THE FEDERAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

(110–75)

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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U.S. House of Representatives
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September 28, 2007

SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER

TO: Members of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit

FROM: Subcommittee on Highways and Transit Staff

SUBJECT: Hearing on the Federal Safe Routes to School Program

PURPOSE OF HEARING

The Subcommittee on Highways and Transit is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, October 2, 2007 at 10:00 a.m., to receive testimony on the progress of the Federal Safe Routes to School program, created under the most recent surface transportation authorizing legislation. The Subcommittee will hear from the Kansas Safe Routes to School State Coordinator and officials with the National Center for Safe Routes to School, the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, and the Bicycle Transportation Alliance.

BACKGROUND

The Federal Safe Routes to School ("SRTS") program was created in section 1404 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users ("SAFETEA-LU"). Congress funded this program at $612 million over five years. The objectives of the program, as stated in section 1404, are: to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school; to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

The U.S. Department of Transportation ("DOT") reports that in 1969, 42 percent of children walked or rode bicycles to school.[1] By 2001, that percentage had dropped to less than 15

[1] U.S. Department of Transportation's 1969 Nationwide Personal Travel Study

percent.[2] A variety of factors have contributed to this decline, including a lack of adequate infrastructure near schools and in neighborhoods and parental concerns over safety.

The Federal SRTS program grew out of an earlier pilot program administered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration ("NHTSA"). Marin County, California and Arlington, Massachusetts were chosen as pilot cities, and in the year 2000, each received a one-time grant of $50,000 from NHTSA. Both pilots were considered successful by those involved.

In Marin County, the number of students walking to school rose by 57 percent, the number of students biking rose by 57 percent, and the number of kids being driven to school dropped by 29 percent.[3] The Arlington program, which focused solely on walking, resulted in 268 less cars trips each day: a vehicle miles traveled ("VMT") reduction of 840 miles each day.[4] In addition to these pilots, several other countries have had success with similar programs. In the 1970s, Odense, Denmark initiated a safe routes program to combat their child pedestrian fatality rate, and succeeded in lowering accidents by 82 percent.[5]

Safe Routes to School Projects

A variety of infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects are eligible for Safe Routes to School funding. Eligible infrastructure projects include: sidewalk improvements, traffic calming, speed reduction improvements, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, on-street bicycle facilities, off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, secure bicycle parking, and traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools. Eligible non-infrastructure projects include: public awareness campaigns, traffic education and enforcement in the vicinity of schools, student sessions on bicycle and pedestrian safety, health, and environment, and funding for training, volunteers, and managers of safe routes programs. Infrastructure projects may be carried out on any public road or any bicycle or pedestrian pathway or trail in the vicinity of primary and middle schools.

Safe Routes to School is guided by the Federal Highway Administration's ("FHWA") Office of Safety, and is administered by state departments of transportation. Program funds are apportioned to the States through a ratio that accounts for the total student enrollments in primary and middle schools in each state. SAFETEA-LU provides a minimum apportionment of $1 million for each State in each fiscal year, and directs the Secretary to set aside not more than $3 million for administrative expenses before the State apportionment occurs. States are then required to use not less than 10 percent, and not more than 30 percent, of their apportioned funds for non-infrastructure projects. SRTS funds are 100 percent Federal, are non-transferable, and are available until expended.

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[2] U.S. Department of Transportation's 2001 National Household Travel Survey
[3] Marin County Bicycle Coalition's Safe Routes to Schools Demonstration Project Final Report
[4] Arlington, Massachusetts Safe Routes to Schools Demonstration Project Final Report
[5] Andersen, Troels. "Safe Routes Give Healthy Cycling Children"

The principles of the "5 Es" are often applied to SRTS projects. The 5 Es are:

- **Engineering:** Various design and engineering techniques can lead to a safer walking and biking environment, including sidewalks, bicycle parking, crosswalks, paths, and speed bumps.

- **Enforcement:** Enforcement strategies aim to deter unsafe behaviors by motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. In the context of SRTS, this generally entails law enforcement agencies working alongside parents, students, crossing guards, and school personnel to enforce safe habits by all transportation users.

- **Encouragement:** Encouragement strategies aim to raise enthusiasm about SRTS through special events, ongoing activities, and contests.

- **Education:** This strategy involves teaching pedestrian, cyclist, and traffic safety. This can range from teaching elementary school children how to safely cross the street to teaching older students how to follow traffic rules when cycling.

- **Evaluation:** Surveys reveal attitudes about walking and cycling, and can be helpful in shaping a program in its early stages. Subsequent tally sheets and travel surveys are key elements to determine the effectiveness of a SRTS program. In addition to the broad goals laid out by Section 1404, FHWA has issued SRTS program guidance which lists a variety of desired outcomes. Since SRTS programs can vary between communities, the desired outcomes are a broad list of factors by which the success of the program can be gauged, such as:
  - Increased bicycle, pedestrian, and traffic safety
  - More children walking and bicycling to and from schools
  - Decreased traffic congestion
  - Improved childhood health
  - Reduced childhood obesity
  - Encouragement of healthy and active lifestyles
  - Improved air quality
  - Improved community safety
  - Reduced fuel consumption
  - Increased community security
  - Enhanced community accessibility
  - Increased community involvement
  - Improvements to the physical environment that increase the ability to walk and bicycle to and from schools
  - Improved partnerships among schools, local municipalities, parents, and other community groups, including non-profit organizations
  - Increased interest in bicycle and pedestrian accommodations

Safe Routes to School Coordinators

Section 1404 requires States to use a sufficient amount of their apportionment to hire a full-time Safe Routes to School State Coordinator. This position is modeled after, but must be separate from, the State Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator. State SRTS Coordinators are responsible for the implementation of the program within their State. The coordinator works in cooperation with others in the State DOT, including the Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator and safety personnel, and community officials, local schools, law enforcement, and non-profit organizations to establish their State's SRTS program.

Currently, all 50 States and the District of Columbia have hired either a permanent coordinator or an interim point-of-contact. Additionally, the District of Columbia, Virginia, Maine, and South Dakota are the only States with interim points-of-contact; all other States have full-time SRTS coordinators.

The Safe Routes to School Clearinghouse

SAFETEA-LU also directs the Secretary to make grants to a national nonprofit organization for the creation of a SRTS clearinghouse. The purpose of the clearinghouse is to develop informational and educational programs on SRTS and to provide technical assistance and disseminate techniques and strategies used for successful SRTS programs. FHWA issued a request for applications for the clearinghouse in January 2006. The University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center was selected, and the National Center for Safe Routes to School was established in May 2006.

The clearinghouse acts as a repository for a wealth of information on all aspects of the SRTS program, and issues quarterly reports tracking topics including state-by-state breakdowns of funds invested, the number of schools involved with SRTS, and the program status in each of the States. The clearinghouse provides tools for collecting data on SRTS, including student travel tally sheets and parent surveys to aid in determining the success of the program. It also provides training and media support to state and local agencies.

The clearinghouse's most recent tracking report, for summer 2007, reported that $94.5 million of funding has been spent or committed to SRTS projects. This number does not include money that States are spending for administrative purposes, or salaries for SRTS coordinators. Twenty-nine States have announced funding for local or statewide SRTS programs, and each State and the District of Columbia have active SRTS programs in various stages. Almost 700 schools are now participating in the program.[6]

Safe Routes to School Task Force

The Federal SRTS program also provides for the creation of a SRTS Task Force. The task force is charged with developing a strategy for the advancement of SRTS nationwide. The task force is comprised of leaders in health, transportation, education, safety, and law enforcement. Thus far, the task force has held three meetings, with another meeting scheduled for November 2007.

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[6] National Center for Safe Routes to School Summer 2007 SRTS Program Tracking Brief

The task force's upcoming report will detail the need for the Federal SRTS program, an assessment of relevant data, a look at the challenges that the program faces, and its vision and future strategy for the program. This document will provide direction to Congress and help to lay the groundwork for the future of the Federal SRTS program.

PREVIOUS SUBCOMMITTEE ACTION

This will be the first Subcommittee hearing on the Federal Safe Routes to School program.

WITNESS LIST

PANEL I

Ms. Lauren Marchetti
National Center for Safe Routes to School
Director
Chapel Hill, NC

Ms. Deb Hubsmith
Safe Routes to School National Partnership
Director
Fairfax, CA

Mr. Scott Bricker
Bicycle Transportation Alliance
Interim Executive Director
Portland, OR

Ms. Lisa Koch
Kansas Department of Transportation
Safe Routes to School Coordinator
Topeka, KS

HEARING ON THE FEDERAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

Tuesday, October 2, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 2167, Rayburn House Office Building, the Honorable Peter A. DeFazio [chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Mr. DEFAZIO. The Subcommittee will come to order as soon as I turn on my microphone.

Today, the subject matter is a hearing on the Federal Safe Routes to School program. Coming down the hall, I thought we had created a massive amount of interest when I saw the police and crowd, but I find that was a scandal instead of something that is substantial in contributing to the future of our Country.

This program, which the Chairman of the Committee took a particular hand in creating, in my opinion, and I believe probably others share this sentiment, can address a number of problems simultaneously in the United States. We have a childhood obesity problem. If we can change the habits of children and make them less sedentary, that will lead to a life-long improvement in health. It is solving problems for children who are today, already, riding their bikes or walking to school, who are not the new entrants in the program, but who are doing it in areas that are not safe.

In my hometown of Eugene we have had one fatality of a small young boy who was riding his bike and crossing a four-lane road, and the car closest to him stopped, and as he was obscured riding past that, a young driver who was speeding past that car in the outer lane killed the child. We had another incident of a child in the crosswalk who was seriously injured.

And I know this is repeated around the Country. There are obviously improvements we can make in the routes that our children might use to go to school, in addition to getting more children to choose to walk or ride bikes to school.

So I think this sort of interim hearing on what progress we are making, what problems there might be with the program will help direct its future.

With that, I would turn to the Ranking Member, Mr. Duncan, for his comments.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank all of the witnesses that have come here to testify this morning and thank you for calling this hearing.

The topic of today's hearing is the Safe Routes to School program that was created in SAFETEA-LU. This program was intended to pay for infrastructure improvements around elementary and middle schools to make it safer and easier for students to walk or bike to school. Funding from this program can also be used to pay for non-infrastructure activities that encourage walking and biking to school.

Where it makes sense, I think it is great if children are able to walk or bike to school. I think the goals and objectives of this program are very admirable, and I think we can all agree that childhood obesity is a major problem in our society and that any program that enables children to be more active is a good program.

Some people have raised concerns about whether these activities should be funded through the Federal Highway program and the Highway Trust Fund because, before the end of 2009, the account of the Highway Trust Fund will run out of money. In fiscal year 2009, the Safe Routes to School program will receive $183 million. In that same year, we allocate only $90 million for highway improvements on high-risk rural roads, and we set aside only $100 million for emergency highway repairs to respond to natural disasters and disasters like the collapse of the I-35 bridge in Minnesota.

I think the Safe Routes to School program is a wonderful and worthwhile program, but we need to make sure that we don't shortchange other programs that would perhaps save even more lives.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you. With that, I would see if other Members have opening statements.

Ms. Matsui?

Ms. MATSUI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this important hearing. I just want to first start out by saying that Safe Routes to School is a wonderful and a worthwhile new program that Congress authorized in SAFETEA-LU.

In my district, in Sacramento, we are having great success with this program. For example, one of our school districts has created a program—and I think this has happened in other States too—called Walking Wednesdays. It encourages the kids and the parents to walk or bike to school together. It encourages more family time, which I guess all of us know there is not enough of, but also promotes a better appreciation for the healthiness of walking and encourages alternate modes of transportation. These are all lessons that can be used later in life and can help build healthier communities.

I am looking forward to working on these issues with you, Mr. Chairman. I am also looking forward to hearing from today's witnesses. I thank you and I yield back.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you.

Mr. Coble.

Mr. COBLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be very brief.

I want to welcome the panelists, especially my fellow North Carolinian, Ms. Marchetti, and I want to associate with the remarks, Mr. Chairman, of the gentleman from Tennessee. I believe the goals are indeed admirable, and I too look forward to hearing the testimony today, and I yield back.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you. With that, I would turn to the Chairman of the Full Committee, Mr. Oberstar, the father of the Safe Routes to School program. Or grandfather or whatever you would like to be.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will take full credit, responsibility, obligation, but that has to be shared with so many dozens of others who were there at the creation of this initiative.

