

**National Center for Safe Routes to School**  
**National Review Group Meeting**  
Grant Hyatt Metro Center  
Washington, DC



Tuesday, March 20, 2012

**Review Group Members Present:**

Barbara Alberson \*  
State and Local Injury Prevention  
California Department of Public Health

Jeffrey Beausen \*  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Division of Adolescent and School Health

Pat Childers  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Air and Radiation

Andy Clarke  
League of American Bicyclists

Philip Haberstro \*  
National Association for Health and Fitness

David Henderson  
Miami-Dade MPO

Deb Hubsmith  
Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Kit Keller  
Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle  
Professionals

Renee Kuhlman \*  
National Trust for Historic Preservation

Tina Lankford \*  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity

Tracy McMillan, PhD \*  
PPH Partners

Chris Metka  
State SRTS Coordinator  
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Sharon Roerty  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Kristin Rosenthal  
Safe Kids Worldwide

Sandra Schefkind  
American Occupational Therapy Association

Sabina Vyas \*  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Division of Adolescent and School Health

Arthur Wendel, MD \*  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for Environmental Health

\* Attended via telephone



**National Center Partners Present:**

Barbara Harsha  
Governors Highway Safety Association

Yolanda Savage-Narva  
America Walks

Jennifer Toole  
Toole Design Group

**US DOT Representatives Present:**

Becky Crowe  
Federal Highway Administration

Paula Bawer  
National Highway Traffic Safety  
Administration

**Invited Guests Present:**

Cpl. Jon Carrier  
National Association of School Resource  
Officers

Regina Langton  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Sustainable Communities

Richard Dolesh  
National Recreation and Park Association

Angela Mickalide, PhD  
Safe Kids Worldwide

Nicole Graziosi  
National Organizations for Youth Safety

Margo Pedroso  
Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Robin Joseph  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Children's Health Protection

Laura Sandt  
Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center

Marcia Kargbo  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Children's Health Protection

Brandi Sweet  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Indian Education

**National Center Staff Present:**

Lauren Marchetti, Director

Hilary Culbertson, Communications  
Coordinator

Nancy Pullen-Seufert, Associate Director

Seth LaJeunesse, Program Coordinator

Pam Barth, Project Manager

Mathew Palmer, Project Coordinator

Austin Brown, Program Manager

Diane Lambert, Senior Planner  
Toole Design Group



## Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Pam Barth, Project Manager for the National Center for Safe Routes to School (National Center). Rebecca Crowe, Program Manager for the Federal Safe Routes to School program, and Lauren Marchetti, Director of the National Center for Safe Routes to School, briefly welcomed National Review Group (NRG) members.

Ms. Marchetti called attention to a card that was distributed to all NRG members asking for input on future considerations for the National Center and/or the federal SRTS program. The question on the card was as follows: “During our 18-month extension, the National Center took on starting Bike to School Day, creating the Map-a-Route tool, and piloting a Peer-to-Peer program for State SRTS Coordinators. Moving forward, is there something you or your organization would like to see the National Center or the federal program consider?” Ms. Marchetti mentioned that the card would be collected at the break and the results discussed during the meeting. She reminded members that the NRG is intended to be both a sounding board for the National Center as well as a means to identify potential partnership opportunities.

Ms. Marchetti then facilitated introductions, asking participants to provide three words to describe what SRTS means to you or your organization. Responses included:

- |                                      |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Safe active communities              | Safely moving more              |
| Quality of life                      | Making healthy places           |
| Building social capital              | State coordinators              |
| Fitter, safer kids                   | Safety, mobility, options       |
| Building health leaders              | Safe alternative transportation |
| Old schools rock                     | Freedom and energy              |
| Provide best practices               | Joy, independence, routine      |
| Active and safe travels              | Children’s health               |
| Sustainability, childhood and energy | Safety of kids                  |
| independence                         | Think safe routes to parks      |
| Community health, mobility, choice   | Empower youth safety            |
| Keep kids safe                       | Health and livability           |
| Student participation                |                                 |

## SRTS and Success Stories

Pam Barth introduced the topic of SRTS and Success Stories by thanking NRG members for the time they spent with her on the phone this past winter identifying and discussing topics of interest to members. She described common themes and questions during the call, including: What’s the status of the legislation? What’s the status of the National Center? What’s going on with the national evaluation plan? How can well performing states share their strategies with



other states? Several members had asked for talking points on SRTS, and a handout on this was included in the meeting packet.

