



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS: MARIN COUNTY



Novato Safe Routes to School
Task Force Meeting Notes
Wednesday, September 23, 2020

Attendance:

Wendi Kallins- Safe Routes to Schools, John Neville- County Department of Public Works- Traffic and Transportation, Leslie Benjamin- Director of Communications Novato School District, Gwen Froh- Education and Encouragement Safe Routes to Schools, Manijeh Larizadeh- Assistant Engineer City of Novato, Diane Gasson - Novato School Board Trustee, Peggy Clark- Safe Routes to Schools, Dabney Smith- Resident San Jose Middle School. Monica Liefer- Safe Routes Bi-lingual Coordinator, Joakim Osthus- BPAC

Transportation Planning

Safe Routes toolkits:

[Covid Back to School Toolkit](#)

[Covid-19 Toolkit Supplement](#) (English)

[Guia Suplementaria](#) (Spanish)

Please view the Toolkit Supplement when reading the notes below. To learn more about:

- How to Set-up a Transportation Committee
- Park and Walk Locations
- Pop- Up Infrastructure
- Sample Letters (park/walk permission, letter to neighbors, school community notice,
- Appendix (Oregon Metro)

Oregon Metro (appendix) has helpful information called “school streets” that includes: concepts, locations, materials needed, education and

encouragement, health and safety precautions. Information on one-way streets, sidewalk extensions/bike lanes, examples for communicating the changes in the community and secure bike and scooter parking.

When school campuses reopen to students, walking and rolling on narrow sidewalks or busy roadways will not provide space for physical distancing. There is a concern parents may think it is better to drive then walk; this will increase traffic around schools and make the roadways less safe.

Safe Routes to School Toolkit provides detailed information to assist with identifying and creating space for active transportation to encourage exercise and to reduce traffic near schools.

How to Organized a Transportation Committee

Safe Routes has not been able to recruit parent volunteers (Team Leaders) due to Covid in Novato. The PTA will be contacted and presented this information to help with recruitment. In some of the other larger districts in Marin the BPAC (next meeting Nov 9, 2020) is supporting efforts to develop a Transportation Committee.

In the meantime current team leaders, and task force members, Dept of Public Works staff (City and County of Marin), other volunteer parents, neighbors, school administrators, students, school operations, PTA, school districts Director of Maintenance/Operations or the school districts Transportation Manager, elected officials are requested to assist. Many students walk and bike to the middle school. They may be interested in this as a class project. School Site Councils may be available if they are not too involved in assisting the school with setting up Covid protocols.

Not all individuals can attend meetings; however key people/organizations must be kept informed (public works and school administration). The DPW must be updated regularly on locations under consideration and give prior approval well in advance.

Identifying Park and Walk Locations

Loma Verde School piloted a very successful Park & Walk campaign a couple of years ago. On average 160 vehicles were driving 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.

Identifying Park and Walk locations can be less complicated than identifying and getting approval from the department of public works for pop-up locations.

Suitable Park and Walk locations are places where students can be dropped off remotely and walk or cycle to campus; generally a $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile. K- 2nd grade students must be accompanied by an adult. Third grade and up students may be confident to walk alone- parents decide how students will get to school safely.

The City of Novato Dept of Public Works has base maps for all the schools and Safe Routes to Schools has a [Suggested Routes Map](#) for Sinaloa Middle School to help identify current and additional locations. Google maps may be a quick resource too.

All property owners must submit written permission to authorize parking in advance. Verbal permission is not enough. Please reference the sample letter provided for permission (or not) in advance. Resources are available on “how to develop a Park and Walk Program” at your school. Success can be very high when messaging and encouragement from a school principal is made to the school community. Please contact Gwen@marinbike.org for more information.

Identifying Pop Up Locations

Characteristics of a good location are right in front of a school campus where sidewalk or roadway space can be cordoned off to provide space to travel while practicing physical distancing. Options to consider are taking a

lane or blocking off parking spaces; making a road one way temporarily or close it to non-local vehicle traffic.

Once the locations under consideration are identified the next step is to contact the town and/or county Department of Public Works (DPW) and the neighbors that will be affected by the proposed changes. The DPW will decide if the location is feasible and what resources are needed. A “encroachment permit” may need to be issued; the DPW will decide. They will also determine if the pop-up resources will stay in place or need to be moved during am/pm school hours and how that will need to be managed and by whom. (Sample letters are in the toolkit)

A concern was expressed for the families that do drive and have more than one child at a school with different drop off times. Where will they be waiting between drop-off/pick-up times? The district would like to learn from Safe Routes, what is/not working in other school districts as they return to campus before Novato does.

Staggered start times will also influence the schedule for crossing guards. Guards can not be on site for multiple hours in the am/pm. Once dates and school start and end times are determined the crossing guard company will be notified.

The County of Marin DPW was awarded a grant from TAM to support quick build/pop-up facilities near schools within the county jurisdiction. Potential resources to be provided are: cones, stripping, and barricades to provide walkable and bike friendly spaces for students to safely physically distant. Loma Verde School can apply for support from the county even if it opens campus later then other districts.

Projects under consideration by the county include a new/temporary drop-off area near a school and closing a narrow road to “through traffic” to create more space for students/families to make use of the roadway during drop-off/pick-up.

Safe Routes Education and Encouragement Programs

Educational resources remain available to all schools and community members. Please visit the following links to learn more:

[Remote Learning Pedestrian and Bicycle Education.](#)

Classes are available for remote learning and on-line live. Safe Routes staff are available to meet with students to present all grade level classes. Education presentations include drone footage of our bicycle skill stations to make class fun for the students.

[Pedal Playground](#)

A Pedal Playground is an arrangement of connected streets with roadway features that are free of motorized vehicles. It is a fun space for students to develop their confidence as they navigate streets, intersections and crosswalks. Safe Routes to Schools instructors are available to chalk out a Pedal Playground. Please contact peggy@marinbike.org to schedule your FREE Pedal Playground now.

[Family Bike Education](#)

Savvy Family Cycling is a brief presentation for adults and students to watch together; teaching all how to ride safely while abiding by traffic rules. With more young cyclists on the roads for the first time during Covid-19 best practice lessons are very important.

[Family Biking Live on October 15, 2020](#)

This is a free 1 hour live webinar to help parents identify when their kids are ready to ride on the road and will offer safety tips, helmet fitting, and learning how to navigate the road while riding with your kids.

[International Walk and Roll to Wherever](#) - October 2020

The links below provide information for parents and students on how to participate, have fun, win an ice cream gift card and an Ortlieb bicycle bag. This information has been emailed to schools as well.

[K-5 Schools iWalk](#)

[Middle School iWalk](#)

Safe Routes Grant Application

Safe Routes to School staff did assist the city during the application process. This could be a temporary location for a pop-up during Covid to learn what proposed resources are effective (a testing period). No further updates were available at this meeting for the project at Novato Blvd and San Marin Blvd.

Other issues

The Novato BPAC is working on the Bike Ped Master Plan. One component is to encourage the City to work with the school district to improve bike parking facilities at various schools for students and staff.

Leslie Benjamin has offered to connect Safe Routes to Schools to several School District department managers to attend upcoming planning meetings.

Next Zoom Meeting

Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 5:00pm