I thank you for allowing us to hold this hearing. And the gentleman from Tennessee, who is ever so diligent in supporting the activities of the Committee and for his ever-thoughtful comments, thank you so very much.

Ms. Matsui, in whose city there is a very strong, very effective Safe Routes to School program, on its way to being an award-winning project with use of all of the initiatives, the education, the traffic calming, the actual walking and cycling to school, engaging parents, faculty, administration, and the city engineering office as well. The program also works well when the mayor of the community, Mayor Heather Fargo, in this case, is strongly supportive. My hat is off to Sacramento and to Portland and to so many other cities across the Country.

The real purpose of this hearing is to fulfill what I said at the outset of the creation of the Safe Routes to School initiative, is that it has to be accountable; that we have to take measure of the program in its initial stages, halfway through, and then at the end of the authorization period, when, on the eve of 2009, we will be writing a new transportation bill under the leadership of the gentleman from Oregon.

I said this is a new initiative. It is one that has great hope, great promise for the future, and for that reason we have to hold it accountable and we have to review its progress, make sure that it is achieving the goals set out and, if not, to adjust that program.

Well, I am quite satisfied that not only are the goals of Safe Routes to School being achieved, but exceeded. For that, at the outset, I want to thank Tim Arnade, who is at the Federal Highway Administration, the national director of the Safe Routes to School program for the U.S. Department of Transportation. Mr. Arnade put himself, Mr. Chairman, heart and soul, full energy into the development of the guidelines, working with State coordinators for Safe Routes to School across the Country as they were designated by each State; developed a comprehensive plan, a model for each of the States to follow; and then, when all the coordinators were designated, he gathered them, had a conference, got the best ideas, best practices, and moved this initiative forward.

We didn't ask him to testify; that should come at a later date in the program. We should hear from those who are on the firing line.

I also, at this point, want to thank our Safe Routes coordinator in Minnesota, Kristie Billiar. She is the best thing the Minnesota Department of Transportation has done over the last three years. Everything else has gone to hell in a hand basket over there; the bridge collapsed, they can't get their act together, can't pass an increase in the gas tax. But they can do Safe Routes to School, and they have done it exceedingly well.

When I crafted this idea, it was following a presentation by the Centers for Disease Control in March of 2000 on results of a five

year longitudinal study of obesity in America's children. This study reported that, 40 years ago, 60 percent of all children walked and biked to school; in 2000, less than 2 percent; that, further, 25 percent of children were clinically obese, that is, more than 30 percent above their ideal body weight; that 60 percent of children 15 and under were clinically seriously overweight or verging on obesity; that 65 percent of adult Americans were clinically overweight or obese; that 75 percent of trips by children 15 and under were by vehicle, motor vehicle, to school, from school; that twice a day air quality is severely deteriorated at school areas because idling of buses and cars and SUVs and the rest.

There were many other disturbing data, but the worst of all was that Type II diabetes had doubled in five years among children 15 and under. No period in health statistics had seen such a dramatic increase in disease, a preventable disease, largely.

So I gathered a group of enthusiasts for cycling. Actually, I went out and did a ride on my bike that afternoon. It was a short session that day and I went out and I meditated on the issue, called a group of cycling/pedestrian advocates together in my office and I read those statistics to them and I said I have a plan to fix it, I am going to call it Safe Routes to School. Someone raised their hand and said it is a great idea, it has already been done in England. I said, well, it is still a pretty good idea, even though the Brits already did it.

They cited to me the study which had been completed three years—more than a study, an experiment—three years sustainable transportation, and in those three years the Brits had really changed habits of young people; created Walking School Buses. They did infrastructure changes at intersections: widened the crossings, brighter striping; as I said, Walking School Buses for children, wearing the same clothing or hats. They engaged parents and school administrators, and in the third year of the program more bicycles were sold in the U.K. than automobiles. Well, I am not out to sell more bikes than automobiles with this program, but, in fact, that is what is happening. Last year, more bicycles were sold in the United States than automobiles.

So we took that idea, we had—to shorten the story—engaged the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to commit to two grants of $50,000 each, one to support a principally walking program in Arlington, Massachusetts, and the other principally a bicycling program in Marin County, California. Thanks to the energy, enthusiasm, and creativity of Deb Hubsmith, that Marin County program was a resounding success, and the same in Arlington, Massachusetts, where they revived school crossing guards that had long been dormant in that city; and in both places lessons learned, lessons applied resulted in the draft legislation and finally inclusion in SAFETEA-LU, and here we are with an enormously successful initiative.

You have many opportunities in the legislative arena to do good of one kind or another. Many of us get an amendment passed and occasionally we get a bill passed. But rarely do you have an opportunity like this, to change the habits of an entire generation, and that is what we can do with Safe Routes to School. We can save an entire generation, and those to follow them, from childhood dia-

betes, from obesity, into safer walking, bicycling habits; change the safety parameters in the school arena. And we are seeing the benefits, seeing the results, and seeing the success of those initiatives with the program on which we will hear a full report today.

Over 700 schools in just the first two years of the program have initiated programs and had reports and success. Safe Routes to School is now in all 50 States and the District of Columbia. Law enforcement, families, children, school boards, city governments, all are engaged. We have a Safe Routes to School clearinghouse with Lauren Marchetti at the University of North Carolina School of Public Health, and serving as a center for sharing information, best practices, and making sure that information gets out quickly, Safe Routes Task Force, headed by Deb Hubsmith. All are working together, sharing their experiences, and the best result of all is that we are seeing success in reducing Type II diabetes, high cholesterol and blood pressure among school children.

I look forward to the testimony, which I have read already, frankly; I stayed up until the early hours of the morning making sure I read every page of it, and I am very excited about the report we will receive this morning.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Are there other Members who wish to make an opening statement?

[No response.]

Mr. DEFAZIO. Seeing none, we will then proceed to the witnesses and we will begin with Ms. Marchetti.

TESTIMONY OF LAUREN MARCHETTI, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL CENTER FOR SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL, CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA; DEB HUBSMITH, DIRECTOR, SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP, FAIRFAX, CALIFORNIA; SCOTT BRICKER, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE, PORTLAND, OREGON; AND LISA KOCH, COORDINATOR, KANSAS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL, TOPEKA, KANSAS

Ms. MARCHETTI. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify. It is an honor and privilege to be here before you to discuss this wonderful program. I also want to thank Congressman Coble for his kind statement of support. But I particularly want to thank the Committee and Chairman Oberstar, and his staff in particular, for their tremendous leadership in making this a reality.

The Safe Routes to School concept has been described as small steps, perhaps, but millions of them and all in the right direction. It is a simple and powerful concept. Where it is safe, encourage children to enjoy the walk to school as generations before them did. Where it is not safe, bring together the community partners and resources to make it safe. Unfortunately, in some places, children are walking and biking to school in unsafe conditions. Often, this is in urban, low resource areas. These children deserve better.

Housed within the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, the National Center works with the Federal Government, all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and local pro-

grams throughout the Country to help implement the Safe Routes to School program. We are pleased that our partners include the American Association of State Transportation Officials, America Walks, the Governors Highway Safety Association, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, and Toole Design.

The clearinghouse serves three main functions. Build capacity. This is done largely with training and technical support. Promote demand. I will talk to you later about the wonderful things that Walk to School Day is accomplishing. And, finally, understand what works. This is very important to us. Successful programs and strategies must be identified and shared so all schools can benefit.

As Chairman Oberstar was saying, we are on the convergence of major issues that Safe Routes to School programs can address. The obesity epidemic and related illnesses that we are experiencing have reached our children, leading public health professionals to warn that this generation of children may be the first not to live to be as old as their parents. Now, that stuns a lot of people when they hear that.

Concerns about traffic congestion, the environment, and our dependency on foreign fuel have spurred many to look for alternatives. Walking is the form of transportation and physical activity that is the easiest to do and most affordable for all. As more and more adults and children seek this ability, we must be proactive in our efforts to make these modes safe and accessible.

With over 30 years experience in the transportation safety field, I have seen a lot of programs. Yet, I am amazed at how quickly so many States have embraced Safe Routes to School, and at the commitment and enthusiasm of the State coordinators. You will hear that spirit when Lisa Koch testifies shortly.

I would like to make five points. One, the Federal program is going strong. They had three requirements: to establish the Safe Routes to School program, establish a clearinghouse, and create a national task force. I am here to inform you that FHWA has moved aggressively to accomplish all three. As Chairman Oberstar mentioned, they appointed a senior level employee, Tim Arnade, to serve as the contact person within six weeks of passage of SAFETEA-LU. This was crucial to the speed with which the program advanced. Within two months, the first two years of funding were issued to the States. By the time the program was one year old, 13 States had announced funding.

The clearinghouse was established in May 2006, and we too understood speed was important. Within three months we had a comprehensive web site, we had convened a meeting of the State coordinators, we started providing free training to each State, and we had established a tracking program.

The national task force was established in October 2006 and, as a member of that organization, I can testify that we have already met three times, about to have our fourth meeting, and we are working hard to get our report out.

My second point is that States are engaged and running with the program. Two key provisions made that happen: the requirement for full-time coordinators and the flexibility in allowing States to use a variety of approaches. Funds are also reaching the communities and we are seeing early successes. As of July, 40 States had

completed or were actively involved in soliciting local Safe Routes to School program applications.

Data is also being collected. We have set up a tracking system. We are going to be looking at programs, and the resulting database will support national level and overall program evaluation. We will be able to see what is working and share that information quickly.

I would like to end my testimony with a success that gives me particular joy. Tomorrow, October 3rd, is International Walk to School Day. I am very proud to say that that started in the United States in 1997. The Brits joined us later. This year, it will be celebrated in 42 countries. The importance to me about this is that it is an event that has caught on in all 50 States, with over 3,000 schools registered this year. And it isn't just an event. When they do the walk to school activity, they go on to start programs and get engaged and remember how much they used to enjoy walking to school, at least the adults when they were young.

In conclusion, I want to say that the Safe Routes to School program is off to a great start because of parents and schools that want better for their children, advocates who are dedicating their time to where their hearts are—and you will hear that in Deb Hubsmith's testimony, I am sure—and the State coordinators, like Lisa Koch, for whom this is not just a job, but a way to improve the lives of school children.

I would like to thank the Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Subcommittee for this opportunity to tell you the wonderful things I am seeing out there.

I want to leave you with one statement from a coordinator in a State that is dealing with some rough economic times. In an application for an award that we are going to be giving out soon, he said, often, because neighborhood schools are the single remaining institution in blighted areas around which a community can rally, Safe Routes to School is the catalyst that engages neighborhoods again and empowers them, through success, to stem decline and recreate community.

Thank you.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you.

Ms. Hubsmith.

Ms. HUBSMITH. Yes, good morning, Chairman Oberstar, Chairman DeFazio, and Ranking Member Duncan, and Members of the Committee. I am pleased to be here today to have the opportunity to speak with you about the success of the Federal Safe Routes to School program.

Overall, my assessment is that the program is doing extremely well and is very popular. Still, there are some things that Congress can do to improve its success, and I will highlight those opportunities throughout my testimony.

I have been involved with Safe Routes to School programs for nearly 10 years. In 1999, California passed the first legislation to allow for a Safe Routes to School program, and then, in the year 2000, as Chairman Oberstar mentioned, I had the opportunity to help to manage a pilot program for the National Highway Traffic Safeway Administration in Marin County, California. We were asked by the Federal Government to incorporate the five E's as part of our Safe Routes to School program, recognizing that if you

build it, they don't always come. So in order to create a program, in order to change people's behavior, you need to use a variety of techniques.

So our program used the 5 Es, starting off with Evaluation, asking parents why they are driving their children to school now and what it would take to change their behavior, and taking initial baseline information; Engineering, taking a look at the routes to schools and what could be changed, and then creating priority lists and seeing what the city can do on their own funding and what type of applications are needed from State or Federal governments; Education, taking a look at traffic safety and how we can improve that in the schools and on the streets; Encouragement, activities like Walk to School Day; and then Enforcement, working together with law enforcement.

