

Safe Routes to School Task Force to the Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
Fifth Meeting: January 23rd and 24th 2008

*Meeting Location: Wyndham Phoenix Hotel
(602) 333-0000*

Meeting Minutes

January 23rd and 24th, 2008

The fifth meeting of the National Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Task Force was held on January 23 and 24 at the Wyndham Phoenix hotel, located at 50 East Adams Street in Phoenix, AZ 85004.

In accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463), the meeting was open to the public.

Task Force Members Present:

Dr. Phyllis Agran
(Representing American Academy of Pediatrics)

Ms. Barbara Alberson
Chief, State and Local Injury Control Section, CA Department of Health Sacramento, CA
(Representing State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association)

Mr. Philip Caruso
Deputy Executive Director for Technical Programs, Institute of Transportation Engineers
(Filling in for Thomas Brahms)
(Representing professionals working in the transportation field)

Ms. Sabrina Cruz
Principal, Brichta Elementary School Tucson, AZ
(Representing Pima County - Tucson SRTS Program and the educational community.)

Mr. Richard Deal, PE, TE, PTOE
City Traffic Engineer, Monterey, CA
(Representing American Public Works Association and professionals working in the transportation field)

The Honorable Sue Frank
Former Mayor, City of Raytown, Missouri
(Representing National Association of Regional Councils)

Ms. Deborah Hubsmith
Director, Safe Routes to School National Partnership

(Representing a national SRTS advocacy organization)

Mr. Michael King

Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates New York, NY

(Representing Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals and professionals working in the transportation field)

Ms. Lauren Marchetti

Director, National Center for Safe Routes to School, UNC Highway Safety Research Center
Chapel Hill, NC

Ms. Jacqueline Epping, M.Ed.

Team Lead, Guidelines and Recommendations

Physical Activity and Health Branch, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity,
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(Representing a Federal Health Agency)

Mr. Robert Ping

Representing Oregon Bicycle Transportation Alliance and Willamette Pedestrian Coalition,
Portland, OR (Practitioners implementing SRTS programs on a local and statewide level)

Ms. Sharon Roerty

Director of Community Programs for the National Center for Bicycling and Walking
(Representing a national bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organization)

Ms. Donna Smallwood, Chair of Task Force

Operations Manager, MassRIDES Boston, MA

(Representing a State Department of Transportation Program)

Ms. Leslie Meehan

Planner, Nashville Area MPO Nashville, TN

(Representing regional interests through Tennessee's Safer Routes to School Advisory Council)

Mr. Roger Wentz

Executive Director, American Traffic Safety Services Association Fredericksburg, VA

(Representing the transportation industry)

Ms. Dale Ann Wright

Officer, West Valley City Police Department West Valley City, UT

(Representing local law enforcement agencies)

DAY 1: January 23, 2008

CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, WELCOME (DONNA SMALLWOOD)

The meeting was called to order on January 23rd at 8:30 am by Donna Smallwood, the Task Force Chair. Ms. Smallwood acknowledged new Task Force (TF) member Jackie Epping from the CDC, who will replace Refilwe Moeti's seat on the TF. Ms. Smallwood led the TF through brief introductions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 2007 MEETING (DONNA SMALLWOOD)

Ms. Smallwood directed participants' attention to the minutes from the previous TF meeting. Mr. Robert Ping expressed disagreement with the last paragraph on page 11 of the minutes which discusses not recommending continuation of the TF. Mr. Ping stated that he did not recall consensus being reached on this topic. Ms. Smallwood directed that Mr. Ping's disagreement be noted in the January minutes. The members of the TF then approved the minutes from the fourth meeting.

REVIEW OF MEETING PURPOSE AND OUTCOME GOALS, MEETING FORMAT, GROUND RULES AND RECAP OF LAST MEETING (DONNA SMALLWOOD)

Ms. Smallwood reviewed the purpose of the meeting which was to offer TF members the opportunity to provide comments on the most recent draft of the TF report. The November meeting provided clear guidance to the consultants; we anticipate minor edits and an effort to meet our goal of getting the final report to FHWA by June. Mr. Arnade stressed that with the release of a National Commission report recommendations on the future direction of the highway program and a congressional hearing last week on the matter; basically, reauthorization hearings have begun and therefore time is of the essence in getting this report to Congress.

Consultant staff reviewed materials contained in the meeting packet, explained the application ratio handout, and briefly explained the responses received from rural State SRTS Coordinators on the bus stop issue (which was also a handout). The complexities related to determining accurate funding supply/demand statistics were discussed. It was also noted that the meeting agenda did not designate time to discuss the case studies that were added to the report. Review of case studies was added to the agenda for Thursday January 24th.

