

Novato Unified School District

Safe Routes to School Task Force Meeting Notes

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

[VIEW MEETING RECORDING](#)

Participants

- Chris Benigni – City of Novato
- Leslie Benjamin – Novato Unified School District
- Lisa Clarke – Sustainable Marin Schools
- Sgt. Trevor Hall – Novato Police Department
- Matthew Hartzell – WTB-TAM
- Dan Hernandez – SR2S/MCBC
- David Hoffman – SR2S/Parametrix
- Wendi Kallins – SR2S
- Manijeh Larizadeh – Novato Public Works Engineering
- Monica Leifer – SR2S Bilingual Coordinator
- Natalie Levine – SR2S parent volunteer (Lu Sutton)
- Gretchen Schubeck – Novato Sustainability Coordinator, School Travel Working Group
- Jen Shriber – SR2S/Parametrix
- Dana Weissman – Fehr & Peers
- Casey Ward – CSPOC, SR2S parent volunteer (San Ramon)

Marin County School Access Safety Action Plan Update (Dana Weissman)

Dana presented an overview of the Marin County School Access Safety Action Plan, highlighting the project's progress since the fall task force meeting. She discussed the safety analysis conducted, which identified a school-focused high-injury network and a safety toolkit with strategies for improving road user safety around schools. The project team has identified draft priority locations for school safety audits, which will be refined and used to develop site-specific recommendations. Dana emphasized the importance of community involvement in the safety audits and invited feedback on the plan's development. Key walk audits will be conducted in the spring, with the remainder in the fall. The aim is to finalize the plan in late 2026 or early 2027.

Dana noted that the plan will help jurisdictions secure grant funding to implement improvements, for example from the Safe Pathways or Active Transportation programs. However, the plan itself does not guarantee or provide funding.

Corridor Priority Projects (Wendi Kallins)

The group discussed the Novato locations that have risen to the top of the Safe Routes issue prioritization process: Center Boulevard (Lu Sutton) and Olive Avenue (Olive).

A walk audit has already been done on Center Boulevard, so the information can be compiled into a corridor plan. The end points of the corridor will need to be defined, and Safe Routes engineers may do another visit to collect more observations and data. Casey noted a potential



opportunity to potentially get an easement for a pathway between Novato Boulevard and the back field through the former funeral home property. This would need to cross the creek and be coordinated with the principal as the back entrance is not open at present..

The Olive corridor of interest runs from Redwood to the school. The City already has plans to update the road. The plans include installation of a separated bike/ped path from Redwood past the railway tracks, connecting to the future SMART pathway, as well as a new crosswalk across Olive east of the tracks. The plans do not extend all the way to the school. Matthew suggested adding green striping across the Trader Joe's entrance where the new path would cross the driveway.

Gretchen emphasized the importance of considering the entire city rather than addressing issues in isolation. Wendi clarified that while Safe Routes need to focus on schools, CSPOC offers an opportunity to examine broader connectivity

Suggested Route Maps (Wendi Kallins)

Wendi presented updated suggested route to school maps for Lu Sutton and San Jose. For the Lu Sutton map, Natalie raised a question about specific bike route options near cul-de-sacs and suggested adding a walking route down Grant Avenue to better serve students from that area. The group also noted that Hill Middle School is now called the Hill Education Center and includes Nova, Marin Oaks, and the Adult School.

For San Jose, Wendi noted that Safe Routes must get permission from landowners before privately owned park and walk locations can be added to the map.

Education and Encouragement (Monica Leifer)

Encouragement

Monica described upcoming Safe Routes encouragement events. The next parent volunteer meeting will be held on February 12, and a high turnout is expected. There are seven events, including two optional events, planned for the spring semester. The official Safe Routes programming will start on March 4 with a Walk and Roll Wednesday. The spring contest will kick off on April 15 and will include one event per week, ending with National Bike to School Day on May 6. The theme will focus on Jane Goodall's work. Students will receive weekly incentives and the chance to win a scooter and helmet. An optional Earth Day event will be held on April 1, and Bike Hero Award nominations will be open through the month of May.

Education

Sinaloa, Lynnwood, Olive, Lu Sutton, and Hamilton Elementary received their education classes in fall 2025. Scheduling is ongoing for San Jose, San Ramon, and Hamilton Middle, and Leslie offered to help reach out to principals at these schools. Natalie mentioned that she was unsure if the second grade walking class had been scheduled at Lu Sutton. She will follow up with Gwen and Katy to confirm. Monica will investigate the situation at Hamilton Middle and will connect with Lisa Clarke if any help is needed to schedule those classes.

Park and Walk Pilot Program (Natalie Levine)

A park and walk contest was held at Lu Sutton during the first week of the fall semester. It was very successful, and another weeklong contest is planned starting March 4. The school is partnering with Sustainable Marin Schools, which will provide Fellows to run a walking school



bus.

Casey is thinking about holding a park and walk event at San Ramon in spring, contingent on buy-in from the principal.

Sergeant Hall mentioned that the more advanced notice to police about events the better, with at least two weeks' notice so the police department can coordinate staff to help at events. Natalie will connect with Sergeant Hall about the Lu Sutton event.

Next Steps

- The Marin County School Access Safety Action Plan team will finalize its High Injury Network and priority areas and will report back in the spring.
- Safe Routes will work with the City on the corridor plans.
- Safe Routes will make adjustments to the Lu Sutton map.
- Leslie will follow up with San Jose and San Ramon on scheduling education classes.
- Natalie will follow up with Gwen and Katy to confirm second grade education classes at Lu Sutton
- Monica will investigate the situation at Hamilton Middle and will connect with Lisa Clarke if any help is needed in scheduling education classes.
- Natalie will coordinate with Sergeant Hall on the park and walk event at Lu Sutton.

Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, April 29 at 5 PM