So Safe Routes to School became a comprehensive program that really brought the city and the school together and directed the resources of these entities to make a difference. It worked so well that when the Congress passed the Safe Routes to School legislation, the Federal Highway Administration created guidance recommending the 5 E's for Safe Routes to School, and that has been a tenet for its success.

I went on to form the Safe Routes to School National Partnership that is a network of more than 300 organizations now, including the Institute for Transportation Engineers, the American Association of School Administrators, Rails to Trails Conservancy, and the League of American Bicyclists. We are working to grow the Safe Routes to School movement, set best practices, and to share information. We released this report yesterday, Safe Routes to School: The State of the States, and there are copies here that will be available for you to pick up later if you are interested.

I would like to cover four points as to how Safe Routes to School is succeeding. Number one, it is being proven that the program is increasing walking and bicycling to school. In California, where we have had a program now for six years. The Department of Transportation released a study this January that showed that at schools that received improvements, we increased the number of children walking and bicycling in the range of 20 percent to 200 percent.

Secondly, Safe Routes to School builds important partnerships, both at the State level and also at the local level. It brings together partnerships like the Health Department, law enforcement, and the Departments of Transportation and Education, partners that may not have always worked together before.

Our friends in Knoxville, Tennessee report that the Regional Transportation Planning Organization is particularly proud of the fact that they have worked with the Bearden Elementary School and the Beaumont Elementary School to run active Safe Routes to School programs, and they are now applying for Federal funds to expand to three more schools. And they are particularly proud of the fact of how they brought together these diverse partners.

Thirdly, Safe Routes to School is reaching low income communities. By providing the 100 percent funding for the program, it allows for communities that may not have the resources to apply for grants to do so, and the Active Living Resource Center, funded by

the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is making an effort to work with DOTs to have that happen. It is being successful.

In addition, another success is that Safe Routes to School is leveraging additional funds. Foundations like the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Bikes Belong Coalition, and the Harvest Foundation have invested money to help make this program succeed. In addition, thousands of parents give their time, through Walking School Buses and other activities, in order to make the program work. This adds value to the Federal program.

There are three opportunities and challenges that I would like to address where Congress can help. First, there is a latent demand for the funding for this program. In most States, we have seen way more requests than funding is available. In fact, many times it is five times the amount of funding that is available. In New Jersey, $74 million was requested for only $4.15 million that was available.

Secondly, the Federal requirements for Safe Routes to School reflect Title 23, and while it is extremely important to have rigorous oversight for the expenditure of Federal funds, many of these programs are very small in nature, and the administrative fees and time it takes to implement them are quite intense. It would be great if we could work together with Congress to streamline these activities, because many of the changes are taking place in an existing built environment and result in educational programs.

Thirdly, we would like to work with you on improved data collection. We are very pleased that the National Center for Safe Routes to School has developed parent-student collection surveys, and these are good, but we would like to work with you to improve the census questions, to have questions related to school travel, and to fund the National Household Travel Survey. In addition, as the State DOTs report information to FHWA, we would like to have more information reported on bicycle and pedestrian data and Safe Routes to School.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not address recent criticisms that have been directed at the use of Federal dollars for Safe Routes to School and other bicycle and pedestrian programs. Please let me point out that the funding for this program represents only 0.2 percent of the overall funding in the Federal transportation bill. Our children are worth 0.2 percent of the Federal transportation funds.

Secondly, many communities report that 20 percent to 30 percent of the morning traffic is parents driving their kids to school. This is helping to relieve that traffic congestion. In addition, municipal costs are rising for school bus transportation, so many States are cutting this. We need to provide a way for these kids that are now on the streets to get to school safely.

As was mentioned by the Chairman, U.S. activity among children has plummeted, and now one third of our U.S. children are overweight and obese. That is 25 million children. And there are huge costs for the United States for this. In addition, walking and biking to school reduce greenhouse gas emissions and it reduces energy, and these are priorities for our Nation.

Safe Routes to School is creating a stronger America, a healthier America, and I would like to thank Congress for making the opportunity available for every family and every child to make a dif-

ference in their health and the health of this Nation. Safe Routes to School is a program the United States can be proud of. Thank you very much. I look forward to working with you to strengthen the program and to answering your questions.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you.

Mr. Bricker.

Mr. BRICKER. Thank you, Chair DeFazio, Chair Oberstar, Ranking Member Duncan, and Members of the Committee. My name is Scott Bricker and I am with the Bicycle Transportation Alliance from Oregon. I am very pleased to be here, very excited to be up here testifying. I am hoping to provide just a small, brief snapshot of what is going on in Oregon, successes and challenges that one State is facing.

In 1996, I started working on youth mobility issues as part of my master's degree at Portland State University in transportation planning. For two years I rode bicycles with children to school, after school, and worked with them on what types of transportation needs they needed and had.

In 1998, I worked with the Bicycle Transportation Alliance to write a grant to ODOT, the Transportation Safety Division, to get money, actually FHWA money, to start a bicycle safety education program. In the last eight years, that program has taught over 40,000 children a 10 hour traffic safety course riding bicycles on the street.

In Oregon, we have worked to be part of the National Safe Routes to School partnership and I have been on the board of that organization with Deb. We passed Oregon Safe Routes to School laws in 2001, 2005, and 2007, and in Oregon, recently, we created a Safe Routes to School advisory committee, as well, to help write rules in the Oregon law, but also mostly because of the Federal program.

In Oregon, communities up and down the State have been working on and grappling with issues about bicycling, walking to school, and the children. In Eugene and Springfield, the Lane Transit District has been working to try and increase safety of children and get bus passes into kids' hands, trying to increase walking and biking to school.

In Albany, one community volunteer, Jim Lawrence, has been working with the community to grapple people to work with this issue of congestion in front of his schools, and in Corvallis, the Benton County Health Coalition has been working to try and do the same.

In Bend, the Public Works Department created Oregon's first Safe Routes to School plan in Bear Creek Elementary School, working with the principal and a couple parents, and in Ashland and Medford the communities have been working with their traffic safety committees in the community to try and handle this issue.

Finally, in Portland, we have been working for the last four years to try and increase Safe Routes to Schools.

In all of these programs the community has been really the group that has been leading this effort. In fact, in none of these communities has the school been the place that has been leading this effort. At the same time, Oregon spends $300 million a year on school bus transportation. Today, Oregon receives about $1 mil-

lion a year from the Safe Routes to School program. And, in Oregon, only 30 percent of the kids actually take the bus.

What is the problem here? The Federal Safe Routes to School program has given the impetus, with only $1 million a year, to help form these coalitions, to help actually bring these people together to create school travel plans, to create strategies, and to apply to receive Federal Safe Routes to School funds. In fact, in Oregon, in 2005, we passed a law stating that to get Safe Routes to School funds you would have to have a school transportation plan or some kind of strategy; not a very formalized plan, but a strategy, a discussion between the city and the schools or the county and the schools.

The Federal program has been successful in Oregon because it has helped leverage real partnerships; it has helped bring me out here, and this is my first time testifying in front of Congress, and I really am excited and slightly nervous to be up here, but you have the potential to have more and more people who have never been here before because of this program. Yesterday we had a press conference with children who came with bikes and were walking, had a chance to have a civics lessons. Kids who, in the past, were not empowered to bicycle and walk to school today are being so.

I believe that, for Oregon, the Federal Safe Routes to School program has had some very specific positive impacts. One, it has been the impetus to help us create our Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee, which really is a coalition and has, for the first time, Department of Education, School transportation people in the same room with ODOT, with the transportation department. Two, as I had mentioned, it is creating partnerships between health departments, between cities, between schools, between advocates like myself, parents, safety advocates, a wide range of people that have never worked before together in this way. And, three, it has real money. Even at $1 million a year, we can build crosswalks, we can build curb extensions, we can build meeting islands, and we can also provide safety education to children in Oregon. We can promote bicycling and walking to school and active, healthy lifestyles, and those things are happening.

There are some problems or some concerns that we have, stumbling blocks about the programs. Our stumbling block is the construction requirements that are required by FHWA. With $1 million a year, and perhaps only $700,000 a year, we are encouraging communities in Oregon to only submit small applications, between $35,000 and $250,000 per school. Two hundred fifty thousand is one traffic signal. To have to go through the Federal hoops, right now, we haven't even figured out in Oregon. We are encouraging bundling of projects; we are encouraging a streamlining process and seeing if there is any way we can streamline the evaluation project. If you are going to build a $2,000 speed bump, you shouldn't have to have a $10,000 administrative fee.

At the same time, the promotion and education programs have already been funded, and those programs are moving forward.

The other thing that we are stumbling with is the issue of supplanting ongoing costs. We would like to be able to fund ongoing bicycle safety education, but we are not exactly sure if this program

will let us do it for more than one or two years, and that is something that we are working on.

In summary, in Oregon, the demand greatly outpaces the cost of available revenue and ODOT is doing an excellent, in the Transportation Safety Division, managing this program. At the same time, planning does take time. With only two years after the Federal program has really been released, communities are still trying to put their plans together. So we are excited to move this forward and have more and more schools submit programs and plans to you all.

So I encourage you and I look forward to working with you all to increase this funding in the future to keep this program going and to let us continue this great work. Thank you.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Bricker.

Ms. Koch.

Ms. KOCH. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Duncan, and Members of the Committee. My name is Lisa Koch, and I am the Coordinator of the Kansas Safe Routes to School program at the Kansas Department of Transportation in Topeka. In addition to my oral testimony today, please accept my written testimony, which I have submitted for the record.

Thank you for holding this timely hearing on the status of the Federal Safe Routes to School program, which was funded through the passage of SAFETEA-LU in 2005. Since the passage of SAFETEA-LU, the 50 State Departments of Transportation and the Department of Transportation for the District of Columbia have been working to create Safe Routes to School programs that meet the needs of their varied constituents. My comments today will focus on the Safe Routes to School program that has been created at KDOT as an example of how the Federal guidance for the Safe Routes to School program has been interpreted at the State level.

KDOT started their Safe Routes to School program in early 2006, just months after receiving guidance from FHWA. The leadership at KDOT supported this program from the beginning and, knowing that there wouldn't be much time to prove its viability during the life of SAFETEA-LU, moved aggressively to start their program. After a public information campaign and an application process, KDOT selected its first 24 Safe Routes to School projects in October of 2006, just six months after starting our program. In the year since that time, KDOT has worked aggressively to educate the public about the holistic nature of the Safe Routes to School program and has selected over 20 more projects in its second year of funding.

The flexibility of the program guidance which FHWA provided for the Safe Routes to School program has allowed us to fund over 10 non-traditional recipients of transportation funding, including school districts and non-profit organizations. The flexibility of the guidance has also allowed us to appropriately fund programs at all levels. Our smallest programs focus on single school initiatives where there are specific traffic or safety concerns that are not allowing children to walk or bicycle to school. Our largest programs are being implemented with two of the metropolitan planning organizations in Kansas. These programs focus on regional programming such as Walking School Bus programs and safety education.

When I speak to local communities, they have found that the Safe Routes to School program works. A specific interaction that reminded me of the importance of these types of programs occurred when I met with leaders from a small town in Southeastern Kansas two weeks ago. I asked them why they needed a program like Safe Routes to School, why it was important to them. They said that their city of around 1500 people was on the verge of dying. Their population was aging and their children were leaving for college or better opportunities. Special programs like Safe Routes to School would help enable city leadership to encourage families to move back to this town to raise their children.

Increased livability factors would encourage industries to locate near this town, creating more jobs and opportunities for folks to live there. Having a more walkable community would allow their aging population to maintain their independence, instead of perhaps having to leave their home and their town for care facilities.

In my opinion, rural communities are where this program is having the most impact. The programs that occur in the cities and in suburban areas are doing well and they are very necessary, and they have been very successful in Kansas. But the $250,000 in a city that we provide, if there is 100,000 people or so, it isn't having a very big impact on overall traffic patterns. Two hundred fifty thousand dollars in a town with a relatively small population has a massive lasting effect; it has the type of impact that can galvanize an entire town to change their future.

In my conversations with other Safe Routes to School coordinators, there is agreement that the Safe Routes to School program is working. They appreciate the flexible nature of the program because it allows for creativity and for programs to meet the needs of their constituents.