Ms. Smallwood then reviewed the ground rules for the meeting, which were the same as those used at previous meetings:

- Focus on issues and not positions
- Stay on topic
- Ask for clarification
- Listen
- Show respect
- Seek consensus
- It is important for everything to be said, but it isn't necessarily important for everyone to say it.

TASKFORCE REPORT REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Task Force member comments documented below were taken from the whiteboard notes that recorded TF discussion during the meeting. Highlighted text indicates that the TF reached consensus on the topic.

TASKFORCE REPORT DRAFT 3: GENERAL CHANGES

Overview of changes (Jennifer Toole)

Ms. Toole provided an overview of general changes made to the report since the last draft.

Taskforce comments

- Expand on table of contents
- Keep acknowledgements to one page
- Add TF member credentials as appropriate
- Photo permission, do we need photographer permission as well as parental permission? This may make photo collection difficult.
- Need to have diversity in photos was emphasized. Are there industry rules or FHWA standards on how to use photos?
- Once priority photos are identified, pursue full approval using industry standards.
- Ask FHWA to review the design photos to ensure they comply with the MUTCD.

TASKFORCE REPORT DRAFT 3: CHAPTER 1 (EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)

Overview of changes (Jennifer Toole)

Ms. Toole provided the TF an overview of changes made to Chapter 1 since the last draft.

Taskforce comments

- Add TF vision to Executive Summary
- Present issues more broadly - See SRTS as an opportunity to start to address vehicle miles traveled, change culture regarding transportation.
- Communities adopt SRTS for various reasons - obesity in past, but climate change may surpass health as the most compelling reason in the future.
- Could interject 1-2 sentences about SRTS being complementary to livable communities
- Obesity doesn't resonate with kids at all – environment does.
- Exec. Summary is too long, won't grab attention. Suggest adding an introduction that pulls someone to read this document. Speak more from the heart. Present overall picture.
- Need to be careful not to incite other transportation partners.
- Need a couple of brief paragraphs at the beginning of the Executive Summary that are more inspiring than the current text. Speak from the heart, legacy tone, but make it bullet proof. Emphasize personal resonance. Captivate, capture excitement. Include transportation, air quality benefits.
- Look to “Last Child in the Woods”. Appeal to the parent-side of people, keep it positive. Remember our audience – Congress wants to leave a legacy as well.
- Keep Exec. Summary to 3 pages, include pictures, design summary so it can be used as stand alone document.
- Page 4 line 22 – change to “position” to “become”
- Page 4 line 33 – list these issues in same order every time, move safety first

- Page 4 line 39 – move age of children into text, cite reference
- Page 5 – cite sources relative to “widely known” regarding physical activity
- Page 6 line 18 – as it reads, no action verb and what does it mean?
- Page 4 line 39 – 3 different numbers out there for kids walking and bicycling to school. CDC got information from FHWA, interpreting National Household Travel Survey. Actual number from 1969 is 42%. Statisticians were comfortable saying nearly half. We could say over 40% if want to be more accurate. NCSRTS looked at consistent data, which was 42%. TF member suggested that we use “nearly half” but footnote to explain data issues. Group seems comfortable saying that 42% is same as nearly half.
- Under strategies – include some recommendation of construction guidelines for school site design
- Page 4 line 19 - update data as it becomes available.
- Page 5 strategy one, change order.

TASKFORCE REPORT DRAFT 3: CHAPTER II

Overview of changes (Diane Lambert)

Ms. Lambert provided the TF an overview of changes made to Chapter 2 since the last draft.

