has already proven to be a viable program, the learnings are documented from the pilot and marketing materials are available.

#### PedPods and Pedal Pods- slide

These are alternatives to a "walking school bus". If/when schools identify cohorts for classroom needs; these cohorts could also meet up to walk or roll to school while maintaining physical distancing. These could be 2-3 families not to exceed groups of 6 students/adults traveling to school together. Another option for a Pod are the social bubbles some families are forming outside of school. There are a number of resources available throughout the Bay Area on walking cohorts. Please contact SR2S for more information.

## **Encouragement programs**

### Encouragement for Active Travel- slide

Safe Routes staff are here to support efforts to maintain active travel to school. A [Social Distancing Tips for Walking and Rolling](#) is available in English and Spanish. Over 500 copies were distributed this spring via the Canal Alliance. Cycling has increased nationally during this time. SR2S on-line education curriculum is a resource to continue these healthy practices and to give students and adults “best practice” road and path safety information. Health professionals have stated COVID is less dangerous outdoors while physically distancing.

### Traffic Committee - Steps to Take- slide

Safe Routes to Schools does not have the resources to work with every school in the county. We are asking volunteers to create a temporary committee to take the necessary steps. Volunteers are needed to start planning even without having all the information from the county/school district. Advance communications with the DPW will help to identify what could or cannot work for a pop-up. ***Communications are also essential with the school community and surrounding neighborhoods in advance if access to a school changes.***

Pop-up locations must be approved by the town or county Dept of Public Works (DPW) in advance; not all requests may be approved. The DPW will identify/approve what materials can be used.

One option is to install a pop-up that would remain in place throughout the school year; this would be managed by the DPW. Focus should be on locations immediately adjacent to the entrance to the school. The “temporary” pop-ups (set up at the start and end of day only) cannot be supported by the DPW; possibly the crossing guards can assist with these if close to their location.

Volunteers could also put out supplies if approved through an encroachment permit (County of Marin) and instructed by public works in advance. The PTA can be a resource for finding volunteers. The Novato BPAC can be a valued resource to support efforts too. Joakim will provided the BPAC with details from this meeting. Dabney offered to help with traffic counts to assist with understanding if/where pop-up could be used.

## **Safe Routes Education and Encouragement Programs**

Safe Routes to Schools now has [Remote Learning](#) resources for all “classroom” curriculum on-line for grades 1-8th grades in English and Spanish. These lessons were distributed to all the schools in the county this past spring. These will be prompted in the fall too. Safe Routes staff will be ready when school reopens to present experiential classes with students.

[Savvy Family Cycling with Youth](#) is a resource for parents to use when teaching children and their families how to ride on the roadway when they are ready.

## **Summer Bike Week**

During the spring SR2S hosted a Bike Week for middle school students. Over 500 students participated. Now there are two Summer Bike Weeks contests for elementary and middle school age students.; 5 days of fun and education activities; participants can win ice cream for their family.

[Family Bike Week](#)- elementary age

[Bike Week](#) - middle school age

Volunteers were asked to share these resources on their local NextDoor network. SR2S would also welcome support to continue promoting these resources at the schools.

### **Novato BPAC Update**

The BPAC volunteers are currently working on an amendment to the Master Plan. The plan needs to be reviewed because the city does not have the funds to support a full renewal. Information in the current plan needs to be reviewed by Safe Routes to Schools for this amendment. They will also consider proposed improvements that are not currently included.

### **Discussion**

Safe Routes is suggesting each school develop a Traffic Committee to have first hand information for options at the school and to provide updates to the school community. A suggestion was made to present the Traffic Committee directly to the principals. They can encourage and get the community moving. Leslie was asked to coordinate a meeting for SR2S to present these suggestions to the principals for the middle of August. She was suggesting a specific ask of the principals to clarify what actions need to be taken.

The County of Marin has received a specific grant for schools to support these facility requests.. Loma Verde is a school that could be supported with the County funds. Requests would need to be presented to John Nevil at the County of Marin Traffic Engineer as soon as possible.

As a result of the Park & Walk program last year, parking locations have already been identified. The next step is to see if there are pop-up facilities needed to increase safety for the students. The Team Leader at Loma Verde will let the principal know about the funds.

During the San Jose Middle School graduation drivers used the entire driveway (fire lane) to direct traffic to Ignico Blvd. Could this be an option vs using the front door to the school? This could help with distancing and create an additional access to campus. If this were an approved alternative that drive is considered a "fire lane" and must remain clear (outside of a designated time frame) of vehicles for emergency access.

As of this meeting date the school district is remaining fluid regarding plans to reopen schools in September. This does give additional time for a Traffic Committee to plan ahead with the hopes of being ready when students return to campus. It will be helpful to observe in real time what is going to be needed when students are present. If there are more families driving to school, Safe Routes to Schools wants to be ready to offer transportation alternatives.

### **Next ZOOM Meeting**

Wednesday, September 23, 2020 at 5:00pm