



## 2013 Annual Meeting Minutes: Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Monday, August 12, 1-5pm – Safe Routes to School National Conference

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### Welcome and Introductions (Risa Wilkerson, Chair)

Risa thanked the Annual Meeting Committee including the Chair Wendi Kallins for planning the event. She also introduced and thanked the Steering Committee for being a part of our strong leadership. She shared that people from many different fields were in attendance today, which will lead to rich discussions. This year we'll have more opportunity for discussion with two breakout groups, one topic-based and the second focusing on geographic areas.

### Opening Remarks ([Deb Hubsmith](#), Director of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership)

[See Deb's PowerPoint Momentum: Moving Towards the Future.](#) Deb welcomed everyone to the Golden State, California. As an organization and a movement, we're moving forward to a future where kids can walk and bicycle to school, with safer and more sustainable environments. This success is thanks to all of you. We have leaders at the local and state level bringing forward new ways to create solutions to challenges specific to where they live.

Deb recognized some successes: In Mississippi Jay Thompson helped create 26 new shared use agreements, and partnered with the faith-based community. In the Bay Area, Marty Martinez helped pass 29 new Complete Street policies in 6 months because of a new MPO policy. In Minnesota, the American Heart Association and Blue Cross Blue shield are doing amazing work; they secured \$500,000 out of the state budget for non-infrastructure projects and agreed to fund the Transportation Alternatives Program at SAFETEA-LU levels.

She invited attendees to share their successes:

- In Oregon, bicycle education is growing. Albany, OR has introduced bicycle safety into the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade curriculums.
- Cincinnati Public Schools have implemented school travel plans through work with State Advocacy Organizer, Kate Moening. Ohio was also the first state to cover the federal Safe Routes to School match requirement.

Deb also thanked the strong leadership within the National Partnership. Recently we've produced a new [annual report](#), we provide regular webinars to advocates, and we've launched two new programs. First, Voices for Healthy Kids – working on reversal of childhood obesity in underserved communities by 2015 with support from American Heart Association and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. We're doing this through creating more Complete Streets policies and Shared Use Agreements, finding ways to build leaders and capacity. If you're part of a community in need, talk to [Mikaela Randolph](#) and [Keith Benjamin](#). Second, we have also launched [Fire Up Your Feet](#), a grassroots program powered by Kaiser Permanente. We're getting more kids walking, bicycling, dancing and moving in general with a goal of 60 minutes of physical activity a day.

Deb introduced our staff directors: [Robert Ping](#) was our first hire 7 years ago. He'll be leaving at the end of this month, with a legacy in his wake. Deb thanked Robert for being so hard working and such a visionary, for seeing so much and adding to the movement. She wished him the best of luck in his next frontier. Robert will continue to serve on our task force for active transportation. [Margo Pedroso](#), our Deputy Director and advocate in Washington, D.C. [Beth Richards](#), our Communications and Development Director who is spearheading Fire Up Your Feet. [Kris Kessel](#) (not in attendance), who manages our state and network teams along with [Ryan Day](#) and [Stephanie Weber](#).

Deb shared how exciting it was to be with First Lady Michelle Obama as she launched Let's Move Active Schools. We're excited to be part of this movement with Fire Up Your Feet. We've also joined forces with the Design to Move initiative, People For Bikes, and EveryBody Walk.

Americans want to live in safe, walkable communities. This was reflected in the recent study released by the National Association of Realtors. Another new study shows that the millennial generation is driving 23 percent less. We still have more work to do though. A disproportionate number of accidents occur in lower income communities. We want to advance this movement by providing safe, healthy communities. The future is bright and you're all a part of it as we move forward and serve as agents of change. Deb thanked everyone for their meaningful work and expressed her gratitude for everyone's support. Deb announced that we're kicking off our annual campaign today. Please make a contribution, every little bit helps. There are forms and envelopes on your tables.

Deb thanked everyone for the work they are doing in their communities. Because of you we're a movement, and when we're a movement we're unstoppable.