The common complaints from coordinators are that more funding is needed to meet the needs of their applicants. In Kansas, we turn down over half of applicants due to limited funding, and we have very strict application requirements that we get fantastic applications, and we have to turn down quite a few.

Coordinators also think that the Federal aid requirements are too extensive for such a low cost program. The small towns that I work with do not have the staff to work through this process; therefore, projects have to be let through the State Department of Transportation, which extend the time line of projects and make them more expensive. Also, these daunting requirements cause some people not to apply for funds, those programs that we are trying to target.

In closing, I would like to thank Chairman DeFazio for providing me with the opportunity to testify today. On behalf of the 51 Safe Routes to School programs, I would like to publicly acknowledge the fantastic work of the Safe Routes to School affiliated staff at the Federal Highway Administration Headquarters and at the State divisions. I would also like to acknowledge the impeccable work of Lauren and her staff at the National Center for Safe Routes to School. The work that they do in assisting the State coordinators is extraordinary and will have a lasting effect on the Safe Routes to School movement.

Again, thank you, and I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Ms. Koch.

We will now turn to the first round of questions.

Ms. Marchetti, one of the clearinghouse jobs is to develop and share best practices to make certain States are using their funding in the most effective way and we are not recreating the wheel, so to speak, or the path, or whatever. Can you give us a few examples of best practices that you have found that are being replicated and working well?

Ms. MARCHETTI. We are in the process of collecting case studies. We have 35 now that are going up on our website probably within the week, and many of these involve looking at how schools are reducing speeds, because the speed at which a child is hit greatly influences whether or not they can survive a crash. We are also looking at encouragement programs. We have got documentation of a program in Tucson, for instance, that through education was able to increase the walking and biking to school by 300 percent.

The safety strategies are harder to evaluate, and that is why we are very excited about this tracking program we are setting up. We are hoping that the majority of States will get their schools to collect both travel data and parent concern data that will help us—and also what the strategies are, and then we will be able to do supplemental evaluation so that we can understand what works for safety. We feel confident we are going to learn what works to encourage kids to walk and bike, but we need to do very specific evaluations to understand what are the strategies and what are the engineering treatments that will be of most value. So it is an ongoing process, but we have got some.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Great. We look forward to those new postings.

Ms. Hubsmith, you mentioned in your testimony about the delay in project implementation after the grants are announced, the problems with both administrative fees and the time involved. Do you have any proposals on how to deal with that to make it better?

Ms. HUBSMITH. Thank you, Chairman DeFazio. One of the possibilities might be to be able to set a threshold for a certain amount of funding that if a project was $250,000 or less, that there might be able to be a streamlined process for implementation of those grant awards. My understanding is that Title 23 requires about 12 different forms of paperwork that need documentation related to archeological resources, noise, dirt, a variety of different things. We believe that the rigorous accountability for this program is extremely important. It is also important to recognize that most of these improvements are taking place in an existing built environment, and that when it costs sometimes as much to do the administrative fees as it does to implement something like a speed bump, that we need to find a way to be more effective.

In addition, another technique that is being used is the bundling of projects, and I believe that might be one of the best practices that the national center may discover. I know that the State of Massachusetts has worked to allow for one contractor to implement their infrastructure projects throughout the State, and for bundling them in that way they have been able to reduce administrative fees per project and do them overall. That may work in smaller States,

but I don't see that working in a State such as California, that is so big and spread out. So some sort of changes to Title 23 would be helpful, possibly related to the amount of funding that is required if it is taking place in a built environment.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you.

Mr. Bricker, you mentioned bundling also in your testimony. Is there any particular difference? You heard Ms. Hubsmith mention it can work, but in the larger States, with the tremendous dispersion, perhaps not so well. What about the Oregon experience? You mentioned that. They are a large land area, too.

Mr. BRICKER. Yes, thank you, Chairman DeFazio. We are a large land area, especially in some areas not much population. The bundling the way Oregon has proposed it, I had mentioned that the Safe Routes Advisory Committee in Oregon had actually recommended smaller projects, so we really are hoping, with only $1 million a year, and maybe 70 percent of that for infrastructure, was hoping to only fund smaller, $250,000 projects or less. So the idea of bundling was, within a community, if you had applications for more than one school, so, for example, if Eugene was going to apply for three or four schools, each school might have $100,000 worth of improvements, that they would try and bundle those applications into one bunch so they could all be reviewed at once. So it was more of community-by-community than it was the whole State with one contractor. And that would really only work for the larger communities, so for the smaller communities they would be handicapped with this process, and, again, I do want to emphasize the idea of a streamlining approach.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Okay.

Ms. Koch, on Kansas, obviously, you have a rural challenge here. How well does the program work in these more rural areas and what are the needs there that we could meet?

Ms. KOCH. We are finding that this program is extraordinarily successful in rural communities, which was a surprise to us. The research that we have seen from past programs funded through our past transportation funding, they have all been suburban and urban. So this was kind of a new opportunity for us to see if it works.

The most important thing we have had to do is make sure that we are reaching to these communities. A lot of rural communities all over the Country don't feel like Federal funding is intended for them, so it was important for us to make sure that they understood that we were helping them. We wanted them to be participating. We took trainings to their location; we didn't force them to go to the big cities to go to trainings. We provided tons of technical assistance. We created opportunities for them to start their program at a planning process. If they have never done anything before, we would provide them opportunities to plan using our funds. If they have already had a planning process, they can go towards implementation.

The most important thing that we have found with our rural communities in Kansas is that our poverty rates are extraordinarily high. They are as high as a lot of our inner city areas in Kansas. So it is important that we are focusing on these areas.

They don't have the tax base to fix potholes, let alone make improvements to make pedestrian areas safer.

We are also dealing with a lot of aging infrastructure. So there are so many challenges in rural communities that can really be benefitted by this program. Plus the fact that you are dealing with a smaller area where people are wanting to have their kids have great qualities of life; that is why they live in these kinds of areas. The schools that I work with know every single child and their parents on every street in the community that they live, and this is the most important thing that they can do for their kids, and they are overwhelmingly supportive.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Great. Thank you. Thanks for that perspective.

Mr. Duncan.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

TEA-21 required that each State establish a coordinator for bicycling and pedestrian activities. Have you seen any overlapping between the coordinator for that and the coordinator for the Safe Routes to School program? Are they doing the same type of work?

Ms. MARCHETTI. I will be happy to address that first. I find them to be partners. The ped-bike coordinators have been in place for a while, they have a lot of understanding of how to get things done in their States in the general area, and the Safe Routes to School coordinators often work with the ped-bike coordinators. I feel that the combination of interest and passion enables both to progress even more. But I am seeing a lot of working together and not any overlap that isn't positive.

Mr. DUNCAN. Several years ago I joined with a Democratic colleague and got a program started in the Department of Education that we originally called the Smaller Schools Initiative, and this was designed to give grants to communities to try to help them keep smaller schools open that otherwise would have had to close. The name of the program has been changed and some things have been added to it, but it was my belief then and concern that our schools were getting too big and that, in big schools, young people were just numbers and didn't have a chance to make ball teams or be presidents of clubs or cheerleaders or whatever. And I had read that in 1930 the average size school in this Country had a little over 100 students. Now, of course, it is much, much bigger, and parents keep demanding brand new schools, but then they generally make those schools bigger and further away from students.

I am just wondering if there is not some way that—I think a child is better off to go to school in an older building, as long as it is clean and well lit and safe, than they are to go to some big giant school far away from their home. I am just wondering if there is some way that you can join your activities, because it is going to be harder to walk and bicycle to schools if we keep moving these schools further and further away from the students. I mean, those are just some thoughts, I guess, not really so much a question. Any comments?

Ms. HUBSMITH. Yes, Ranking Member Duncan. Thank you very much for bringing that up and for initiating that small schools initiative. I agree with you 100 percent that students are learning better in smaller schools, and there are studies that are supporting that as well. One of the things that we are noticing through the

Safe Routes to School program and the fact that it is creating a dialogue between cities and school districts that traditionally have not communicated with each other on a regular basis is that it is helping to lead to discussions about issues such as school siting, because there has been a change in recent years. In 1970, about 50 percent of children in the United States lived within two miles of their school, and now that is only 33 percent of students. So by creating this Safe Routes to School program and opening up that dialogue, there are now discussions that are going on about school siting master plans and how that can interrelate.

For example, in California, one of the things that has happened because of the Safe Routes to School program and the fact that we received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to focus on barriers to children walking and bicycling to school is that we are able to broaden our approach to take a look at issues such as school siting, and we have come under advisement that the California Department of Education is currently revising their application guidelines right now for school siting. So we have brought together a coalition that includes a variety of different organizations, including the California Department of Public Health, to work together with the California Department of Education and the California Department of Transportation to make sure that as the Department of Education is revising their guidelines, that they are keeping in mind the fact that transportation to the school is important and that the size of the school is important, and that we should be having incentives to renovate older schools that are within walkable neighborhoods.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, let me ask you this. You said today only one third live within two miles of their school. What was the front end of that statistics, in 1970?

Ms. HUBSMITH. Fifty percent.

Mr. DUNCAN. Fifty percent.

Well, let me just say one other thing. We have gotten this annual report and everything in there is good. I have got no criticism when I say this. But having said that, everything in there refers to documentation, data collection, evaluation, surveys, conferences, meetings, training, creation of web sites, a Safe Routes to School library, a toll-free line, e-mail, a question and answer database, all that kind of stuff. Now, what I am getting at is this. I am sure that in the creation of a new program all that had to be done, but I hope that if we have a hearing on this a year from now, we won't hear about all this surveys and studies and data collection and libraries and conferences, but what we will hear about is actual projects, actual safe routes being created.

This Committee has been referred to many times over the years as the Build America Committee, and at some point we want all these studies and data collection to stop and actual highways to be built, or actual runways to be built, or actual water projects to be completed. Do you see what I am getting at? I hope that if you come back a year or two from now in a hearing we won't hear about all this paperwork and all this bureaucracy, we will hear about actual projects, actual safe routes that have been created. So I hope you will make that your goal.

Ms. MARCHETTI. Thank you, sir. That is our report and I can explain that. You are absolutely right. What we recognize, though, is that we got started after the States were already starting their programs, having their State coordinators, and our biggest concern was that this is the one chance some communities are going to have to build something that could be there forever, and we wanted to make sure that they had the expertise and the knowledge to make their own decisions——

Mr. DUNCAN. But what I am saying is this: It is good that you have done all this, but now that we have done it, let's move to the next level. Let's move to the next step and let's get some actual safe routes done.

Ms. MARCHETTI. Absolutely.

Mr. DUNCAN. That is what I want to hear.

Ms. MARCHETTI. We feel like we have got the information place now and it is time to get going.

Mr. DUNCAN. You can just flood yourself with so much information and nothing ever gets done. I mean, you know, we can read about these bills and these issues for years and we can study them, but nothing ever gets done if you don't do anything but read, study, and collect data. You have got to act at some point..

Ms. MARCHETTI. One last thing I would like to say to support what you are saying. The other piece of paper we placed in the folders was a summary showing that early States were spending funds at 80 percent of available funding. This money is already out the door, has been awarded.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, as long as it is out the door, though, to create—see, if the States are doing the same thing and they are doing paperwork and creating web sites and data collection and all that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Okay. I thank the gentleman.

Did I see you grasping? All right, Ms. Koch, go ahead.

Ms. KOCH. Yes. I just want to speak on behalf of the States. The States that have funded programs are not laden in paperwork. We have 24 projects we funded last year. Most of those are planning, but we are doing some projects that are hitting the ground, that involve construction and getting kids out there. The things that are happening with the National Center for Safe Routes to School are a low amount of funding in relation to the projects that are being created, and 40 of our States are already in the process of funding and getting projects on the ground.

Mr. DUNCAN. Good. Thank you very much.

Now I have got to, unfortunately, slip out to another hearing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I understand the gentleman has a very important hearing to go to. Thank you.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, before the gentleman leaves, I plead guilty to insisting on the reports, the documentation, establishment of a database, tracking, and accountability. That was something I insisted on, that we would be able then to track the results of this program, leading up to exactly what the gentleman is talking about, what are the results of Safe Routes to School? Are you putting in traffic calming? Are you doing crosswalks? Are you building sidewalks, putting in traffic lights at schools? And there

are numerous examples of these success stories already reported through this documentation. The program is, I think, through the documentation stage and ready, and will now be reporting on the implementation. I have a number of such projects in my own district, but I know that Ms. Marchetti's testimony, Ms. Hubsmith's testimony, and that of Ms. Koch relates several exemplary sample success stories.

