



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



**Novato SR2S Task Force
April 22, 2021
Zoom Meeting Notes**

Attendance

Wendi Kallins- Safe Routes to Schools, Wendi Kallins- Safe Routes to Schools- Program Coordinator, Gwen Froh- Safe Routes to Schools Program Director, PatEklund - Novato Mayor, Peggy Clark- Safe Routes to Schools, Leslie Benjamin - Communications Director Novato School District, Joakim Osthus - Novato BPAC, John Neville- County of Marin Traffic & Transportation Engineer, Warren Wells- Policy and Planning Director for Marin County Bicycle Coalition, Manijeh Larizadeh - DPW Assistant Engineer, Mark Birnbaum Novato BPAC, Diane Gasson - School Board Trustee, Dabney Smith- resident, Monica Leifer- Safe Routes to School Bi-lingual Coordinator

Safe Routes Education and Encouragement for spring and fall

All the staff have been vaccinated along with the county's teachers; special thanks to Mary Jane Burke and the Mill Valley District Office

[Safe Routes Newsletter SPRING 2021- Safe Routes BACK to Schools!](#)

This is the spring issue, highlighting Bike to School Day on May 12, 2021 and Bike Month- Bike Hero nominations; now open. An elementary and middle school student will be selected from the nominations- deadline is May 30. Bike to School Day- posters (artwork from local students) and encouragement give-a-ways will be distributed to the elementary and middle school teachers to give out; SR2S welcome tables are not permitted on campus this year.

Safe Routes will be distributing helmets to underserved students in Novato, after learning many have been cycling to school without them.

Novato Pedestrian and Bicycle Education Update

The Safe Routes to School Remote and Virtual Learning classes have all been offered and shared with the elementary schools. Pleasant Valley, San Ramon and Hamilton scheduled live virtual classes for grades 2-3-4-5. Lynwood scheduled ChalkNWalk. Schools that were not able to schedule classes this school year will all be contacted to schedule in the 2021/2022 school year.

Volunteer recruitment

Traditionally Novato has had a good representation of Team Leaders at the schools to promote the encouragement events. Next fall SR2S will be directing efforts to the school district to ask for continued and valued assistance with volunteer recruitment.

The Zoom meeting format is a useful tool to invite new team leaders to task force meetings to learn more about the program. Safe Routes will be asking team leaders to attend the task force meeting whenever possible; a high priority.

Potential school closures

The School District created a 7/11 Committee (members represent a broad and diverse group of Novato's community) last February, tasked with making a recommendation to the Board to close one elementary school. They are meeting weekly and working with a consulting firm as they collect data. When a school is selected it would not close until the 2022/23 school year.

It is a very difficult time and challenge for the school district. Enrollment has been declining. This has been a key issue for a number of years. Families with a number of children and moving away and smaller families are moving in along with the aging population. The cost of living is increasing and parcel tax revenue has been declining as well.

The committee met the prior evening and have narrowed the short list down to two schools: Lu Sutton and Rancho. On May 25th the committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. (Note: the Novato School District chose not to close any schools at this time)

Safe Routes Student Travel surveys are available to the school district as they collect data on each school's travel pattern. Novato School District - [Link to Survey Information](#)

Issues list – Review and Update

[Safe Routes to Schools Issues List- Novato](#)
[Novato Issues List Map](#)

This current list needs to be updated; deleting issues that have been addressed and adding new ones and then prioritize each one. The map corresponds with each issue, providing a visual of the location under review.

The list was provided to the DPW prior to the meeting; once updated it will be shared with the DPW again for review and consideration.

Priorities are ranked with the following considerations:

#1: safety issue and a high number of students traveling this area, may be possible to address with current funding or grant funds. Some issues may be easier and less costly to address.

#2: safety concerns but a low number of students travel this area; or, a high number of students but not as much of a safety concern

#3 not a major safety concern and does not have a high number of students traveling in the area.

N1 Bolling Circle and Randolph Drive: not clear during the meeting if this has been addressed or if there is a high number of students traveling in the area. The principal is very familiar with how students travel to school; he would be helpful. The BPAC was notified a stop control will be installed at Bolling Circle and Randolph Drive and Bolling Circle and March Field Court. No priority was set until more information can be collected.

N2 Ignacio Blvd to Calle de la Mesa: A crosswalk is needed on Calle de la Mesa to help the students accessing the dirt foot pathway. Priority 1

N3 Alameda de la Loma: This is in the county's jurisdiction with no bike lane to the school. Priority 2

N4 Alameda De La Loma & Via Del Plano: In the past neighbors have been cutting back the vegetation. The DPW will check the area to learn who is responsible for maintaining the vegetation. Priority 1

N5 Bel Marin Keys freeway crossing: Due to the high vehicle traffic many parents will not allow their children to cycle across the freeway overpass. Drivers tend to look left when getting on the freeway and they do not look to the right. Pedestrians and cyclists are at risk. This is a CalTrans issue; they will be invited to a meeting. Priority 1

N6 Peach Street and Plum Street project is funded

N7 San Marin and Novato Blvd The intersection at San Marin and Novato Blvd was redone a 1yr ago; "fantastic improvements was added" including a class II bikes lanes on either side of Novato Blvd to San Marin to the city limits. Grant was not funded. Intersection is still an issue. Priority 1

N9 Sutro Ave between Vineyard and Center: Missing sidewalks Pleasant Valley School BPAC members provided details: On the west side of Sutro there is a continuous pathway from Novato Blvd down to Center. There is nothing on the east side. Approaching Pleasant Valley School there is a continuous sidewalk on the west side; no sidewalk on the east side. This is needed because it discourages students walking from Pleasant Valley School. There are a number of locations where students need to cross Sutro to stay on a sidewalk. To add sidewalks no street parking would be removed; it does not currently exist, the city may have the right of way and drainage already exists. Priority 1

BPAC would like the School District to advocate to the city to complete these sidewalks to encourage more students to walk and cycle to schools. Many of the schools are located in flat terrain where walking/cycling can be encouraged.

N8 New Issue- Route to Olive School between Redwood and Train tracks There is a sidewalk on the south side of Olive; nothing on the northside no bike lanes. BPAC suggested a separated path on the north side of Olive may be possible. SMART has allocated funding to a path. It would be a good time for them to address the train crossing too. The DPW has been in communication with SMART to address a crossing at this location similar to other locations.

New Issue - Bel Marin Keys route to Hamilton- on hold for now, more information is needed.

N10 -New Issue-No sidewalk on the east side going over Sunset Parkway (right across from the fences to the school) is in very poor condition and not user friendly. There rises at least a foot high; many have been patched with asphalt,

trees are damaging the sidewalk. There are no homes in the area; the DPW will check on who is responsible for the sidewalk repairs. Priority 2

N11 - New Issue - change the drop off zones to San Jose school. This is a school district responsibility and it has been in discussion in the past. A number of scenarios have been discussed in the past to reroute students to entering campus. Even with the staggered start/end times for the school vehicles still back-up on the roadway. Next fall will create an opportunity for students and parents to develop travel routes that do not include being dropped off at the campus. Priority 2

BPAC Update

The BPAC is prioritizing their list of pedestrian improvement projects that will be included in the City's Bike/Ped Master Plan. The BPAC will review the Safe Routes list to see what needs to be included now (there will be some overlap).

City Updates

Paving project: the project is divided into two contracts on the western end of San Marin Drive towards the high school.

#1 Concrete Work: sidewalks, ADA curb ramps.

#2 Paving to include a protected bike lane "class 4" between Simmons Lane and Summerset Drive

Next Zoom Meeting

Thursday, September 2nd, 2021 at 5:00pm