Taskforce comments

- Page 7 line 24 – we have four E’s here but text box defines 5 E’s. Note that often “Fourth E” is commonly emergency services (in other fields)
- Page 10 line 31 – would change “other infrastructure” to “other infrastructure safety improvements”
- Page 11 – Consider whether there should be two goals – jumps from quality of life to school siting.
- Four E’s versus five E’s – include evaluation.
- Odense – add dates that the program started.
- Page 9 line 1 - Wendi Kallins is misquoted here. Funded by NHTSA not U.S. Congress. Numbers are over 2 years. Hubsmith to provide the numbers for this. Arlington numbers are for more time than the original NHTSA pilot.
- Need to be consistent in order of presentation – safety, traffic congestion, air quality and climate change, child health, economics and livable communities.
- But explain these up front and don’t try to have extra long sentences throughout the report.
- Case studies refer to walk to school day – need to include Walk to School Day – 1997 Walk to School Day, and in 2000 other countries joined in. Add a paragraph explaining the history.
- Under congestion – mention goal to include VMT reductions
- Go through the whole report and make sure bicycling gets equal mention
- Bronx – do we have follow up information – do we have any follow up data. Look for report published by NYDOT that talks about overall reductions. Hubsmith or Ping to forward the press release to Consultant staff.
- Go through report and make sure that we have mentioned kids with disabilities more.
- When we talk about kids walking and biking, if we say “consistent with AAP guidelines” which assures that our recommendations are age appropriate – instead just include the words age appropriate and footnote the AAP guidelines.

- “Security” invokes 911, is it too loaded? Page 10 – need some mention of personal security into the paragraph below the bullet. This is more about educating parents and kids about personal safety. We shouldn’t imply that SRTS programs will make people safe from gangs.

TASKFORCE REPORT DRAFT 3: CHAPTER III

Overview of changes (Diane Lambert)

Ms. Lambert provided the TF an overview of changes made to Chapter 3 since the last draft.

Taskforce comments

- Page 16 – take some information from the chart and put it into the introduction.
- Page 17 – line 3 – “one study concluded...” – also include in the intro.
- Page 12 – use “parents who decide to drive their children” instead of “each parent that chooses”. Also, move the sentence on safety concerns to next section
- Page 13 line 5 – mention that this is an issue in the early a.m. hours and late afternoon. Also, sentence structure needs work.
- Page 13 lines 10 and 19 – should we include “safe houses” as a strategy?
- Line 23 and 24 - say “it’s widely agreed” and take out first sentence.
- Say in the chart that it is an annual impact for daily walking – can we put it into terms that we all understand (10 trucks traveling x miles)?
- Say increasing visibility at dawn and dusk – sun in people’s eyes is a problem.
- The behavioral indicators are documented – some would argue it is a stretch – most solid statement is there is no deficit in academic performance in kids that are physically active.
- Should include Active Living studies as an appendix
- Page 12 – these “traffic concerns” are valid.
- Consistently reiterate the health concerns throughout the document.
- Add a sentence regarding evaluation – per written comments
- Page 13 – add a sentence about how crime has decreased overall in the U.S. – it’s not as big of a problem today.
- Don’t reference NY Times article – reference the Active Living Study.
- Table: could we extrapolate the annual impacts – get the total number of gallons annually. Add something in about the amount of calories that are burned by walking one mile, the difference between being obese and not
- Caloric number - need to be careful to clarify that amount is over a life time. Physical activity has an impact in *maintaining* weight loss. Explore whether caloric data exists for kids.
- Table – takeaway message should explain that in combination with other programs, this can make a significant impact.
- Chart needs a little bit of analysis, some sound bites.
- Search and change – data singular and plural
- Parent/their singular plural issue.
- Chapter 3 intro – make it have more impact, mention caloric impact.
- Page 13 line 30 – add overweight and obese here, check the reference.
- Page 14 line 27 – cold starts and short distances, need to correlate the two. State the obvious – the first trip of the day is to school. Only problem is that this is often a chained trip, so the cold start would happen regardless.

- Page 12 line 35 – can we include the words traffic calming in there.
- Parents aren't the only ones that take kids to school – caregivers might be a better term.

Ms. Smallwood noted the time and asked if TF would prefer to continue reviewing report chapters in order or jump ahead to review and discussion of Chapter 6 (strategies). It was determined that the TF would begin reviewing Chapter 6.

TASKFORCE REPORT DRAFT 3: CHAPTER VI, STRATEGY 1

Overview of changes (Jennifer Toole)

Ms. Toole provided the TF an overview of changes made to Strategy 1 since the last draft.

Taskforce comments

- Do we need to define Title 23 issues more explicitly?
- Does Title 23 fit with this strategy? Will we be able to change this in current legislation? Title 23 is revisited in later recommendations on aspects that should change. It is presented here in terms of strategies that States are currently using to streamline, and was included here specifically because the TF asked for its inclusion during the Nov. meeting. Suggestion – move to strategies 2 and 4.
- Re-word strategy statement on Title 23 to clarify specific issues addressed.
- The paragraph on challenges for Title 23 should be presented in challenges in section, not here.
- Move “evaluate” to before provide guidance/standards
- Give examples of small SRTS projects
- Include recommendations on school site design
- Page 26, line 22 – change to “technical support is being provided”
- Build on and share successful implementation strategies (rewording for strategy 1)
- Switch strategy 1 and strategy 2 – shouldn't we first recommend changes when program is reauthorized? Or demonstrate good stewardship first? **It was decided to keep the existing order)**
- Allow pedestrian safety audits as part of funding.

