



2012 Annual Meeting Minutes: Safe Routes to School National Partnership Monday, September 10, 1-5pm - Pro Walk Pro Bike Conference

Welcome and Introductions (Risa Wilkerson, Chair)

Risa thanked the Annual Meeting Committee including the Chair Wendi Kallins for planning the event. She also shared that registered for today's meeting were representatives from 42 states, DC and two provinces from Canada.

Year in Review/Glimpse of the Future ([Deb Hubsmith](#), Director of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership)

Deb started off by saying it has been the best of times and the worst of time.

It's been the best of times for both the Safe Routes to School program and the National Partnership— Safe Routes to School programs are thriving nationwide; the federal program is in more than 12,300 schools; all states have DOT coordinators; more than 630 non-profits, government agencies and schools are partners of the National Partnership; there are so many studies and research we can't even keep track of them all anymore; amazing support from funders; our National Partnership staff has doubled; and enthusiasm is high - we are making huge strides with our goals.

However, it has also been the worst of times. We reached a new low when Congress passed the transportation bill this summer and didn't give Safe Routes to School dedicated funding anymore. This was a blow to all of us.

Deb reflected on what has made our movement great and strong – including all of the advocates, schools, municipalities, professionals, parents and students, and the work they are doing across the country.

[See Deb's PowerPoint for the Top 10 Ways Safe Routes to School Will Survive and Thrive Under MAP-21.](#)

Deb thanked everyone for coming today as their vision and participation makes us stronger as a movement.

Panel and Town Hall Discussion on Funding and Sustainability for Safe Routes to School Programs

Deb introduced each of the panelists.

[Wendi Kallins](#)

Wendi Kallins is the founder and Program Director for the national model of Safe Routes to Schools in Marin County, CA, which has operated successfully for twelve years. She is a founding steering committee member of the National Safe Routes to Schools Partnership. A certified national trainer for the National Center for Safe Routes to Schools, she has provided training and consultation to over 40 communities, nationwide developing new programs and model curriculum. Wendi has been a featured speaker on SR2S at dozens of conferences, nationally and internationally.

David Pulsipher

David Pulsipher is the Transportation Safety Manager for the Chicago Department of Transportation. At CDOT, David oversees the Child Safety Zone Initiative which seeks to improve safety at over 1,500 schools and parks citywide. Prior to joining CDOT, David was a planner with Alta Planning + Design. At Alta he worked on the City of Los Angeles Bike Master Plan and the award winning Metro Blue Line Bike & Pedestrian Access Plan, here in Long Beach. David received his Master's from UCLA in Urban Planning and is an LCI with the League of American Bicyclists.

Bob Murphy

Bob Murphy is President of RPM Transportation Consultants, LLC in Nashville, Tennessee and has 30 years experience in transportation planning and traffic engineering. Bob specializes in multi-modal planning and design. At RPM, he is responsible for a wide range of projects including transportation master plans, traffic impact studies, bikeway and pedestrian planning and design, sustainable design, roadway and intersection design, traffic signal design, intelligent transportation systems, and parking studies and designs. He has extensive experience in stakeholder involvement, including conducting public hearings and charrettes and making presentations on transportation projects. Bob is actively involved in committees and the leadership of several professional and civic organizations. He is a member of the Executive Committee of ITE's Pedestrian and Bicycle Council, member of the Nashville MPO's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and member of Tennessee's Safe Routes to Schools Statewide Advisory Committee.

Bev Brody

Bev Brody is the Health & Built Environment Project Facilitator for Get Fit Kauai; the Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition of Kauai County. Bev oversees 4 task forces and 3 subcommittees that are charged with increasing physical activity opportunities and access to healthy foods through policy, system and environmental change. Get Fit Kauai's Built Environment task force led the charge and ultimately to the passing of Kauai's Complete Street Resolution. (The first county of Hawaii to adopt a Complete Streets resolution). Bev was awarded the 2012 "Employee of the Year" from the University of Hawaii and was also a finalist in "Women Who Mean Business" in the State of Hawaii. Bev's enthusiasm for creating a built environment that promotes physical activity and healthy eating is contagious and her passion for sharing this knowledge is the driving force behind her success.