Because members had also asked to hear the stories of local SRTS programs, Ms. Barth and Ms. Marchetti spoke briefly about their experiences visiting the two 2011 SRTS Award winning schools: Omro Middle School in Omro, Wisconsin, and Heatherwood Elementary School in Boulder, Colorado. Ms. Marchetti commented that many NRG members served as judges for SRTS award, and that for the first time, two schools received the award. A slide show of photos from both schools accompanied the presentation, as well as a video from Heatherwood Elementary showing how they include students with disabilities in their program.

## **Update on Federal Transportation Legislation**

Rebecca Crowe provided a brief update on the transportation legislation, reminding members that the extension on the current SAFETEA-LU legislation expires March 31, 2012, and the National Center is federally funded through October. She added that the Senate recently passed their version of a transportation bill (entitled Map 21), and now the House of Representatives will consider the Senate version and/or will work through their own bill.

Andy Clarke, Director of the League of American Bicyclists, provided an overview of the Bike Summit, stating that with over 800 people attending, the Summit provides an opportunity to put a face to the thousands of emails, calls, and letters members of Congress have received in support of pedestrian and bicycle legislation. Mr. Clarke added that SRTS provides great stories and images as well.

Margo Pedroso, Deputy Director of the SRTS National Partnership, provided an update on the SRTS legislation. Ms. Pedroso reminded members that the current legislation has been extended eight times since 2009. Congress is struggling with how to pay for new legislation without increasing the gas tax or cutting programs. The House of Representatives presented a bill (HR-7) that would have reduced several pedestrian and bicycle programs, including SRTS, but it did not get enough support to move forward. She repeated Ms. Crowe's previous statement regarding the Senate bill, and added that it is likely that Congress will choose to extend the current legislation so that both the House and the Senate can continue to revise and seek support for their versions of the bill.

Chris Metka, SRTS Coordinator for the State of Pennsylvania, spoke briefly on how states are being affected by the delay in re-authorization. Mr. Metka stated that the state coordinators began to get anxious in 2010 when Congressman Oberstar left office, but the ongoing discussions have strengthened their resolve. It has been tough for coordinators and state



programs to plan funding cycles and contracts, and hard to plan transportation improvement programs for next four years. Mr. Metka answered a general question regarding barriers to raising obligation rates in Pennsylvania. He also answered a question about the variety of ways that State programs implement the non-infrastructure portion of their programs

Lauren Marchetti explained the National Center's approach to the current uncertainties being faced by the Federal SRTS Program. She stated that when the National Center contract received an 18-month extension in May 2011, staff, in consultation with FHWA, decided to continue to advance the program with major new initiatives, including planning the first National Bike to School Day, developing a new Walk and Bike to School Day website, and developing a new Map-a-Route tool. The National Center is working with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) to develop a Peer to Peer program to support and enable state SRTS coordinators to share their experiences and learning around selected topic. The goal is to pilot the program and submit a report by the end of October.

## **Bike to School Day**

Caroline Dickson, Communications and Marketing Manager for the National Center for Safe Routes to School and Senior Manager of Communications, Education and Outreach for the UNC-Chapel Hill Highway Safety Research Center, gave NRG members a demonstration of the new website developed to support both Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day ([www.walkbiketoschool.org](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org)). She explained that the website not only adds Bike to School Day but also improves Walk to School Day and creates resources for local programs that are doing things year-round. Ms. Dickson highlighted features of the new website, including content developed specifically for parents, new users, and experienced users, and a home page that will change seasonally. In addition, users who register events will be able to store information from previous events. Ms. Dickson closed by asking NRG members, when the announcement on the new website goes out, to pass the information along to their members and encourage them to register for BTS day. This year, to encourage event registration, there will be weekly drawings from registered schools for bike rack giveaways.

Nancy Pullen-Seufert, Associate Director of the National Center, added that many of the changes and improvements made to the website are responding to needs expressed by Walk to School Day event organizers and other website users. She introduced a new tool called Map-a-Route that will be on the [walkbiketoschool.org](http://walkbiketoschool.org) website. This tool will provide a way for people to map walking or biking routes to school. The map functionality allows one route for an individual as well as several routes for a school. Map-a-Route will also be helpful in planning walking and bicycling events and ongoing activities as it could be used to plan a walk to school



parade route, remote drop off area or walking school bus routes. Users will be able to add roadway features, such as stop signs, etc., and will be able to email or print and share the routes with others as they choose.