So the gentleman's concern is rightly taken, but I will plead guilty to the insistence on documentation because I felt it was, at the outset, to set up a documented database and a tracking for this program so that we can ave the accountability that the gentleman is asking for.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, I will just say this. I think the Chairman knows that nobody in the Congress admires and respects him more than I do, and if you notice that when I first started that I said I think that all that was necessary and good that we collect that; I am just saying that now I hope we don't get bogged down in the paperwork so that we don't accomplish the good things that the Chairman wanted us to accomplish through this program.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Rightly said and rightly taken. Thank you.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman for that clarification.

The gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. BRALEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

For the members of the panel and members of the audience, I have the privilege of serving as the Vice Chair of this Subcommittee, which means I spend most of my time getting coffee and making copies for Mr. DeFazio.

But I also am very privileged to represent the Field of Dreams, where the saying "if you build it, they will come" became part of our national dialogue. And I think that applies to the Safe Routes to School program. One of my big frustrations is that so many of the decisions on Safe Routes to Schools are impacted by local jurisdictions and how they have local zoning ordinances and building codes that can influence whether or not sidewalks are built on passways to schools, and one of the things I would like to hear about from the panel is what you have learned from the work that has been funded to date on this program about the intersection of Federal policies and local building codes and what additional work needs to be done to bridge that gap.

But I am also very concerned about how this is playing out. I happen to represent a district that has urban schools, suburban schools, and many rural schools. Having grown up in a town of 1500 and being one of the 42 percent of students who walked or rode a bicycle to school in 1969, when I was in sixth grade, I realize that there are vastly different challenges when you are dealing with Safe Routes to School in urban areas contrasted with rural areas.

So I would like to open it up to the members of the panel to comment on those two topics, and I will yield the balance of my time.

Mr. BRICKER. Thank you for your comments and questions. I can really only give my experience in Oregon, but I think it might relate to Iowa and other communities.

In my experience, at least from the local level, the major intersection that tends to not happen is between the schools and the

road authorities. The road authorities tend to be county and the city governments, and sometimes State governments, and the schools tend to have their own elected board with making independent decisions, and the coordination between the two is tenuous, at best.

As a transportation advocate, for the last 10 years I have been going to transportation meetings from the State to the local to the regional. I mentioned that Oregon spends $300 million a year on school bus funding. That is a lot. That is a lot of transit service, and I never have seen school bus or school transportation represented. In my experience, the land use decisions made by schools, while it has to fit within zoning codes and whatnot of local authorities, they are not necessarily vetted in the same way that if you were a public agency, that you are going to make your decisions.

The implications on the transportation system, the burden on the transportation system that schools might be generating by locating a school further out because they want a larger piece of land is not necessarily vetted through the city the way it would be if you were responsible for both the roads and the schools. So, in my experience—and I am less experienced about how the Federal policies work within that, but that intersection is one of the major things that is missing from just a political standpoint.

I don't know how it works in Iowa, but in Oregon the school bus funding goes all through the State. So every school district is reimbursed between 70 percent and 90 percent of their school bus funding, whether you spend $1 or $1 million or $10 million. The incentive to actually reduce the school busing cost is very low. So even if you build a new school and it doubles your school busing cost, if you are only paying 30 percent or 20 percent of those costs, there is not much incentive to bring that school back.

So that is my experience, and I don't know if that helps at all.

Ms. KOCH. Speaking on behalf of a State DOT, I just want to thank you for your input and let you know that in the State of Kansas, when we do cite reviews to fund programs, one of the most important questions we ask is if they have local subdivision regulations that support this program. If we build something and then they build new subdivisions and they don't have any requirements for modernization of their roadway facilities or sidewalk improvements or improvements at intersections, then we are going to lose that program once it gets into that neighborhood. So that is a very important part of our decision-making process, to ensure that what we start with our seed money is encouraged through their city-wide and county funding.

Also, Kansas does have very stringent guidelines for this program, so I can't speak on behalf of all State DOT programs, but we take that very seriously.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you.

And I thank the gentleman for that question.

The gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. COBLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I regret that the gentleman from Iowa admitted he was in the sixth grade in 1969. That is very demoralizing. What did you say, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. DEFAZIO. You weren't even born then, were you, Howard?

Mr. COBLE. No comment.

Good to have you all with us.

Ms. Marchetti, in your testimony you included a breakdown of program activity from various States, but our State was not included. Can you give us some information as to how the program has been implemented in North Carolina and the results thereof?

Ms. MARCHETTI. Yes, sir, thank you. North Carolina was off to a great start in the example of the pedestrian and bicycle coordinator working with the Safe Routes to School coordinator. That was going quite well. Unfortunately, the person who was in the position, who had already started doing a lot of training across the State, had to leave the position and a new person has started, and that is one of the reasons why North Carolina's results don't show up as a lot of other States do. However, the commitment of the pedestrian and bicycle coordinator, combined with the new Safe Routes to School coordinator, they have already started doing programs and we are going to start seeing some things on the ground very shortly.

Mr. COBLE. Thank you.

Ms. Hubsmith, do you have data that supports your statement that the Safe Routes to School program will decrease energy use and reduce carbon emissions? I don't doubt that that is accurate, but do you have data to support that?

Ms. HUBSMITH. Thank you very much for asking. The program has been proven to decrease the number of cars that are arriving at some schools, and by decreasing the number of cars, calculations can be made that energy is being saved and carbon emissions are being reduced. These are the types of things that we are looking to be able to calculate more fully as the program is implemented more in the future, and it is one of the reasons why we put in place the rigorous tracking system. My information from this is coming from many programs that have been implemented in California that has had a program for many years and has shown that we are decreasing the number of cars that are coming to schools and then, by proxy, energy and carbon emissions are being decreased as well.

Mr. COBLE. I thank you for that.

Mr. Bricker or Ms. Koch, either one, I am told that parents, in many instances, have expressed concern that their children may be at risk, as far as safety is concerned, while biking or walking to school. How can the Safe Routes to School program address those concerns?

Ms. KOCH. This is certainly what we are seeing in a lot of our data that we collect from parents, that they have concerns about traffic safety. But a lot of those concerns that they have are about personal safety, about kidnapping or bullying, or other things that they can't prevent if they are not there. Something that we really promote with the Safe Routes to School program are group walking or biking, Walking School Bus programs, bicycle trains, where children are accompanied to school with adults that the parents know, adults that have gone through background checks, so that they know that they are legitimate volunteers of the school district or the city, that they have obligation to get those kids to school safely and consistently. That is one way that we do it.

We understand this is a concern. We honor that concern those parents have and we work with our local communities to ensure that they have the set of skills they need to create programs that meet those concerns and that the kids can still get there walking and biking.

Mr. COBLE. Do you want to add anything to that, Mr. Bricker?

Mr. BRICKER. She did a great job.

Mr. COBLE. Good.

Mr. Marchetti, you indicate that between 5 percent and 51 percent of students live within walking distance to their schools. Let me put a two-part question to you. How do you define walking distance, and why is the range so wide that it is 5 percent to 51 percent?

Ms. MARCHETTI. Thank you, sir. The walking distance is considered one mile, especially for younger children.

Mr. COBLE. One mile?

Ms. MARCHETTI. One mile is walking distance to school. Bicycling distance is considered more, two to three miles. The range is because we still have some community schools, we still have some consolidated schools. The point there is that there are some schools where as many as 50 percent of the children, with proper environment and encouragement, could be walking and we could be reducing the congestion around the school.

I would like to make a quick comment about when we were talking about school siting. We used to have schools that had an average of 150 students per school. We have gone to such extremes that one State had a campus so large that they were busing students from one building to the other. That State has since rescinded their acreage rules for schools.

What we would like to see is go away from the 5 percent schools and go more to the larger percent that could be walking and biking.

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Chairman, if I could ask one more question. I know my red light is on.

To any of the panelists, what percentage of school children walked to school or biked to school prior to the implementation of the Safe Routes to School program, and what is the percentage today, if you know that?

Ms. MARCHETTI. I will take that question. It is a very good question. Unfortunately, it is a question everyone would like to have answered, and we are just now in the process of trying to figure it out. The tally forms that we have produced would enable schools to ask students two days during a one-week period a year how did you get to school, and this way we would be the first to start getting that kind of information. If we can get comparison sites, then we would be able to understand what schools who haven't had this opportunity are experiencing versus what the schools that do have the opportunity.

So we are in the process of understanding that, but that is a universal question that people have been asking and wanting to find solutions to.

Mr. COBLE. If you could get that to us, we would appreciate that. Thank you.

Ms. MARCHETTI. Yes.

Mr. COBLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman. I would just ask the gentleman she said the biking distance was three to five miles. I was wondering on the penny-farthing bikes in the gentleman's day, how far could you ride one of those big things?

Mr. COBLE. The gentleman from Oregon is giving me a hard time, but he is doing it with a smile on his face.

[Laughter.]

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Baird, do you have any questions?

Mr. BAIRD. Just very briefly. I just came back from a weekend in London and noticed a tremendous amount of people bicycle commuting. Forgive me for coming in late, but have you talked about how our kids get to school relative to young people in other nations? Where do we stand? If you have already covered it, forgive me for asking. I am familiar with Holland and other places. Everybody is riding bikes. In London, we just saw lots of bikes on the streets, and this was on the city streets.

Ms. MARCHETTI. I would like to make a quick comment on that. I was just at a conference yesterday in Toronto on Active and Safe Routes to School. It was an international conference and, oddly enough, people from the U.K. and Canada were asking how we were getting our good program started. They do have great experiences, but they are also starting to see some problems coming up. One of the issues that we discussed yesterday was that as they make it easier for parents to drop off their kids in cars, they are seeing a decrease in walking and biking. They are very concerned about that and looking for solutions.

So we are all sort of on a continuum. They had early successes. Then, they did something that is reducing their successes, and we are hopefully learning from each other that way.

Mr. BAIRD. We had a hearing on a Committee I Chair, Research and Science Subcommittee, on how social sciences inform energy consumption policies, and very subtle differences in the wording of persuasive messages can make 30 percent, 40 percent differences in such mundane things as recycling towels in hotels. Are you incorporating any social science research in your strategy to encourage use of bikes or walking to school?

[No response.]

Mr. BAIRD. That is not a good sign.

Ms. KOCH. I guess I can speak to that. A lot of what we do is trying to change social behaviors, and if we can make walking or biking social activities, activities that have positive connotations, rather than negative connotations, we find research that shows that when people see adult pedestrians or adult bicyclists, they have negative connotations about those people: that they are poor, that they don't have access to vehicles, that they are part of our society that we are throwing away. If we can change that through positive messages at a young age, then we can incorporate that as they get older and make it a more positive message so that people will want to walk or bike, they will choose that.

The most important thing we do with Safe Routes to School is enable people to make a choice. We don't want to force anyone to do anything, but we want to give them that opportunity so that they can make lifetime behavioral changes.

Mr. BRICKER. If I may follow up, Mr. Baird. In Portland we started working on a program called Smart Trips—it is actually a European program that had a slightly different name—and for the last four years in Portland bicycling has been increasing exponentially. We have a pretty well built-out bicycle network, and in the last four years we have been promoting the bicycle network, as opposed to substantially increasing the bicycle network, and what we have found is that by just giving messages to households that there is a significant reduction in automobile trips; just by asking people are you interested, and then when they say, yes, I am interested, giving them more information and support. And I truthfully forget the data, but it is something like a decrease of 9 percent in automobile trips and, as I mentioned bicycling is increasing exponentially. In Portland right now, a lot of the effort is marketing.

We are also, at the same time, learning new strategies. We have learned that people prefer to bicycle in larger numbers together. We have learned that people prefer to bicycle in low traffic streets, as opposed to the really busy streets, so we are talking on new strategies to even try to increase. So I think part of this is that, really, we are in sort of a young profession, really, in 1991, in ISTEA, where we really started working on bicycling. So some of this stuff is young, but I think that we are getting some data collection.