Robert Ping

Robert Ping is technical assistance director for the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, working to help states leverage Safe Routes to School and Transportation Enhancements funding to create street scale improvements for walking and bicycling in underserved communities in all 50 states and DC. He manages the national learning network and provides technical assistance and training for organizations and communities implementing programs and policies that will increase walking and bicycling to school and in daily life. Robert was formerly the National Partnership's state network director from 2007-2011, supervising twenty state policy networks, three regional policy networks and five Safe Routes to School programs, and providing technical assistance to communities and organizations. Robert served on the

congressional Safe Routes to School Task Force in 2007-2008. From 2003-2007 he was the Safe Routes to School program director for Oregon's Bicycle Transportation Alliance and Willamette Pedestrian Coalition, providing technical assistance to Oregon communities, supervising the statewide Youth Bicycle Safety Education program, and managing Portland's comprehensive SRTS program serving 19 schools. From 1987-2003 Robert worked with the SF Bay Area's Transform and directed bicycle advocacy and youth education programs including the Bicycle Community Project, Pedal Power, Youth Homes and Trips for Kids-Marin. Robert has been a 'bikeaholic' since the age of seven. He is a bike commuter, mountain biker and former road racer, father of two boys, and has over 25 years' experience in youth program development and management.

[See the Annual Meeting panel PowerPoint for copies of their presentations.](#)

Questions/Answers from the Moderator

Deb: How would someone begin to initiate a partnership with law enforcement to lead to them being a champion, which would then lead to them helping with a fine-based funding mechanism strategy?

Robert: The 1st step is to draw them into program stuff going on to see how it works and to talk about safety. Pull them aside and make sure whoever you have coming isn't the officer who likes to keep everyone in the house to keep kids "safe" but wants folks outside. You need the right person and the highest ranking person at the table. From sergeant level up to police chief –then you can get their help at policy maker meetings.

Deb: How did Bev get the Hawaii state legislature to agree to have the new fine money go down to the county level (instead of the state level in Oahu)?

Bev: HDOT is last in the country in distributing Safe Routes to School federal funds. The only way HDOT was going to support it, was if they didn't get the money. They wanted the counties to deal with the money. They pointed out how much easier it would be to get the money out from the county level.

Deb: Bob – it's amazing that 60 percent of scoring criteria for projects relate to health and safety. How did this come about? A Board directive? Staff?

Bob: Staff had a key role but the foundation of it began primarily with the 2009 regional bicycle and pedestrian study that was done in Nashville. They had a lot of technical info as well as opportunities for public involvement and input. It identifying what was needed – more and improved facilities. The public was very supportive of a more walkable and bike and transit friendly environment. They had an HIA that looked at concentrations of populations that were lower-income and identified those concentrations with part of the policies trying to fund improvements in those areas. The study provided the foundation – staff took it further and worked it through the MPO process. A multi-step process but very thorough.

Deb: David - 44 of the 50 City Council members in Chicago were in favor of child safety zones. What did you do to get this support?

David: They made this about children. Cameras were very strategically placed, focused on areas where children have safety issues. They used lots of GIS data and looked at historical crash data and census areas with high youth populations. They told the city council that they would be putting these where most sensitive users are being hit with the potential to do the most good quickly. It is hard to refute facts and crash data.

Deb: There is a sub-contract in Marin County to run the Safe Routes to School program as part of the transportation sales tax. How has your organization been supported as part of the sales tax?

Wendi: We started the program back in 2000 and made a decision after the first year to let go of controlling the program and let the government control it. We trusted the government to do it right and that is where the money was. Then the Marin County Bicycle Coalition became a sub-contractor. It is their number one income source for running the organization and it helped to improve the relationship with the county and all the cities.