### **Topic-Based Breakout Groups**

Below are highlights from each of the topic-based breakout group discussions.

#### **School closures (Robert Ping)**

- Many schools closing are in lower income neighborhoods
- Recommend that schools become part of the planning effort so they are not siloed. They are a central part of the community so this makes sense
- Talk to districts before closures start, convince schools not to sell their property
- Advocates and agencies need to be at the table to work together

- We already have some resources on this on the National Partnership's [website](#)

#### **Engaging youth: high school** (Wendi Kallins)

- Talked about challenges with high school age: kids are getting ready to drive, not interested in bicycling, there aren't as many parent volunteers available
- Advantages: kids at this age can make their own choices, are ready for independence, like to be in large groups (to walk and bicycle together). They can take ownership and come up with their own projects and ideas
- Use SRTS program as a way to get volunteer hours (for college applications). Older students can mentor younger ones
- Students who bicycle will be better drivers
- Program ideas: car-free campus, bicycle field trips, have students to walk audits, let kids take ownership of projects/formulate ideas

#### **Challenges in urban areas** (Jessica Meaney and Meg Thompsom, Tricia Hedahl report back)

- Group focused on an overview of challenges and solutions
- Personal safety is a big issues in urban areas. Solution: send social workers to school, they can be a liaison to the whole community. Reframe the SRTS discussion, how do they perceive danger in their own neighborhood?
- Parents generally working a lot more, look outside of school to faith and senior organizations
- School closures are creating longer commutes for children
- Focus on low hanging fruit and district policies

#### **Challenges in rural areas** (Melissa Kraemer Badtke)

- Challenges: lack of infrastructure, highways are barriers, busing, SRTS is perceived as an urban program
- Solution: educate through curriculum, train bus drivers to lead walking school buses so there is no job threat
- Frame SRTS as a safety mechanism and use HSIP money for 20% match
- Show transportation professionals how walking/bicycling unfriendly the area is (PedNet is doing this)
- Work with faith based organizations, use youth as advocates

#### **Engaging youth: elementary and middle school** (Dave Cowan)

- Current challenges: time commitment for youth, interest with age group (is bicycling "cool" to them), parent volunteers drop off in middle school, sustaining programs after students graduate to higher school – "Champion Turnover"
- Some children live too far away to walk or bicycle, especially with charter schools

- Solutions: partner with champions who are passionate about the program, involve schools in planning process, pitch it as a STEM project, include it in an established club – teachers can recruit
- Engage: principal, superintendent, councilmen, head of PTA, youth
- The National Partnership should: capitalize and expand network of schools, have innovative incentives, advocate

### **Making equity the 6<sup>th</sup> “E” (Mikaela Randolph and Keith Benjamin, Jay Thompson report back)**

- Keith and Mikaela presented a scenario: A diverse city has been riddled with violence, including more than 60 children killed in the last year. Many homicides occurred in African-American or Latino areas. Meanwhile, there is a sustainability initiative (including starting a bikeshare) from the Mayor. A councilwoman and police officer are fighting his efforts in the name of combating violence. Participants were then given a series of questions to answer through role playing.
- Make full access, equity has varying definitions. Work on the built environment in a way to combat the criminal and criminal activity. Ask leadership to take a multi-faceted approach to address issues. More law enforcement involvement.
- Increase eyes on the street through community improvement, lighting, open store fronts, and attracting new residents. Establish corner captains.
- Make wording of materials to fit communities to better convey messages
- How SRTS can impact this issue: Through Voices for Healthy Kids, through engaging key partners and engaging them in meaningful ways in the Safe Routes to school movement and continuing to engage in the built environment issues. Having more conversation about including race and equity.