Ms. HUBSMITH. And if I just may add, I think we all needed to think for a moment because it was such a good question. One of the hallmarks of this program is that it gives flexibility to the DOTs to fund infrastructure improvements between 70 percent and 90 percent, and non-infrastructure improvements between 10 percent and 30 percent. So the DOTs are working together, and many of them, even though it is not a Federal requirement, have formed advisory committees. In fact, 36 of the States have formed advisory committees that bring together the Department of Public Health with Education with law enforcement in order to work on issues such as that. Many times, Departments of Public Health have done a lot of research around messaging, which is why it is really important to bring them in.

At the local level, as well, the program is based on the five Es, and every community determines how to implement those Es, which are Evaluation, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Engineering. And while a program is different whether it is in a rural area, suburban area, or an urban area, the common practice is bringing the community together to address how to realize those five Es, and with Evaluation being the first one, it is really important to survey the parents as to what it would make them do to change their behavior. So messaging is often incorporated on the State level, on the local level based on the concerns of the community, and then also based on the grade level that you are working with.

We found that this program serves K through 8. The K through 5 children, elementary school, are reacting in many ways to their parents, so messaging is detailed a lot more toward the parents. When you get toward middle school, many times you will work through student leadership groups to have the students develop the messages and then to bring those messages to their students, be-

cause they are very influenced from their peers. So there is a lot of work that is being done with that to tailor the messaging.

Thank you.

Mr. BAIRD. I appreciate that very much. That is good news. I would just encourage, also, to look at the literature in this field. One of the studies that we had—and my staff will get you this, but a gentleman was looking at—I mentioned about towel usage in hotels. Well, they were able to increase towel recycling by 34 percent by just changing the message, and here is the take-home point that is troubling: none of the messages that they found most effective were actually being used by any of the hotels. The hotels were saying if you recycle your towels, you will save energy, you will save the planet, the world would be a better place, we sing Kumbaya, basically.

What they found was that the most effective message was everybody else is doing it, you don't want to be the guy who isn't. I mean, that is paraphrased, but the point being wrong messaging can actually be counterproductive, even if you think it is right. And if we have got some good literature on this, good data, empirical studies would actually put different messages.

They actually found, similarly, at Petrified National Forest, the signs that were intended to cause people to not take petrified rocks from the forest actually increased theft; whereas, a different version actually decreased it. So you want to be careful and hopefully disseminate that. Thank you.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman for that observation.

Mr. Dent.

Mr. DENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am fascinated by this whole conversation here, about how to encourage students to walk or bike to school, do it safely. I mean, my own household is a classic example of this. My children take the bus to school, even though I try to tell them it is only a couple hundred yards further to the school to walk. You are going in the right direction and I lose all these articles at home, so I realize what you are up against trying to persuade people. But it has been a continuing frustration for me, just in my own household, to talk about the benefits of walking to school when, in fact, it seems to be socially fun to ride the bus, as opposed to walk. These are just the issues that I face in my household. Yours are much greater.

I just wanted to ask you a question, Ms. Hubsmith, if I could. You may have touched on this already, and if you have, I apologize. Do you have any kind of quantitative data that can support your statement that Safe Routes to School programs will decrease energy use and reduce carbon emissions? Do you have any data on that up to this point?

Ms. HUBSMITH. At this point, right now, what we are doing is we are gathering data, and my statement about that was based on some of the early implementation of programs prior to SAFETEA-LU. In California we have seen that the program has increased walking and biking in the range of 20 percent to 200 percent and has improved safety up to 49 percent. By increasing the walking and biking, we have decreased the number of automobile trips, and calculations can be made about the miles that students are from

school and, as a result, how much energy and how much carbon is being decreased.

Through the tracking system that the National Center for Safe Routes to School is putting in place, we will be able to learn much more about how this pans out with the implementation of the SAFETEA-LU program, and we look forward to providing more of that hard data to you in the future, which is one of the reasons why we have worked so hard on evaluation and data.

I would add that one of the things I mentioned in my earlier testimony is that we would really like to work together with Congress to have even more rigorous systems for data collection, and we feel that we can be collecting data as part of the census, as part of the National Household Travel Survey, and also finding ways, when FHWA collects data from States, to add in more information about collecting data related to schools. We know that Congress is moving more toward a performance-based analysis for transportation systems, and we are all in favor of that. We would really like to have your help in terms of being able to further quantify these things because we know they are working.

Mr. DENT. Also with respect to quantifiable data, I think you stated that up to 30 percent of the morning rush hour traffic is generated by parents who are driving their children to schools. You said that earlier, did you not?

Ms. HUBSMITH. I did. Thank you. These are data that come from local communities, it is not data that is collected at the State level. In Marin County, California, where I am from, they determined that between 21 percent and 27 percent in the morning traffic is parents driving their children to school. That is from the Transportation Authority of Marin. Similarly, in Santa Rosa, their traffic engineer says it is the same number. And we are seeing similar types of studies in other communities.

These are done on a community-by-community type basis because the data is not supported at the State level yet.

Mr. DENT. I don't doubt the data, it seems logical to me, just my observations dealing with taking kids to school and watching the morning traffic patterns in my community. I wouldn't be surprised by that number. But I guess the follow-up to that would be if these parents are dropping their children off on the way to way to work or to run some other errand, do you think this program is going to have a real impact on reducing congestion?

Ms. HUBSMITH. I do think that it will. In fact, in Marin County, California, what we were able to see is that, consecutively, every year we have seen a 13-point percent decrease in traffic congestion around the schools because we are reversing the way that children are coming to school. By making it safer for students to walk and bicycle, and especially by incorporating improvements like the Walking School Bus, where one parent will walk with the group of children together, coupled with engineering improvements and adding in law enforcement, police officers that are out there on the street and enforcing the speed limit, we are able to show a decrease in traffic congestion around schools, which also then improves air quality, and it creates sort of a cyclic effect because as more people begin walking and bicycling, others begin to want to do it as well, and it is really something that helps create a positive momentum

within the community when we get law enforcement and other infrastructure improvements involved.

Mr. DENT. Well, thank you. This panel has done a great job of informing me so I can go back home at the end of this week and instruct my children and wife that it is better to walk to school, for a lot of reasons that you have identified. Now I have empirical data to back it up, so thank you for that.

I yield back.

Mr. DEFAZIO. The gentleman might consult with the resident psychologist on the most persuasive techniques for that messaging.

Mr. DENT. I have already done so.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Oh, okay. All right.

I turn now to the Full Committee Chairman, Mr. Oberstar, for his questions.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Dent, thank you for those questions and comments, and for your own personal experience. I will give you an example from Sacramento, where my son lives. Son Ted, when he was in high school, was a trainer for the football team and he wanted to drive the family car to practice. I put a backpack on my back, got on my bike, and pedaled with him to school to show him it could be done. He is now a father of two. He gets on his bike with my granddaughter, Kathryn Jo, and they pedal from their home about a block and pick up Kathryn's friend, Sierra, and then they pedal another block and they pick up their friend Jackson, for Jackson Hole—this is California; they are named for mountain ranges and things—and then they pick up another couple of children and then they cross this 100-foot street to the school, and Ted then pedals on to CalTrans, California Transportation Department, where he works.

What do you suppose Kathryn is going to be doing 20 years from now? She is going to be biking with her children to school. And in the process, crossing that 100-foot street, Ted observed that the apartments and condos and single-family homes on the one side, children were being bused less than a quarter of a mile, just the example that you gave, to this school. He said, that is crazy, why are they doing this? So he met with the city planning department to get a traffic calming and traffic lights and they said, oh, we can't do it, we don't have the money. So Ted figured out how to do it. And he also went out and got a city councilman elected, school board member elected, and a mayor elected to enforce all these things, and they changed it. They now have traffic calming, they have traffic lights, the kids from the apartments and so on are now biking and walking to school. It takes a lot, but you can change the habits.

Mr. BRICKER. Will the Chairman yield?

Mr. OBERSTAR. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. BRICKER. One thing I have noticed about this issue, from a personal perspective, is my wife is concerned about security. There seems to be more security in going to the bus stop than walking to the school, even though I can see my child just walk to the door, practically. But there is some fear that something could happen on the streets. When I went to school, I always walked to school out of sight of my parents and much greater distances, but because of our society and the criminal element out there, there is such a fear

among many parents. There seems to be security in numbers in the buses.

I am not sure how you overcome that, but I am trying to talk to that psychologist for my wife to see if she can overcome some of those fears. It is just an issue that I just wanted to share with you.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Absolutely, and that is why we started out with—maybe we have to change the term to Securer Routes to School, because that really is what it is all about. When I was a elementary and junior and senior high school student walking to school, the worst we had to fear was an errant snowball being thrown in our direction. But not so anymore.

The question has been asked what are the success stories, and Mr. Duncan raised the question about studies and reports. The education and the engineering part of the five E's are foundational activities. You have to develop the database. You have to do the engineering. You have to do the education. As we learn from the Marin County experience and the Arlington, Massachusetts experience, you have to develop a base of information, design engineering and find the trouble spots, the traffic obstacles, the security questions, and address those with the infrastructure changes that are needed, with the training of students to safe practices in both walking and cycling, and then implement the infrastructure changes that are needed: sidewalks, traffic lights at key crossing areas, lowering traffic lights to eye level for walkers and cyclers. All those are in the works. This is foundational.

But in Deb Hubsmith's testimony there are at least four pages of success stories. In Idaho, until recently, children had no choice but to walk in the street because there were no sidewalks. There are now sidewalks being built. That makes a huge difference.

In Michigan, 223 schools training 547 people in 100 school districts. More than half of the counties of Michigan are engaged in this foundational work of training, changing mind-sets, changing attitudes. That is hard to do, to change people's attitudes, especially about walking and biking to school, but those things are being done.

In Missouri, 160 children, six schools register for the Walking School Bus program and walk to school every day on 14 different routes.

In Two Harbors, on the north shore of Lake Superior, in my congressional district, the city has had a school right on the shore of Lake Superior, spectacular view, but it is an 80 year old school building. They built a new one inland, on the other side of a major highway. Most of the people live on the east side of that highway. But the students said build us a trail, a round trip, so that we can bike and walk to school and come home by a different route, and with the help of some funding and in TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU, that two mile bike trail and walking trail has been built, and it is in constant use. And when the kids are in school, the parents are out using the trail. I see them every time I get up to Two Harbors.

In the southern end of my district, in Cambridge and Isanti, two small towns—well, Cambridge is not so small by our standards, it is 6,000 people now; Isanti is about 1,500, 2,000. But the children from Isanti go to school in Cambridge, four miles away. What sepa-

rates them is a wildlife waterfall wetland, otherwise known as a swamp.

Well, they said why can't we bike and walk to school? And if we could go through the wetland, it would also be interesting. And now they are doing that with an elevated wood four mile facility. Well, it is about two miles of elevated wood pathway, with appropriate railings, and then paved asphalt on the other ends. They love it. They are excited to get to school, to talk about muskrats and herons and geese and ducks that the have seen on the way. This is exciting and it is changing habits, and they are healthier and they are ready to learn when they get to school.

In Marin County, Ms. Hubsmith, you didn't state at all the success story. Tell us when you started Safe Routes to School and the percentage now that are participating.

Ms. HUBSMITH. Thank you, Chairman Oberstar. When we started the pilot program back in the year 2000, about 21 percent of children were walking and bicycling to school, and in my testimony I indicated that at the end of that first year there was a 64 percent increase in the number of students walking, a 114 percent increase in the number of students bicycling, a 91 percent increase in carpooling, and a 39 percent decrease in the number of students arriving by private car carrying only one student.

And I will add that after the one year of funding from the Federal Government, the county did not want the program to end, so what happened after that was that the Marin Community Foundation chipped in some funding in order to make it possible to continue. Then the Bay Area Air Quality Management District provided a few years of funding. Then the funding was going to end because all of these funding streams were only allowed for one or two years. The county was looking for a way to deal with our aging infrastructure and was going to be launching a transportation sales tax in order to deal largely with roads and transit, and one of the things that they polled upon was how would people like to support a measure that included Safe Routes to School and enable that program to continue so it could be safe. It was one of the highest things that came up in the community poll. So they ended up dedicating 11 percent of the transportation sales taxing to the program.