Before opening question/answer up to the audience, Deb mentioned that in San Francisco, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) used CMAQ money for Safe Routes to School. The MTC just voted to allocate \$20 million for Safe Routes to School over the next four years. [Read more here](#). She also mentioned that California has state level Safe Routes to School (SR2S) funding - \$24.25 million a year in addition to federal money; this started through state legislation in 1999 and was reaffirmed with another bill in 2007..

Question/Answer from the Audience

How do you answer the questions of “how will we spend money on all this stuff when our bridges are crumbling and roads need repaving”?

Bob: One strategy is to bundle your active transportation projects into other projects.

Wendi: Tell them that transportation sales taxes include money to maintain roads as well, finishing car pool lanes, helping us take care of buses and our children all in one tax.

How can I get seed money for a pilot program to study speeds around schools in a semi-rural area in Southern California?

Robert: Get older kids out there with photo/video studies like PhotoVoice. Then bring community members out there to see ad hoc what is going on. Take these into officials and make the case and they will find the funds. You can also find a local foundation dedicated to safety to find small grant for it.

Deb: Call the Safety office at Caltrans, Dale Benson in District 7, and to talk to Jessica Meaney (National Partnership staffer in Los Angeles) to connect with the right people.

Wendy Alfson (attendee): Contact highway patrol or local sheriff for speed study. They have automated speed equipment to lay on the road and you can also start building that relationship.

A question was asked about child safety zones and about how to build relationships between program leaders and school districts.

David: Representatives were from school districts as part of the oversight board and they used them as a point of contact. They haven't yet reached the full potential of how they'd like to do community outreach. Going forward they plan to use the City Council, their staff, schools and principals as points of contact to review recommendations and what they have missed.

Robert: It's an easy sell. School principals will be very interested in this --get them on board. Get student transportation and law enforcement on board too. Correct misconceptions by school officials about what the hot spots are.

The question of liability came up. How should we answer people who say we can't allow our children to walk because it is dangerous out there?

Robert: Pointed out [Change Lab Solutions resources](#).

Bob: Things have changed from 50 years ago and we need to change the philosophy. Get out the data.

Why is the camera program's revenue only for infrastructure? How are they paying for the cameras? What is the projected revenue from the cameras?

David: This allows the mayor's office to take the lead and has to go to traffic safety. CDOT took this to mean engineering. But the general consensus is that the mayor's office will use it to hire police with jurisdiction to do traffic safety around schools. He is not sure how they are paying for the cameras at this point. They don't have a specific number on what the cameras are expected to raise, but several million is the projection based on the revenue from red light cameras already in place. They are only doing 50 cameras at this time.

Attendee from New Jersey: Shared that a pilot in New Jersey with red light cameras has a vendor fronting the money for the camera. There is zero cost to the state.

Miami has been working on similar legislation (to Hawaii's) for 2 years. A surcharge on speeding tickets in school zones. They tried the red light cameras, but people didn't want them. Is there an established mechanism for analyzing the data?

David: The way their ordinance was written, when they captured data, certain things had to be met such as a still image of license plate, the driver has to be owner of vehicle and various other stringent regulations. They set up a natural set of checks to make sure you were getting the right person and that they had broken the law, like an image of car and then an image of them going through the light.

Leah Stender from Walk San Diego shared that they worked with one school district that didn't allow students to bicycle to school. Then they worked with NPLAN/Change Lab Solutions to remedy this. The recommendation from higher ups in the school district is now at the board that they remove the biking ban from the policy and they are inches away from getting it reversed.

At what point in the process did the HIA occur in the Nashville process?

Bob: As part of 2009 regional bicycle and pedestrian plan. It wasn't originally in the scope of work but they asked for it to be included and they did. It was well-received and appropriate to include as a criteria for scoring projects. This part was completed about a year before the long-range transportation plan. It also created a new position at the Nashville MPO. Previously, Leslie Meehan was bike/ped coordinator at the MPO. But now she is the Director of their Active Transportation Department. The position is a lot more inclusive and has encompassed a lot of the health aspects.