TASKFORCE REPORT DRAFT 3: CHAPTER VI, STRATEGY 2

Overview of changes (Jennifer Toole)

Ms. Toole provided the TF an overview of changes made to Strategy 2 since the last draft.

Taskforce comments

- Consultants will add sentence on other aspects of the legislation that should be retained that have not yet been addressed (i.e. state coordinators)
- Does what is said about Title 23 allow grantees and subcontractors to provide fewer benefits to workers? Yes – if Davis Bacon is not required contractors can pay their labor minimum wage. Problem is more about the documentation process than cost (very cumbersome).
- Issue is that there are parts of Title 23 that certain places are having difficulty with. Current language addresses the topic adequately.
- Suggest we say streamline Title 23 but retain Davis Bacon (explicitly state this)
- Page 31, line 6 – get Title 23 in the headline.

- Page 31, Move line 26 to first sentence (gets lost at end)
- Wording: provide limited exemptions to Title 23 requirements
- Possibly include comments from State Coordinators in Appendix (anonymous) as they are very specific. Find a way to be more specific. Consultants will explore pulling a quote to insert in report. Goal – enable local communities to use these funds.
- Be careful of language that could lead to impression that local programs can't handle requirements, therefore not a good use of \$.
- Can there be a list of exemptions for other States to use? These are generally so specific for each State's process, that it is unlikely that we can develop across-the-board exemptions..
- Re-word strategy: Improve Federal support for SRTS by strengthening the forthcoming transportation legislation
- Need to state that only with additional funds can we expand to high schools
- Page 30, line 6 change to “clarify eligibility of the program to tribal governments”
- May be helpful to list what we want to retain
- List high school examples (page 28)
- Page 28 – OK to recommend changing name to National Resource Center, but continue to refer to the Clearinghouse in its current format when referring to it in the present. **Will call it Clearinghouse while retaining recommendation**
- Page 29 – allow “local match” on a limited basis
- Page 28, line 15: add evaluation
- Page 29, Line 8: allow matching funds - rationale is that it will stimulate local spending. Thinks current legislation accomplishes this. Matching funds could have the opposite impact. TF came to consensus at November meeting to allow matching funds. Wording would change from “shall be 100% funded” to “may be 100% funded” which leaves door open for programs to accept additional funding. This will be discussed tomorrow.
- Safe Routes to Bus stops: TF member does not agree with conclusions from November meeting. Not a good use of limited resources. This is an opportunity to expand our base to rural communities/States. Add parameters (maybe in guidance) – add wording to safeguard against improper uses?
- Sunsetting SRTS Task Force: TF member wants to recommend a standing committee to review work of Clearinghouse, review strategic plan, provide oversight, etc. Current contract with NCSRTS already includes oversight, performance measures, reporting, etc. TF reached consensus on this in November. Eight TF members voted to retain the consensus, 4 voted to revisit the topic. Ms. Roerty requested that the topic be revisited today. The TF chair determined that this topic will be discussed tomorrow.
- Page 28, line 43 – SRTS programs are already leveraging funds (change wording to reflect this). Does this imply matching funds? Can we give examples? Include in text box. See if this is represented in an existing case study.
- Issue of using funding for local SRTS program managers – state that this aspect of legislation guidance should be retained.
- Add to aspects of legislation that should change – do not allow new schools to use SRTS funds to supplement new construction costs.
- Page 30, lines 36-37: Expand to other non-motorized modes. Remove examples (scooters, etc.)

TASKFORCE REPORT DRAFT 3: CHAPTER VI, STRATEGY 3

Overview of changes (Jennifer Toole)

Ms. Toole provided the TF an overview of changes made to Strategy 3 since the last draft.

Taskforce comments

- Would like to see sound bite on unique strength of SRTS program in bringing together diverse stakeholders
- Add strategy on complete streets (see page 11 of TF comments on Draft 3 for recommended wording from Hubsmith). We want people to think about SRTS as being integral to the design of transportation projects. TF likes the concept... Need to combine these issues into one strategy – need to provide for pedestrians and bicyclists in school construction and roadway design because if they are built right the first time, we won't need to use SRTS funding to fix them. Concerns about losing focus. Does this better fit under Strategy 4 “address policy issues”. Consultants will work on this and recommend an approach tomorrow.
- Program sustainability – clarify Page 32, line 7. Add to line 5 other types of resources/support. Could remove “as federal funds are depleted”.