### **Complete Streets (Marty Martinez)**

- Implementation is an issue
- Need good data in order to push this issue forward
- Would like to mirror what’s happening in CA, with public health department looking at increases in walking and bicycling
- Another strategy: tie in grant funding to require CS policies
- Involve other stakeholders, identify need for greater cultural shift required.
- How can we share the message and vision for complete streets with the community? Roads are a shared resource, we need to expand the conversation around what a road is.

### **Fire Up Your Feet (Rosie Mesterhazy)**

- Used discussion time to answer questions and offer up ideas about Fire Up Your feet since it’s a new program and how this program can apply to neighborhoods.
- Fire Up Your Feet is a one stop shop for walking and bicycling materials and resources, fundraising program, focuses on getting 60 minutes of physical activity per day
- How can we build participation in this process?
- Use Fire Up Your Feet to raise money for SRTS programs

- Use teachers as allies to enforce 60 minutes/day

### **Millennial generation driving less: How to capitalize on this trend** (Deb Hubsmith + Alissa Simcox)

- This trend is shared a lot. Something we can all do is make sure that we're available as resources to press, blogs
- Reach out to policy and decision makers to educate them on this trend when making economic or environmental decisions. Often times they aren't aware of the current state of things.
- Make sure this isn't a trend, that it becomes a sustainable lifestyle
- Introduce families that continue to walk and bicycle
- Use social media

### **Long-Term sustainable funding** (Leslie Meehan)

- SRTS dedicated funding was lost with the change to MAP 21. Is this a problem in your state/community or is still working since communities can apply for SRTS projects under Transportation Alternatives?
- Make sure your MPO includes SRTS
- Use sales tax for SRTS, coordinate with other groups like health departments, insurance agencies, nonprofits
- Look into dedicated funding with MPOs – they control the process. Advertise school dismissal as a major event. Get state to dedicate money, use federal funds for an infrastructure project.
- Utilize data to make the argument with decision makers
- Continue to advertise to MPO even if there isn't a dedicated pot of money

### **Federal Update** (Margo Pedroso, Deputy Director at Safe Routes to School National Partnership)

[See Margo's PowerPoint Mapping Out State Strategies Responding to the New Transportation Law: A National Overview.](#)

We're now one year out from MAP-21 passing, let's take a look at what happened nationwide. MAP-21 changes funding for Safe Routes to School, bicycling and funding was consolidated into the Transportation Alternatives program and we no longer have dedicated funding. There was a significant cut in funding from \$1.2 billion to \$808 million, and states can now transfer money out.

We're now seeing that state DOTs and MPOs are the decision makers. We have engaged state coalitions on Transportation Alternatives (TAP) and other funding streams to influence state decisions on funding staffing and process. See a snapshot of state decisions as of July 2013 [here](#). Thirty-five states have committed to not transferring money out of their TAP funds, 9 states have not made a decision (AK, AR, FL, HI, IL, LA, NC, TX, KY) and 7 states are transferring some of their funds (AZ, GA, IA, ND, OK, SC, UT). Nine states are adding money to TAP (CA, CO, DE, FL, MN, NJ, OR, WA, WI). Fifteen states are keeping SRTS as a standalone program. However, most states haven't implemented programs yet, only 26 states have set a deadline for their first TAP application.

Most states are retaining their Safe Routes to School staff – 23 are keeping SRTS coordinators full-time, 17 keeping coordinators but adding other duties, 4 states have not decided (AK, AR, CA, ND) and 7 states will not retain their SRTS coordinator (IN, KS, MT, NE, OK, TX, WY).

Matches are generally 20 percent from state or local dollars. Five states (FL, MA, MI, NJ, OH) will use state funds to meet the match commitment. Seventeen states will require entire match to be cash, 22 states will allow some in-kind contributions, and 6 states have not yet decided their match policy (AR, CA, LA, MN, UT, WI).

More than 180 MPOs in 45 states control TAP awards of \$200 million/year. We need to make MPOs understand how schools impact them. We saw this before with state DOTs, and we can overcome this barrier. Many MPOs are familiar with SRTS, but unused to administering it. Key application concepts for MPOs include: data collection, potential benefits, school and neighborhood engagement, equity, community connections. We have a best practices guide available on our [website](#).