Someone brought up that transportation sales taxes are regressive. How can we raise funds in a progressive way so as not to raise concerns for lower-income folks? We need to build equity into where they spend the money too. Regardless of the source of funding, there should be an equitable system built in.

Wendi: There is only one good way for progressive taxes and that is income taxes, and local governments don't have control over those. Property taxes can be a little more equitable but they can also hit elderly people hard. This is a difficult one to answer. We have to work with the tools we have - fees/fines and sales taxes to some extent. There is a surcharge on a gas tax and you can use that towards Safe Routes to School and other transportation measures. It is a big question, including how people view taxes in general.

Bev: They only went with the surcharge on fines for this reason. Only people who break the law get charged.

Legislative update ([Margo Pedroso](#), Deputy Director of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership)

[See Margo's MAP-21 PowerPoint presentation.](#)

Questions/Answers

Does the money go to the locals or to the state? It depends the community you live in, and on your community's share of the population. If your state has MPOs with more than 200,000 residents then they will get a share of Transportation Alternatives funds and have to hold a competitive process to get it out. They have to fund rural areas as well as smaller towns, though that is through a competition. So, some funds go to MPOs and some funds are administered by the state.

An attendee from New Jersey asked if any municipality should put in applications to the state DOT and the MPO at the same time? There are different processes for both, and the MPO and state won't necessarily be coordinating on their competitions. If you live within one of these large MPOs, you could apply in both places, assuming your state retains its Transportation Alternatives funds and runs a competition.

How does the 80/20 match work? Safe Routes to School projects have been at 100% federal funding, but in MAP-21 this conflicts with the 80-20 match for other Transportation Alternatives projects. While it has been reported at the conference that USDOT is ruling that Safe Routes to School projects are going to be an 80-20 match, but that is not a done deal. This is not the final decision, and we are continuing to push for the 100% federal funding. Basically though, if your project costs \$100k, under Safe Routes to School now you get \$100k for it. With the 80/20 split, they can only give you \$80k and you have to find \$20k at the local level to fund the rest. [NOTE: USDOT will be issuing guidance shortly on this; see our MAP-21 Resource Center for the latest information.
<http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/national#map21resourcecenter>]

Why the emphasis on Recreational Trails? It is implemented really differently in most states from Transportation Enhancements and Safe Routes to School. Most states transfer their money to a natural resources agency to administer. The structure simply didn't work with the new Transportation Alternatives, which is why Congress gave states the option to carve it off and administer as it is now.

Is there still a 70/30 percent split for infrastructure/non-infrastructure? Because MAP-21 references current law, infrastructure and non-infrastructure are still eligible. However, states will not be required to spend a minimum on non-infrastructure, so it is up to all of us to still advocate for why a comprehensive approach for Safe Routes to School is still critical.

Is there a timeline for a special call for projects by the end of year? There are no deadlines for the SAFETEA-LU Safe Routes to School money. It won't expire. However, it is a prime target when Congress is looking for spare change to fund something. So we need to get the money out the door, and get it obligated so it isn't taken from Safe Routes to School if there is a rescission.

Breakout groups

Below are highlights from each of the eight breakout groups.

Youth engagement

- Film videos and share to promote projects as the best way to utilize social media using Facebook.
- Plan a National Youth Challenge or project to recognize youth and have them compete against each on youth-led projects.

- Get older students to work with younger students – as mentors and through internships. A tiered system where interns then move to paid assistantships then to be paid instructors and to then diversify staff in the Safe Routes to School field.
- Organize high school clubs for Safe Routes to School. When you hear from youth about challenges or opportunities, make a commitment to seize those opportunities to reap big rewards.
- Engage more youth in the [Safe Routes to School National Conference](#). Have student reps on the conference planning committee for a more youth-focused conference.