## Program Update

Nancy Pullen-Seufert provided a brief update of the work the National Center has done to keep SRTS relevant to a broad base of stakeholders. She mentioned several projects undertaken in two areas in particular: supporting local and state programs, and advancing the state of the practice. Ms. Pullen-Seufert told the group she was going to focus on activities that included NRG members and National Center partners. The National Center worked with others to support local and state programs through support for the 3<sup>rd</sup> SRTS National Conference held in 2011. She noted that RFP for the 4<sup>th</sup> SRTS National Conference will be released in coming months. Education was also being offered through monthly webinars – which included an NRG member as well as working with an NRG member to create a soon-to-be-released web-based walking school bus training. She noted the record breaking participation and big media events with National Center partners and NRG members in New York and Washington, D.C. for 2011 Walk to School Day.

Ms. Pullen-Seufert then turned to highlighting a few ways the National Center works with others to advance the state of the practice. Ms. Pullen-Seufert reminded members of the Federal Program Progress report the National Center released in 2011 which examined, among other things, what kind of projects are being funded, and whether low income communities are being equitably reached. She also noted that enhancements were made to the SRTS funded project map so that Title 1 schools are easy to find. Another way to share information about the progress and implementation of State SRTS programs is the SRTS Noteworthy Practices Guide written with the National Center's partner, AASHTO. The National Center also continues to produce quarterly tracking reports that include the number and dollar value of projects announced and numbers of applications received by each state. Ms. Pullen-Seufert noted that the National Center released results from a small study the National Center conducted that compared SRTS programs that achieved a measured increase in walking/bicycling rates to programs that did not and uncovered four promising strategies. The National Center has released two of a three-part series devoted to reporting on measurable results attained by SRTS programs and encourages local programs to evaluate and track changes. Finally, she noted the release of the Federal SRTS Program Evaluation Plan, informed by Roundtable Member input and review. Several NRG members were part of the Roundtable. The Evaluation Plan also was informed by another report from the National Center that looked specifically at the feasibility of conducting a crash-based evaluation of SRTS.



Over the course of her presentation she noted the National Center working with (or planning to work with) the following organizations:

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
- America Walks
- Bureau of Indian Education
- California Department of Public Health
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Governors Highway Safety Association
- Institute of Transportation Engineers
- League of American Bicyclists
- National Association of School Resource Officers
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- National Organization for Youth Safety
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- PPH Partners
- PedNet Coalition
- Safe Kids
- SRTS National Partnership
- UN Decade of Action for Road Safety

## **National Review Group Feedback for SRTS and the National Center**

Lauren Marchetti and National Center Partner Jennifer Toole of Toole Design Group summarized NRG member responses to the card question distributed to members at the beginning of the meeting: *Moving forward, is there something you or your organization would like to see the National Center or the federal SRTS program consider?* The cards were reviewed and the group heard about some of the key themes including:

- Focus on Peer to Peer - states will have more success with obligation rates if we can pair states (high with low); similarly with using categorical exclusions.
- Think about SRTS 2.0 – need some strategies for keeping programs going if the federal program ceases to exist. What would state or local programs look like without the federal program?
- Develop a national template for school travel plans and integrate it with the data system to make it easy for schools to make a plan for SRTS.
- Develop a system to allow local programs build a GIS database of their needs.
- Improve the engineering guide and provide more engineering tools, focusing on those that are more generally accepted.
- Provide more outreach to Indian schools, training state coordinators on culture issues.



- Attend the School Resource Officer national conference.
- Explore Safe Routes to Parks, National Bike to your Park day.
- Collect data on how many SRTS programs are afterschool programs.
- Continue to link to national physical activity programs such as Let's Move, and link SRTS to speed reduction campaigns.

Ms. Marchetti stated that this is start of a conversation between the National Center and NRG members, and that the National Center will continue to explore these ideas moving forward.

## **Adjourn**

Lauren Marchetti and Rebecca Crowe thanked the NRG for another productive meeting, reminding participants that NRG members will be important to keep SRTS going, especially if the federal program changes form. Ms. Marchetti encouraged members to continue to communicate ideas to National Center. The meeting adjourned at 4:10.