### **Examples of Implementation**

#### **Josh Miller – Bicycle Alliance of Washington**

Josh's colleague Blake Trask is also a good resource for MAP-21. In fall 2013 the governor's office convened an ad-hoc steering committee comprised of stakeholders from tribes, the legislature and cities. The Bicycle Alliance has protected funding for Washington programs. Their first victory was to maintain this funding. The Bicycle Alliance also advocated for standalone programs and made room for the addition of funding from HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program); CA and FL have done something similar. In Washington, all TAP funds were distributed through MPOs, except SRTS which was through a grant program. They found that by combining state HSIP and TAP funds they were able to meet their funding.

#### **Leslie Meehan - Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization**

The TAP call for projects in 2013 are currently being announced, there will be a second call for projects in spring 2014. Tennessee has funded \$30 million over 3 years with state gas tax, this has been for infrastructure projects only. It's been hard to do a lot with a small amount of money for SRTS, but with Christy Smith's help (the National Partnership's Tennessee Advocacy Organizer), Tennessee decided not to transfer any money out. Christy wrote a letter of praise to the state, explaining how well they had already been doing with this program; this proved to be extremely effective. Tennessee will do their last SAFETEA-LU call this fall, this will be a joint call for projects with the Active Transportation Program. There will be \$12.1 million dollars available total. Leslie encouraged everyone to set funding priorities first, and then get creative with funding streams later. Sell projects as safety and economic development projects to your MPOs.

#### **The Next Transportation Bill (Margo Pedroso)**

We're now looking to the future, even though we're just seeing the impact of the first bill, it will expire in September of 2014. We're expecting the policy to stay the same, but are still working on how to figure out funding. It's unlikely that we'll be able to un-consolidate the program, so we're going to do

our best to work within the structure. We're looking to diversify funding streams, and will need good data to make the case. We think focusing on safety is the way to go for bipartisan support.

Margo introduced the geographic breakout groups. Meeting attendees will gather in their geographic regions to discuss MAP-21 implementation in their area, and then a second policy topic of interest.

### **Geographic Breakout Groups**

**Northeast & Mid-Atlantic:** ME, NH, VT, NY, PA, MA, CT, RI, NJ, MD, DE, DC, VA (Nora Shepard)

#### MAP-21:

- Participants discussed more about how MAP-21 works and how to access funding through MPOs, and the specific situation in their various states.
- Concern was expressed around the ability of disadvantaged and underserved communities to compete and access dollars.
- Participants emphasized the need to understand the specifics of your state/region, since they are all different, and more information is needed.

#### Topic: Incorporating health considerations

- Participants brainstormed different ways to address health as part of Safe Routes to School, such as shared use, breaking down siloes between transportation and health
- It was noted that kids already walk and bicycle in disadvantaged areas, and for them it's more about safety than health, but walking school buses can help ensure these children don't miss school breakfast.  
Incentives, communication tools, multilingual materials, and the economic benefits can help advance this issue.

**Southeast:** FL, GA, SC, NC, WV, KY, TN, AL, MS, LA, AR (Christy Smith and Jay Thompson)

#### MAP-21:

- Participants reviewed MAP-21 successes and challenges.
  - o Alabama lost SRTS funding, but has maintained a part-time coordinator and made SRTS part of the MPO conversation. However they are lacking a champion to help with Complete Streets, etc and the 20% match is a problem. Consolidation of schools has also made programs harder to coordinate and maintain.
  - o Florida has maintained funding and DOT has a strong complete streets policy, but pedestrian injuries are still high
  - o Mississippi retained coordinator and the Department of Health is coordinating with SRTS to educate elementary school children
  - o Tennessee has \$30 million dedicated funding for bike/ped out of state gas tax. Magnet and charter schools have made it harder to create programs.
- Suggestions: show SRTS link to improvement in test scores, get school board involved with transportation