So our Marin County program is now in 45 of our schools, which is two thirds of our schools, and we are seeing a regular amount of decrease in the number of cars that are arriving at schools as a result of the program. It has been very successful and we are very grateful to have had the opportunity to work with the Federal Government to do that pilot.

There has been a 13 percent decrease. And if you go to the web site tam.ca.gov, and then click under Programs for Safe Routes to School, there is about a 50 page evaluation report that substantiates how that has happened.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Those are just striking numbers and exciting numbers, and the goal is to replicate them all around the Country, and as the foundational work takes hold, the education work and all, that is going to happen.

Mr. Bricker, I was struck by your observation that Oregon spends $300 million a year on bus transportation, over 50 percent of children are driven to school. I never thought about that. If we

can reduce the amount of money that States and school districts are spending on school bus transportation. We, in fact, did get a good deal of push-back from the bus drivers organization and from private school bus companies that contract with school districts to provide schools: oh, you are going to take our business away from us. Well, I hope so. I hope so. But I have never seen it quantified before, and you have provided a great service to us. Have you heard any such push-back from the private or public school bus operators?

Mr. BRICKER. Well, Chairman Oberstar, I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this. This is one of those issues, as a bicycle advocate and lobbyist, and a pedestrian advocate and someone who is in the Capitol, this is something that is very, very challenging, as you can imagine. There is a lot of money in school busing, $300 million, and there is a desire to make sure that every kid can get to school safely. So I want to acknowledge that every student should be able to get to school, and I believe that when the law in Oregon that basically required school busing was created, it was out of creation for every child to be able to get to school.

However, the school bus fund is not eligible to fund—well, it is not clearly eligible to fund transportation projects that would reduce the cost, and I do believe we have not had success working with the school bus lobby on trying to shift some of those dollars. So if only 1 percent of those funds went, we would triple the amount of money we are getting for Safe Routes to School, and if 10 percent, if we had $30 million a year to increase safety for schools around Oregon, we could significantly reduce the ongoing costs for school bus transportation.

And the other thing to note on school bus transportation is the school buses are only half full. The way that they are created, they do these routes and half of the time kids are driven to school and half of the time they get on the bus. So, really, from a performance standpoint, it is not very clear how effective those funds are being used. So while school bus is a very safe way to get to school, an important way for kids who live miles and miles away from school, within the areas of one, two, or three miles, many kids are getting driven to school and many kids are getting bused because of the safety improvements. If we were able to flex some of those dollars, we would be able to reduce long-term costs, and I think that that would have appeal to most decision-makers.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Thank you very much.

I will yield to the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman for yielding. Unfortunately, the No Child Left Behind Act may have a provision which will actually increase the use of busing, rather than decrease it, in that it mandates that if you are in a school that is deemed to be failing under AYP, the school actually has to set aside a trust fund, basically, that would be used to bus the kids to another school of their choice. I actually had the unfortunate experience of being at a school where the principal was in the process of laying off 24 paraprofessional educators because their salary, instead of being used to help educate the kids to help them succeed, had to be set aside for a fund to pay for the cost of busing to send kids to another school. And, by the way, that other school didn't have to have dem-

onstrated any better success with that same population. So No Child Left Behind may actually, paradoxically, increase busing to other schools and, thereby, all the other side effects we have talked about today.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Maybe we can change this to No Bicyclist Left Behind. I thank you for that observation. One final comment, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Koch, I really appreciate your comments and observations about the experience in Kansas, physical changes around the school zone, soft-side elements, encouragement programs. Flexible nature of the program, that is what we intended it to be. We gave flexibility and you have shown how, in Kansas, that flexibility is serving the needs of constituents and tailoring the program to the varying needs of differing size communities.

And I appreciate your observation about application to tribal governments, and I will follow up further on that matter.

But your final paragraph, local communities, small town in Southeastern Kansas, why do they want this Safe Routes to School program? Because their city of 1500 people is on the verge of dying, and that a Safe Routes to School program would encourage families to move to the town to raise their children, and you create a—you call it a livability, I call it quality of life issue. If we can achieve that around this Nation, we will have accomplished something extraordinary.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman for his leadership and for that inspiring statement.

Mrs. Capito.

Mrs. CAPITO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very interesting topic, Safe Routes to School.

I represent West Virginia, and the trend in the educational system over the last, I would say, 20 years has been to consolidate schools to where, instead of an elementary school where you might have 150, 200 students, you might have as many as 800, 900 students. While that is a little rare in a State like West Virginia, I know in some of the larger, more urban areas it is very likely to be happening. So I think that presents challenges for anybody seeking to walk or have a bike route to the school. Do you find this to be a particular challenge? I will just throw the question open to anybody who might like to answer it.

Ms. HUBSMITH. Yes, thank you. This is a big challenge, and through surveys that have been done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, distance is the number one reason that there is an obstacle for walking or bicycling to school, and certainly the consolidation of schools and putting them further out on the edges of communities is something that is contributing toward the problem.

There was an interesting analogy that was made from a colleague at the EPA that has talked about school siting, because if you look at the Safe Routes to School program, there are $612 million that is being spent nationally on the program over five years. If you look at the cost of school construction and siting schools, it is much, much greater than that. And he asked the question can the tail wag the dog, and, in effect, what we are doing is we are

seeing that that is happening in some ways, that just the discussions that are being created at the State level, among the Department of Education and the Department of Transportation and the Department of Health around Safe Routes to School and the impacts of school siting and school consolidation, because we have this Federal funding and we are charging State DOTs with creating a program, that is influencing regulations that are being related to school siting. And because the program focuses on the five E's at the local level, discussions need to be had with the school districts and the cities, who often don't speak with each other. I mean, many times you will have a school district that decides to site its school in a certain location, and they don't consult with the city's master plan and their general plan before making that happen.

This program, this small program is really creating those conversations, and hopefully one of the goals we can have emerge out of this as a positive consequence is that there can be more effort that is brought forward about the decisions of school siting, what that means in terms of walkability, what that means in terms of the neighborhood, what that means in terms of students' ability to be able to learn. So we are hoping that the tail can wag the dog and change the habits of a generation.

Ms. MARCHETTI. I would like to just briefly add to her comments. Observing at the national level what is going on in all the States, as a lot of communities were rushing toward building the larger schools, some communities are rushing back, because they are recognizing, what we thought was a good idea for these reasons have other unintended consequences that we don't like. So some of what I am hearing is, you know, when we compare refurbishing this school with building this new school, nobody ever factors in transportation costs. That changes things.

Other places are saying, you know, if we take this downtown school and refurbish it and include a library, a YMCA, a childcare center, whatever, we have created a community cluster that benefits everyone.

So there is a lot of innovation out there right now; we have just got to get the word out. People are recognizing that accomplishing one good sometimes does some other things that you really never thought about.

Mrs. CAPITO. I think that is an excellent point, and I do see that trend in my community of rather than trying to go to four schools together, maybe refining the schools that are existing.

I was thinking about my own experience growing up. I mean, it just struck me. I used to walk to school, but I also walked home for lunch and walked back to school. And when I tell my own children that, they can't believe that you can—I remember my mother made pancakes sometimes for lunch; they were so good.

In any event, I think another challenge for students, particularly in the elementary school area, is the latchkey kid phenomenon, where, if a child is coming home after school, if they are walking home or biking home, more on their own without—I mean, our buses would not drop our kindergarten students unless I was standing there or an adult was standing there. That has got to be a challenge in terms of trying to develop programs around all the

different times that people are home and putting that responsibility on the child to remember, well, I can't really walk today because mom and dad aren't going to be home.

I am sure you deal with this, trying to develop this program. Do you have any insight into that?

Ms. MARCHETTI. The only insight I have is that, when I get bogged down in these thoughts sometimes and think, oh, there are so many issues and so many concerns, I look to the community level, they figure things out in ways I never would have thought of. They are creating groups of kids that walk together. They are creating community service projects where high school students walk with the kids and actually do some mentoring of them on other issues as well. We need to gather these examples and get them out there, because it is at the very local level that the most amazing ideas are coming.

Mrs. CAPITO. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Cohen.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you and Chairman Oberstar for all your work on this project; it certainly is something that is good for the American people and for children. Children need protection at all levels.

I did not have the experience Chairman Oberstar had. I went to school in Memphis and in Florida and in California, and I walked, but we didn't have snowball problems.

[Laughter.]

Mr. COHEN. We did have problems sometimes with the Federal Express jets flying over and bothering our hearing, but other than that it was all right.

But walking to school was a good experience, and you need kids to learn.

My State Senator is here, State Senator Beverly Marrero, and I would just like to ask the panel. Much of this is administrative, but are there legislative initiatives that any of you all are familiar with that she could take back to Tennessee in promoting safety, either pedestrian or bicycle, for kids and safe routes? Yes, sir.

Mr. BRICKER. Thank you, Mr. Cohen. In Oregon we have passed a couple of different efforts trying to basically create the discussion. We, in the creation of our Safe Routes action plans, we require that schools work with the city or the county. So just the actual having people who are city and county engineers, who understand the roadway systems, working with the people who understand children and the kind of ebb and flow of the school, is something that needs to happen, and in that process you get parents and the community on board. So we actually have legislative that our Safe Routes to School action plans would require that partnership to take place.

We also, in this last legislation session, required that any new schools to be constructed or major renovation of the school would have to launch a Safe Routes action plan that has these stipulations in it as well. So when you are looking at some of these issues—and I think that potentially looking forward, when you consolidate a school you should be required to look at the transportation implications. And when I say transportation, I mean safety

as well, and looking at actually walking around with the folks in some community.

Ms. HUBSMITH. Congressman, I have three ideas for you related to State legislation that might be possible. One is with the issue related to school siting. I don't know off the top of my head what the regulations are in Tennessee, but several States have minimum acreage requirements and indicate that if you are going to locate a high school, it needs to be on a tract of land that has 30 acres. We recommend that there be a removal of those minimum acreage standards, because that often drives the schools to be on the edges of communities.

In addition, many States have regulations called the two thirds rule. If it costs more than two thirds to build a new school than it would be to retrofit an old school, they encourage building of the new school instead. It would be a good idea to take those regulations off the books to evaluate each school site and plan on its merits, so you can work to create the neighborhood schools.

A second idea is the fact that relates to that there are many more applications for Safe Routes to School funding as there is funding available, and the Federal funding is often quite flexible. Through SAFETEA-LU, Congress created a provision for the creation of a strategic highway safety plan in every State, and each State is analyzing data-driven analyses for how injuries and fatalities take place. On a national level, 13.5 percent of injuries and fatalities are bicyclists and pedestrians. Something that your State could do is take a look at the percentage of bicycle and pedestrian injuries in your State and create a fair share for safety and guarantee that that percentage of your safety funds goes towards bicycle and pedestrian improvements, including Safe Routes to School.

Finally, another provision is called Complete Streets. Many States and municipalities are moving forward to create this right now, and what this is is a requirement that every roadway, as it is being constructed, or any transit project that is being constructed would consider the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians simultaneously. And this is really a good use of taxpayer dollars, because as you are planning for transportation infrastructure, we want to plan for people who are walking, bicycling, who are disabled, who are elderly, who are taking transit and who are using automobiles, and by actually putting legislation in effect that requires this consideration helps to lead toward the construction of more comprehensive projects that serve the needs of all users and don't have to be retrofitted at a later date.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you. I want to thank both of you and ask LA, who is here, Mr. Houston, to get with you all and get some notes about your legislation. You know, this is such a good program, a lot with obesity. We have got a problem with obesity with kids, and that is because they are taking a bus or driving, rather than walking or bicycling. That is part of it. You know, you get into the lobbies. You mentioned the bus folks. They don't want to give up their money. You know, all kind of things get involved, and we really need to look after the kids first.

I thank you all for your testimony, and we will try to implement some of these things in Tennessee.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Chairman Oberstar.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Okay, I will thank the gentleman.

I want to thank the panel. I think that what we have shown, we have laid a very solid foundation for an extraordinarily successful program over the final years of the SAFETEA-LU bill, and I think it is something upon which we will be able to build in future authorizations and hopefully expand. So thank you for your time and your testimony.

The Committee is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:58 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

1 Harry E. Mitchell

Statement of Rep. Harry Mitchell
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit
10/2/2007

--Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

--According to the Department of Transportation, in 1969, approximately 42 percent of children walked or rode bicycles to school. By 2001, less than 15 percent of children did so.