TASKFORCE REPORT DRAFT 3: CHAPTER VI, STRATEGY 4

Overview of changes (Jennifer Toole)

Ms. Toole provided the TF an overview of changes made to Strategy 4 since the last draft.

Taskforce comments

- Address policy issues – remove “through the legislative process”.
- Under liability issues – strike “this information should include strategies to provide liability insurance to SRTS program participants that need it”.
- Liability issues – it should be noted that transportation design comes with responsibility regardless of connection to SRTS programs.
- Address policy issues – two paragraphs are in conflict with each other. Recommend removing paragraph at top of page 34. Change “outside the purview” to “more complex”, recommend that DOT collaborate with other agencies, including but not limited to US EPA, Dept. of Ed and Health and Human Services and other appropriate stakeholders, to address this issue. Don't think NCSRTS as subcontractor to FHWA has that responsibility. May want to consider broader statement.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

At 2:45 pm, a break was taken to hear public comments. No members of the public were present to provide comments so the TF continued with discussion of the report.

TASKFORCE REPORT DRAFT 3: CHAPTER VI, STRATEGY 5

Overview of changes (Jennifer Toole)

Ms. Toole provided the TF an overview of changes made to Strategy 5 since the last draft.

Taskforce comments

- Page 34, line 21: remove “boost participation?” Examples include things which do not boost participation. Current paragraph includes both infrastructure and non-infrastructure. Change

wording to make it clear that we are talking about innovative strategies for both infrastructure and non-infrastructure. Make sure we address needs of urban, rural, suburban. Separate educational measures to boost participation from infrastructure. Not all examples are new – maybe change heading.

- Rename this strategy: Support and advance SRTS efforts? The original purpose of strategy five was to look to the future – what comes next?
- Maybe have appendix or some list of good programs
- Add bullet under strategy 1 with best practices. Include experimental tools and MUTCD as separate items.
- Support and advance new and compelling programs.
- Add a bullet that talks about latest and greatest physical measures
- Utilize existing best practices to develop compelling national programs to advance and support SRTS efforts.
- Empower children – give concrete example, also empower parents as well as children
- Page 34, line 35 – who would evaluate them?
- Add to beginning of Chapter 6 – didn't assign responsibility, want to keep it open as many entities could be involved in implementing these measures.

TASKFORCE REPORT DRAFT 3: CHAPTER IV

Overview of changes (Diane Lambert)

Ms. Lambert provided the TF an overview of changes made to Chapter 4 since the last draft.

Taskforce comments

- Page 18, line 14-15: Strike sentence that begins “in general” Remove “far” before “exceeds”
- Add non profit organizations to list on page 18
- Program successes, page 19-20 – three examples about walking school buses. Diversify to include education, enforcement, engineering, evaluation.

TASKFORCE REPORT DRAFT 3: CHAPTER V

Overview of changes (Diane Lambert)

Ms. Lambert provided the TF an overview of changes made to Chapter 52 since the last draft.

Taskforce comments

- Page 22, line 6: what proof is there that a match will stimulate local spending? It would require local spending in order to access the funds.
- Page 22, line 32: expand last sentence – “as a result the data will be incomplete and inaccurate”
- Page 23, line 25: strike low-income
- Page 24, line 12: not sure what this means. Pull this out into a separate bullet. There are a lot of differences between communities, each program needs to be approached differently. Could eliminate second sentence. Reword to say “community” instead of “cultural”. **Spin this into an opportunity – communities can create customized programs based on individual community needs.**
- Page 23, line 18: Re-insert that money spent on school-related transportation is not money spent on providing the best possible education for America's youth. But this statement is not

true for personal expenses. Don't want to antagonize school bus industry. (sentiment was echoed by other TF members)