#### Topic: Low-income neighborhoods and SRTS

- How can we make sure we that SRTS is in all areas?
  - o In Miami, they go through a planning process to prioritize schools based on the number of children walking, auto ownership, injury rates, etc. This helps the city to determine which schools based on need and helps to prevent more affluent schools from getting more of the money. List is used with MPO for other funding priorities as well.
  - o Eliminate bias by using safety data – fund areas with most crashes
- The National Partnership can play a role by hosting Network meetings to discuss this issue, work with other national partners that bring a lens to the local level (YMCA, AHA). Capture stories that can be shared across the communities and across the nation as best practices

**Midwest:** OK, OH, IN, MI, IL, WI, MN, IA, MO, KS, NE, SD, ND (Kate Moening)

MAP-21:

- Participants reviewed the current state of programs across states, they looked at SAFETEA-LU levels, incorporation with TAP and coordinator statuses.
- They shared different ways states have addressed the 20% match problem.

Topic: Wellness

- Participants discussed wellness policies across states:
  - o In Ohio, every district makes their own policies and they all vary. The Department of Health is working towards a coordinated effort. Many schools have policies, but there is no compliance.
  - o Michigan follows policies at the federal and state level, but they are focused on school time only, doesn't address a full day.
- Suggestions: use research and data to improve policies, bringing experts for physical activity, nutrition and mental health, integrate throughout entire school building.

**Southwest:** TX, NM, AZ, CO, UT, WY, MT, NV, HI (Dave Cowan)

MAP-21:

- Participants discussed their frustrations with changes MAP-21 has brought to SRTS. Many MPOs have been slow with the decision-making process and match levels vary.
- They shared creative ways to raise funds:
  - o Use percentage of drivers' license renewals to get match
  - o Fatality galvanized groups to increase speeding fines throughout CO Springs, this will go to an engineer to coordinate better infrastructure

**Northwest :** OR, WA, AK, ID (Robert Ping)

- Participants discussed the impact of MAP-21 in their states, then decided between institutionalizing SRTS and SRTS in rural communities as a second topic.



**California:** CA(Jeanie Ward-Waller and Pauline Chow)

### MAP-21

- Currently SRTS is slated to be consolidated into an Active Transportation Program. This will be decided by the end of August, and will mean that SRTS will have to be more competitive without dedicated funding.
- Most participants want to keep dedicated funding for SRTS while others are able to make up the difference with HSIP. HSIP is problematic though, it is injury driven and it doesn't go to rural or tribal communities.
- Participants also discussed some challenges with the SRTS program: it's oversubscribed, SRTS projects are small and often get overlooked in the face of larger infrastructure projects and it's harder to sell in rural areas.

### Topic: Complete streets

- Deb mentioned that while we have a policy that requires complete streets to be included, there is no tracking of implementation. Others echoed that the legislation was vague and some don't interpret it as mandatory.
- Participants noted that complete streets are harder to implement in rural communities where an interstate or highway is often the main street.
- Suggestions: engage communities and elected officials, there is no one size fits all.

### **Town Hall reporting** (Wendi Kallins)

#### **How will you address MAP 21 challenge?**

- **Robert Ping:** (California) In Oregon, we'll try to make sure that having a bicycle-pedestrian policy is a criteria, set as a priority.
- **Carmen Burks:** (Ohio) In Ohio, our local MPO has included SRTS funding with the TAP application. Originally they were not eligible to apply as a school district, but they kept fighting and now they're changing the criteria so they'll be able to apply in the next round.

#### **What challenges do you experience in your geographic area?**

- **Nora Shepard:** (New Jersey) It's a challenge to get the money spent, period. It's hard to deal with the requirements, we're looking to see how we can help communities with the grant process.
- **Christy Smith:** (Tennessee) Getting matches is a big problem in the south, communities and schools cannot provide this and with TN and AL not allowing in-kind donations it's an issue. Equity is a major issue for matches. The communities that need improvement the most can't get it. How can we find a way to ensure matches? Consolidation of schools is also a problem as schools move farther away from the students they serve, we see similar issues with magnet and charter schools. We're finding that communication is key, we need to bring groups together to discuss this issue.