Challenges in urban areas

- We need an urban peer group for Safe Routes to School for better information sharing. We have shared problems and still are feeling like the movement doesn't have that yet.
- They talked about violence and the perception of violence/crime, Safe Routes to School and Safe Passages joining forces, and how to do a better job of that.
- For urban areas, the matrix of Safe Routes to School is less about mode shift and more about traffic/personal safety or violence. They need to talk about successes and understand what they need to do better.
- Build local capacity. The missing ingredient –parents/teens/seniors.
- Sign in policies and how they affect Safe Routes to School.

Getting Safe Routes to School funds awarded and obligated

- They talked about the SAFETEA-LU money that is available still.
- Problems: agencies don't know their own policies; they may have new guidelines but agency folks don't know the new guidelines; and budget cuts at school levels.
- Two possible solutions:
 - o Kansas City MPO is requiring reasonable progress policies for their Transportation Enhancement funds where an organization applies for policy/tells what docs are needed and the DOT and grantee are held to the standard and only have one opportunity for an extension.
 - o On-call consultants to work with grantees to get through the process.

Challenges in rural areas

- One main challenge is busing. Students are bused in from long distances and remote drop-offs. Faculty and staff can help.
- Upcoming issue with busing – cuts for school busing. This is a huge expense to families if schools start charging families for students to ride the bus.
- Solutions:
 - o Education/encouragement activities.
 - o Learn right skills on roadways with low volume traffic.
 - o At school – after school programs.
 - o In rural areas perception is key. Smaller communities hold personal safety as a huge issue and we want to make Safe Routes to School a community movement and garner champions within that area.
 - o Good sidewalk network that provides additional opportunities.

Safe Routes to School and health

- Talked about the effectiveness of HIAs and having them be more than just project-based.
- Health officials can bring data to help inform transportation decision makers.

- Resources – [a new publication on Transportation and Health](#) from the National Partnership and APHA to be released in October 2012.
- Also discussed the continued effectiveness of crossing guard programs.

School siting and diversity

- Problems: schools consolidating; academic performance problems; need for equity.
- Solutions:
 - o Look at the differences between urban/suburban/rural situations.
 - o Think a lot bigger than Safe Routes to School to get at this one.
 - o Think about access to recreation and play.
 - o Need to get Safe Routes to School to tables of bigger land use and comprehensive planning conversations.
- There are good examples around the country even though there is much to be done – Santa Monica, and Dallas Fort Worth.
- A framing paper is coming out soon and there is likely to be a webinar on on this topic to get the conversation started.

Responding to MAP-21

- There is already a [national campaign](#), but it isn't one size fits all for each community. Each community has a set of state organizers.
- We need to start now and guidance will come out in the next few weeks.
- They encouraged everyone to contact their state lead by the end of the week.
- Use Walk to School Day to involve elected officials.
- Now is the time to really get advocates working on the MPO process.

Institutionalizing Safe Routes to School

- Problems: staff turnover; volunteer turnover; keeping funding going; working with schools to just let you in door; getting district-wide support; and getting data collection institutionalized.
- Solutions:
 - o PTA support is very important.
 - o Transportation coordinators – especially when school buses are being cut. Example of one that used software to schedule walking school buses.
 - o Utilize college kids, PE teachers, school nurses, people behind the desk in the school office, childhood injury prevention people at hospitals; and Title 1 teachers, especially in low income schools (get it in their job description that they will work with Safe Routes to School programs).
- Integrate curriculum into classroom. Have a credentialed teacher review curriculum.
- Get statewide data through data collection.

Evaluation Handouts/Closing/Adjourn (Risa Wilkerson, Chair)

Risa thanked everyone for coming. She reminded everyone that what doesn't kill us makes us stronger. This is strengthening our movement. If we have our states in a stronger position, this will only benefit us as we continue this work in the future. We have an opportunity now to work at the local level with our MPOs, so this is an opportunity to strengthen the movement from the local level up so we can show them at the national level how important this program is to America. Let's all step up. There are creative ways we can keep things rolling as we move forward.