- Hazard busing is missing from this strategy – TF member suggests a separate bullet for this. Long-term costs of hazard busing could be used for SRTS infrastructure instead.
- Page 23, school siting – why last sentence in first paragraph. Why have second paragraph. Re-work “green design” discussion.
- School siting and equity in older urban cores – have separate bullet?
- Page 21, line 28: need to be more specific. Not compelled by the challenges. Call out average cost of infrastructure project, non-infrastructure project compared to highway projects, but paperwork is the same regardless. (40% of award amount were \$ or under)
- Page 22, line 6: are we changing header “opportunity to stimulate State and local spending”. **Opportunity to leverage State and local spending.**
- STRATEGY 2: Don't want it to be so vague that each State can decide what their local match can be. See page 29, line 15. Goal is to find way to leverage State/local funding. Recipients of 100% funding are allowed to contribute other aspects of a total project cost, while funding received will only be used for project defined in application. Will discuss more tomorrow.
- Page 22, line 11: add clarification on program managers as included in Fed. legislation
- Page 21, lines 28-36 – move some of this to make challenges section stronger on this topic.
- Page 23, line 31: reword to make this an opportunity. Educators are under tremendous pressure. SRTS presents an opportunity to tie into the national wellness policy (reference law that requires wellness councils, etc.). Change title. School climate and safety plans also tie in. Education could tie in to education standards.

CONCLUSION OF DAY ONE

Donna Smallwood thanked TF members for their hard work, discussed the agenda for the second day of the meeting, and adjourned the meeting for the day.

DAY 2: January 24th, 2008

CALL TO ORDER, REVIEW OF PROGRESS FROM YESTERDAY (Donna Smallwood)

TF members were presented a list of agenda items to be covered, including the following:

1. Comments on the graphic design – use flip chart, or write directly on boards.
2. Revised schedule delivery to FHWA/Congress
 - a. Original plan: proceed with graphic design for March meeting.
 - b. Graphic design will take four weeks once text is finalized
 - c. Delivery to FHWA: August 2008
 - d. FHWA delivery to Congress: February 2009
3. Items on the “bike rack” requiring further discussion
 - a. Sunsetting the Task Force
 - b. Local match issue
 - c. Suggested bus stop language
 - d. Suggested new language for policy strategy

- e. Potential new title for Strategy 5
 - f. Conflicting themes – brevity but add more, be passionate but add more facts/clarifications, less adjectives
4. Any other issues
5. Future meeting dates:
- a. March 4th: 1-3 pm conference call
 - b. April 17th?

TF COMMENTS ON GRAPHIC DESIGN SAMPLES

TF members were instructed to submit comments on the two graphic design samples by either writing on the samples or on the provided flip chart. These were collected at the end of the meeting.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES FROM DAY ONE (Donna Smallwood, Jennifer Toole)

Strategy 2: Under Aspects of the Legislation that should Change:

Current language:

Allow local contributions

Federal SRTS funding could be even more effective if it was possible to use the funds to leverage local spending. However, requiring matching funds is not permissible under the current legislation, which stipulates that the program shall provide 100 percent funding for projects, to ensure that schools in low income areas can participate in the Federal program.

Therefore, it is recommended that future SRTS legislation allow up to 100% federal funding for projects and activities as well as local contributions to stimulate State and local spending on SRTS projects. However, 100 percent funding should be required for projects and activities that serve disadvantaged schools (following established guidelines for schools that receive free and reduced lunch programs) or schools that are located in areas where child pedestrians are deemed to be at a high risk of deaths and injuries. (Is this too broad? FHWA would have to interpret that in guidance)

Suggested language (this wording was agreed to by TF members)

Allow local contributions

Federal SRTS funding could be even more effective if it was possible to use the funds to leverage local and State spending. However, even voluntary local contributions are not permissible under the current legislation, which stipulates that the program shall provide 100 percent funding for projects and activities, to ensure that schools in low income areas can participate in the Federal program.

Therefore, the Task Force recommends that the requirement for 100% federal funding for projects and activities be continued; however, this does not preclude applicants from providing State, local or private supplemental project contributions. If supplemental funds are considered in the application process, means should be taken to ensure that disadvantaged schools (following established guidelines for schools that receive free and reduced lunch programs) and schools in areas where child pedestrians are at higher risk of deaths and injuries are not at a disadvantage in the selection process. FHWA should be tasked with developing guidance on these issues.

STRIKE:

However, 100 percent funding should be provided for projects and activities that serve disadvantaged schools (following established guidelines for schools that receive free and reduced lunch programs or schools that are located in areas where child pedestrians are deemed to be at a higher risk of deaths and injuries) however this does not preclude these schools from providing local and/or State contributions. FHWA should be tasked with developing guidance on these issues.

Task Force Vote:

Keep it at a 100% and include language about leveraging other funds– Votes: 9

Change language to allow “up to 100%” - Votes: 6

Strategy 2: Under Aspects of the Legislation that Should Change:

Last meeting (from whiteboard): There was consensus that the Task Force would like to find a way to provide some limited funds for infrastructure projects for bus stop access improvements in rural areas, but the TF does not want to open the door too wide.