- **Sandra Stenmark:** (Colorado) Denver public schools had a coalition to prioritize schools with greatest need for free and reduced lunch and other health disparities. By broadening the scope of a grant, you can bring in other partners to help with the match.
- **Jay Thompson:** (Mississippi) Also worried about how the match is disproportionately affecting communities in need, there is no in-kind in MS either. How can we continue this momentum?

#### Can we hear from a state with positive state MAP 21 discussion?

- **Humboldt County, CA:** we spoke about a radical call to reframe the discussion so wealthy communities don't take all the money
- **Wendi Kallins:** (California) We know this is a successful program and good for community, there's no reason to take money away. We want you to work together in your geographic areas to fight back keep this program alive.

#### What other policy initiatives are you seeing in your area?

- **Stephanie Weber:** (Virginia) We don't know what the outcome will be yet, but in the latest round of SAFETEA-LU we saw funding for more district coordinators. We now have 10 district-wide coordinators.
- **Deb Hubsmith:** (California) Complete Streets has been a DOT directive for 12 years, state legislation requires the inclusion of Complete Streets policies and we're seeing innovative things locally. However, there's a difference between having a policy, and having it implemented. We'd like to see more states and MPOs pass policies like the one in California.
- **Christy Smith:** (Tennessee) What else can the National Partnership do to help states? The Southeast group asked us to communicate about other organizations we are working with like Kaiser Permanente, America Walks and the American Heart Association. Sometimes they don't realize these partnerships are in their state. We can also recognize the great work people are already doing at a local level.
- **Beth Richards:** (New Hampshire) Share those stories and opportunities with us on Facebook or email – we want to lift your stories up.
- **Kate Moening:** (Ohio) We're seeing wellness policies in the Midwest. A shared vision and goal equals more successes. It can happen, it has to be top down and bottom up.
- **Rosie Mesterhazy:** (California) Still thinking about different ways we can communicate at a grassroots level and with elected officials. Violence prevention inspires fear, but these stories are still important. How do we ally people in underserved communities without overshadowing the message that walking is safe? We need better bridges and grassroots tactics, to work with parents and find ways to spread the message in an emotive way.
- **Leslie Meehan:** (Tennessee) Most of our projects are smaller, which should mean an easier match, but that's not the case.
- **Margo Pedroso:** (Maryland) Worries about small towns without the tax base for this, they'll get left out the most in this process. In cities they can make choices as to where to put matches.
- **Participant (Unknown):** I agree with you on small towns, all funding goes towards motorized transportation. It's unfair as a lot of people in these towns aren't even driving. We need to push

small communities to put money into a separate account for active transportation. Even if it takes a few years to save some money it will be beneficial, this is just fundamentally fair.

- **Ryan Day:** (Washington) Gas taxes are going up and so is fuel efficiency and electric cars. That funding source will disappear and leave our program in jeopardy. We need to look to our next funding streams.
- **Deb Hubsmith:** (California) We're pleased to be part of the Active Places Hub with support from the American Heart Association to make sure we're serving underserved areas. We want to get this written into policy to make sure these communities are included. Please talk to Keith Benjamin and Mikaela Randolph if you have projects that we can help with.

### **Closing Remarks** (Risa Wilkerson)

Risa invited everyone to join us at the Safe Routes Social directly after the meeting. Thank you to everyone for filling out envelopes. You can also leave us a note to follow up with you about a pledge. Every contribution is a big help.

Risa called for partners as we're looking to grow our network as we move forward. Moving forward has been a theme today. We are moving forward together, and the work discussed in this room illustrates how we're moving forward directly. Risa asked everyone to reflect back on this afternoon and think of three words that described their emotion or experience.