Yesterday’s discussion: Strengthen wording to safeguard the original intent of the funding.

Current language with suggested modifications:

“Many States have found it difficult to make SRTS funds available to rural areas, because often only a small proportion of students live within a 2-mile radius of rural schools. Safe access to bus stops can be a greater problem for these schools, because students often must walk along high-speed rural roadways, and sometimes must also cross roadways and railways at unsafe locations. Therefore, it is recommended that funding eligibility be expanded to include cost effective safety improvements to routes that access bus stops in rural areas. FHWA should issue clear guidance to ensure that these funds are spent wisely and in a manner that is consistent with the original safety goals of the Federal SRTS program.”

Sense of the group:

Like the modified wording above – 11

Do not want to go with this language – 4

Strategy 4: Address Other Challenges that SRTS Programs Face

Address policy issues (preventive medicine title):

Task force has asked that we develop a catch-all strategy that addresses multiple policy issues, including school siting, ensuring schools are designed with walkable/accessible campuses from the outset, and that streets and roads throughout the community accommodate bicycles and pedestrians as a standard component of planning, design, construction and maintenance practices.

TF agreed - we will add language about this being an issue for both State and local policies – roadway design and school siting. We will not include buzz words that may have a negative effect on the reception of this report, such as “complete streets” but will otherwise describe all the principles of complete streets.

Strategy 5 – Title change:

Looking towards the future: develop innovative solutions at the national level that support and advance local/State SRTS programs and activities.

TF agreed with the following approach: we will divide the second sub-strategy into two separate strategies, one that deals directly with infrastructure-type solutions (per yesterday’s discussion) and one that addresses programs.

Future Task Force Discussion

- By virtue of the existing law, the Task Force automatically sunsets upon completion of this report. Should we recommend another taskforce in next legislation? Congress specifically tried to avoid a Federal Advisory Committee in the conference report. The consensus at the last TF meeting about sunseting the taskforce included both current and future legislation. If it is recommended, FHWA will oppose it. It is proposed that the role of the National Clearinghouse is extended to include convening experts for various tasks.
- Timeline between now and next legislation is such that another advisory committee should be assessed to review how we are implementing strategies called for in this report, what new strategies might be needed, to provide a new report to congress, then sunset. Believe the National Center will establish the National Review Group but this is a separate entity. Need independent review group advising Congress on this. Do think it was Congress’s intent to have a taskforce. Think this TF has done a thoughtful job of writing this report.
- The clearinghouse can serve this function fairly well. A good example is the Partnership for Walkable America, which started Walk to School Day.
- Defer to knowledge about Federal process, but this is a report to advise only, final decision will not be made by the TF. Two other areas with Federal advisory committees have been with dietary guidelines and physical activity guidelines – both require updates every 5 years.
- Don’t believe there is another FHWA transportation program that rises to the level of having an ongoing Federal Advisory Committee. Also it should be pointed out that other transportation programs don’t operate in a vacuum – they do seek outside input. MUTCD as example – it has a great deal of outside input. Could it be in legislation that FHWA is required to submit report to Congress?

- Concern – if this is an issue that FHWA would say they don't agree with, does FHWA have option to say this about other areas of the report? Yes. FHWA will review report and in transmittal letter to Congress may state their views on the report overall or certain recommendations contained in the report. FHWA can't alter the report, can just comment on it.
- Request for clarification regarding cost for committee – if there was a new committee under clearinghouse would the same cost go with it? No –clearinghouse is pulling an expert panel together. Will have to use a less prescribed public process. There will be some cost, but it will be a lot less.
- Wearing advocacy hat – volunteer group doesn't always have influence over Congress. TF would potentially have this opportunity.
- Suggestion that State Coordinators could provide this information – difficult because they may not be able to look at things objectively
- Taskforce is task oriented – you do something and it ends. Are we talking about this or ongoing oversight committee? Have problems with oversight committee as this would cause duplication of efforts.
- Just had a U.S. Congressional hearing on the status of the Federal SRTS program and the General Accountability Office (GAO), an arm of Congress, is underway with a thorough audit of the program. To say there is not oversight is not recognizing the U.S. Congress and the oversight role they are exercising.
- What would clearinghouse do? What would committee do? Don't know.
- What would middle ground be? A group would have to be convened to provide a report to Congress. Wasn't this already covered by saying the Clearinghouse would convene experts as needed? Yes, that is what we agreed at the last meeting. Now question is – should this be pulled out of the Clearinghouse so it is not run by them, it is independent. Part of this review is to look at what Clearinghouse is doing and they are funded by FHWA.
- Compromise – require FHWA to provide report to Congress every 2 or 3 years. Does this report address strategic planning issues? Could recommend both progress and strategic direction.

Task Force Votes:

1. Stick with the consensus from the last meeting (as reflected in current draft). The Task Force would be sunsetted at end of this report and in future legislation. National Resource Center will be tasked with convening groups of experts around specific topics of national significance. Votes: 0
2. Stick with the consensus from the last meeting (as reflected in current draft). The Task Force would be sunsetted at end of this report and in future legislation. National Resource Center will be tasked with convening groups of experts around specific topics of national significance. **PLUS: FHWA would be directed to report to Congress on progress and strategic direction periodically. Votes: 11**
3. Establish a new Task Force (Federal Advisory Committee) in the next legislation to advise Congress on future legislation and progress on strategic goals. Also charge this new Task Force with developing a continuing strategy. Votes: 4

TF COMMENT ON CASE STUDIES

TF member noted that case studies and pictures provide the strongest possible link to make this a transportation program. Suggest case studies talk more about things other than sidewalks – crosswalks, signs, etc. TF member commented that he does not think the DC Pace Car program is part of SRTS and should be removed from the case studies. TF member suggested that the information on when the program began and how Federal funds will be used is included for all case studies in the appendix as well as in the full report. TF and consultants discussed time requirement for such a task and it was determined that consultants will add this information if they can within the time remaining. Consultant also clarified that the case studies were developed by the NCSRTS and have been approved by the people who gave them this information – may be a problem to make changes without consulting the original people who supplied the information, therefore this may be more time consuming than TF members realize. TF member requested that the case studies be made more succinct. Edit them and then have link to NCSRTS to get more information. Discussion of a possible additional appendix listing SRTS Coordinators resulted in the decision that the report could refer people to the Clearinghouse website for this information. Specific comments were: Page 41, line 13 (Hawaii): strike it; Page 41, line 21: extract detail

TF COMMENTS ON PHOTOS

TF commented that they would like to see more infrastructure in the pictures; requested consultants make a list of types of photos that are still needed and email to TF along with photo requirements and whatever photo waiver FHWA has.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE REPORT

TF members discussed a revised schedule for delivery of the report to Congress. Consultants will have to assess work required following this meeting, would need at least four weeks for graphics design once the text is finalized. This time includes getting all photos, quotes, case studies, etc. ready for the graphic designer, and back and forth with the graphic designer to ensure the final result is what we want. Ms. Smallwood reviewed what will happen after TF reviews graphics: graphic refinements will be made, then the report will be printed and transferred to the USDOT Secretary. It may take up to six months for the report to reach Congress, after it has been received by USDOT.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

Ms. Smallwood led the TF in a discussion of future meeting dates. The March 4th conference call was confirmed; at this call TF members will approve final report text and the report will go to graphic design. There is not sufficient time between March 4th and the previously scheduled April 17th meeting date to revise the report, complete graphic design, and then get out a draft in advance of the meeting. Therefore the April meeting date will be moved to May or June, at which time TF members will review/approve graphic design.

TF members requested time to review the next draft and make comments. Consultants will aim to provide next draft of report by February 23rd, allowing 10 days for TF review and comment. TF member suggested that TF members submit comments to consultants and have consultants summarize and highlight only key issues for the March conference call.

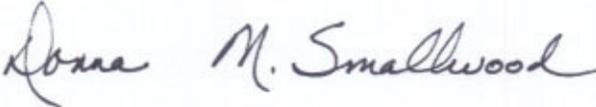
OTHER ISSUES

Michael King submitted a comment on a Liability tip sheet that TDG is developing for NCSRTS. The liability piece reads as if walking to school was a new invention. I suggest approaching the subject from the POV that SRTS is similar to any other effort to transport kids to school - school bus, parking lots, drop-off areas, city bus pass, taking kids on field trips, etc. It is a known activity, and with every activity there are liability concerns and risk management issues.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.



MAR - 3 2008

Donna Smallwood
Chair, National Safe Routes to School Task Force



MAR - 3 2008

Tim Arnade
Designated Federal Official for National Safe Routes to School Task Force
Office of Safety, Federal Highway Administration
These minutes will be formally adopted by the task force at its next meeting.