--This development is troubling. Not only is this impacting traffic congestion and fuel consumption, but it is also hampering our ability to help our children achieve healthier lifestyles.

--A number of factors have contributed to this decline ranging from a lack of appropriate infrastructure near schools to more general safety concerns about safety.

2

--The Federal Safe Routes to School program seeks to address this by funding projects that improve safety, reduce traffic congestion, and encourage children to walk and ride bikes to school.

--I believe these are admirable goals, and I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses about how we can work together to achieve them.

--I yield back the balance of my time.

Highways and Transit Subcommittee Hearing
Statement of Rep. Grace F. Napolitano
October 2, 2007

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding this very important hearing. The California State Legislature implemented a Statewide Safe Routes to School program in 2000. This program has provided $144 million in federal safety funds to cities and counties for infrastructure projects that improve the ability of students to walk or bike to school. Caltrans and the University of California reported in 2006 that the program has increased walking and biking to school by 20%-200% varying by school district.

California added the SAFETEA-LU Safe Routes to School program in 2005 when it was created by the federal government. Caltrans received 459 applications totaling $178 million in the first cycle of implementation. They only had $45 million available to provide in the first cycle. A project in Montebello, CA, in my Congressional District, was funded for $363,000 to create more traffic signals and repair sidewalks for students in the Montebello Unified School District. This project is expected to be completed in 2008.

The Safe Routes to School program is important to our communities. I strongly support the structure of the national program in focusing on both infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. Many schools in my district are within a few blocks of railroad tracks. It is a safety risk when students have to cross these railroad tracks in order to get to school. Many students on bicycles illegally use the railroad right-of-way because it is a short cut for their commute to and from school. Students have been injured and killed in my district by playing and loitering around the railroad tracks. Non-infrastructure projects, such as Railroad Safety Awareness programs, must be a more integral part of the Safe Routes to School program.

Thank you to our distinguished witnesses for providing your insights and experiences in the administration of this program. I thank the Chairman again for holding this vital hearing.

THE HONORABLE JAMES L. OBERSTAR
CHAIRMAN
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
HEARING ON THE FEDERAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
OCTOBER 2, 2007

- I thank Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Duncan for holding this important hearing.

- For all of the years I have been with this committee, first as a staffer and then as a Member, I've learned that rarely do you get the opportunity to change the habits of an entire generation. The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is our opportunity.

- I authored this provision in response to an unsettling trend. In the last 40 years, the number of kids walking and biking to school has dropped precipitously, from nearly half to less than 15 percent. This trend is fueled by everything from parental concerns over safety to a society that has become ever more dependent upon the automobile.

- The $612 million provided by the Congress in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) has already been put to good use for infrastructure projects such as sidewalks,

street crossing improvements, traffic calming, and intersection upgrades. It has generated educational programs that teach pedestrian, cyclist, and traffic safety. And it has reached almost 700 schools in just the first two years of the program.

- These are no small gains; I could not be more pleased with the progress of the Safe Routes program after such a short time. In all 50 states and the District of Columbia, SRTS state coordinators have worked with school officials, law enforcement, families and children, and all levels of government to get their programs off of the ground.

- The Safe Routes to School Clearinghouse has been established, and under the direction of Lauren Marchetti is providing a wealth of knowledge to aid states in starting their program. The Clearinghouse facilitates the learning and sharing of best practices, which will be key for this program to reach its full potential.

- The Safe Routes Task Force is also hard at work charting a course for the future of this program. The Congress will be looking to their work to guide us during the next surface transportation reauthorization.

- SRTS puts our infrastructure to work for the safety of our kids. Alone, that is a goal that deserves the focus of the Congress. But in addition to making our kids safer, the SRTS program has a number of other benefits.

- We know that kids today are spending more time in front of the television and computer screens, and less time playing outdoors. As a result, we are facing an obesity epidemic that afflicts nearly one fifth of our youth. Kids are struggling with illnesses that previously only impacted adults, including Type 2 diabetes and high cholesterol and blood pressure.

- By giving kids a fun and safe way to incorporate exercise into their daily routines, we are teaching them at a young age how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

- We are also teaching them how to be good stewards of the environment. The threat of climate change is growing, and America is working to respond through innovation and technology. But we can't forget the simple actions we can take a regular basis to make a difference.

- Walking and biking have the benefit of being both environmentally-friendly and kid-friendly. Let's teach our kids now that they do not have to be dependent on cars as their sole mode of transportation.

- Increased safety, healthier lifestyles, a cleaner environment; in these many ways, we can instill in our children positive habits that will last a lifetime.

- I am looking forward to the testimony from our witnesses and hope that this hearing can be the first step in assessing and improving the federal Safe Routes to School program.

Statement of
SCOTT BRICKER
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Before the
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
October 2, 2007

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Duncan, and Members of the Sub-Committee. I am honored to be here today to testify on the success of the federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program.

The Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA) is a statewide nonprofit organization with the mission of creating healthier, more sustainable communities by making bicycling safe, convenient, and accessible. We open minds and roads to bicycling in Oregon and SW Washington by representing bicyclists and the bicycle industry. The BTA has over 4,500 members and runs programs and projects statewide.

The BTA is Oregon's pioneer of SRTS and youth bicycle safety education programs. In 1998 the BTA received and I managed a NHSTA grant to develop a 10-hour Bicycle Safety Education (BSE) program and implement it statewide. The program has reached over 40,000 children in 20 Oregon cities. As part of this effort we also began promoting bicycling and walking to school and pushed the Oregon legislature to create an Oregon SRTS program.

The BTA continues to run the BSE program statewide, supports the Oregon SRTS program as technical advisor, chairs Oregon's coordinated effort to run an annual statewide Walk and Bike to School Day, and manages the daily operations of the Portland Safer Routes to School program. We also bring transportation planning expertise to the program, with innovative work on increasing low-traffic bicycle and pedestrian boulevards that would cost-effectively transform local neighborhood streets into safe routes for families and children.

Our goal is the shift the behaviors of a generation. While the statistics vary, about 60% of children bicycled and walked to school in 1970 while 15% do today. And from a practical point, that means that Oregon spends $300 million per year on school bus transportation; it means that over 50% of children are driven to school; it means that we are in the midst of a generation of

children that missed something that you had – independence and mobility. Consequently our children are increasingly inactive and overweight which leads to unprecedented health problems including diabetes, hypertension, and the inability to concentrate. My direct experiences and related research find that children are losing their ability to navigate their communities. Children are not learning how to pedal a bike to accomplish an independent task.

I believe that the Federal Safe Routes to School program is a critical effort to influence the behaviors of a generation. The SRTS program provides a flexible framework and financing that allows schools, municipalities, parents, teachers, children, and community members to work together to develop a multi-tiered effort to increase bicycling, walking, and non-motorized transportation to school.

OREGON BEGAN RUNNING SRTS IN 1998

Starting in 1998, the BTA's BSE program included a promotional element aimed at increasing bicycling to school. In 2001 the first bicycling school bus – a promotional element of SRTS – was run in Eugene in a partnership between the City of Eugene and the Center for Appropriate Transport. A year later the first SRTS Action Plan was developed in Bend, a partnership between the Department of Public Works and the School District. The Lane Transit District soon after received an Oregon Department of Energy Grant to promote transit to school. In 2003 the City of Portland began earmarking traffic fine revenue increases for a test pilot SRTS program.

FEDERAL SRTS PROGRAM PROVIDES ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

While Oregon has been working on SRTS for almost a decade, the federal SRTS program has provided real money to implement solutions and ideas. The federal program is the key reason for the formation of the Oregon SRTS Advisory Committee (SRAC). The SRAC, which has a diverse array of members and liaisons from the transportation, health, education and police departments, has met for over a year to develop an Oregon SRTS strategy and the grant program.

The federal SRTS program provides real resources for local communities to start working on ideas that have been incubating. It offers resources that communities have never had before. It provides real opportunities for schools and cities that are interested in tackling their school-commute problems.

Today, many communities view their efforts as test pilots. These pilots are successfully changing behaviors and building community support. The interest in and experience implementing SRTS programs continues to grow and will lay the foundation for a more success and hopefully robust effort moving forward.

SCHOOLS NOW CARE ABOUT A CHILD'S COMMUTE

The SRTS program is unique because it is based on the premise that commuting to school is an activity that schools should care about. As the education, engineering, and promotion services are being developed, school principals are becoming enthusiastic in their efforts to care for children during their commute to and from school. In Portland, for example, the city and the

school sign an agreement that lays out program goals and the specific services that will be rendered.

SCHOOL AND MUNICIPALITY RELATIONSHIPS ARE BEING BUILT

SRTS builds new partnerships between schools and local city and county government. Many of these relationships did not exist, in fact, in my thirteen years in the transportation planning profession, I had never been in a meeting with a public school transportation service provider. This new consideration about children bicycling and walking to school is making its way to the school district's administration.

These new relationships are helping establish a new level of integrated planning among municipalities and schools. All of Oregon's SRTS applications are required by Oregon law to have a coordinated plan between schools and municipalities. In many cities, like Bend, Eugene, Portland, Corvallis, and Albany, school districts are participating in meetings with city planners to discuss community-wide SRTS strategies and solutions for specific schools.

At the Oregon level, the SRTS Advisory Committee has representation from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Oregon Department of Education. Discussions about statewide law and policy, and ultimately transportation services and financing, are happening. The federal SRTS program provides real resources that give these statewide forums teeth. The federal SRTS program is helping expose the magnitude of the issue that we face.

FHWA CONSTRUCTION RULES ARE CHALLENGING

For Oregon, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rules are the most challenging part of the federal SRTS program. According to the Oregon SRTS Manager, all infrastructure projects are subject to FHWA rules on contracting and the environment. These rules require a high level of oversight and grant administration.

These rules are especially challenging for minimum allocation states like Oregon – the minimum amount a state can receive is $1 million per year. The Oregon SRAC encouraged communities to submit smaller projects, including speed bumps, lane restriping, median islands, and curb extensions as solutions to fix the most dangerous crossings and important street safety issues; funding smaller projects allows the SRAC to distribute grants to a larger number of communities. Unfortunately, ODOT highway grant managers believe that local project estimates may need to be doubled or tripled; administration is a contributing factor to this increase.

Oregon is working to reduce these regulatory costs by developing a bundling system and by streamlining the process for certain project types. The bundling system would allow a local community to include projects at more than one school in a single application, thus reducing the total administrative costs. This works well for larger cities and school districts. ODOT is working to develop a streamlined process for the most straightforward projects that clearly do not have an environmental impact and that most municipalities can contract in house. An example might be a school seeking to build five speed bumps, stripe two new sidewalks in a school zone, add ten bike racks, and infill 30 feet of missing sidewalk.

SUPPLANTING RULES ARE CONFUSING AND LIMITING

Supplanting is another federal granting issue that Oregon is struggling with. Communities are confused about supplanting rules and in many cases have been test-piloting programs in the hopes of a finding additional funding source to help run them. Perhaps the federal SRTS program was never intended to provide ongoing funds, but in many cases the supplanting rule requires a school or community to apply for a new concept with zero or limited track record before funding a proven program.

The supplanting rules also lead to confusion about the length of time that a federal SRTS grant can support a school in its efforts to shift behavior and increase bicycling and walking. Oregon's experience is that this work takes time and is challenging. Federal rules should be loosened to allow local communities to apply for multi-year grants under the SRTS program.

DEMAND GREATLY OUTPACES RESOURCES

In the communities that have started promoting SRTS, the demand strongly outweighs the resources for the program. The City of Portland and its partners are currently serving 26 schools--providing education, encouragement, and quick engineering fixes. Twenty additional schools are on the program's waiting list. Furthermore, almost all of the participating schools have identified a list of engineering fixes that will not be built because of a lack of funds. Oregon cities including Bend, Eugene, Corvallis, Springfield, and Albany applied for only a portion of the potential SRTS projects because of limited funding.

VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES ARE INVALUABLE

Oregon's SRTS programs rely heavily on the resources of community volunteers including parents, students and advocacy organizations. The Oregon program has done an excellent job of building new relationships with health professionals, foundations, and institutions.

Through SRTS programs, agencies that have not always worked together in the past now join forces to improve the health and safety of school children. Many successful SRTS activities include encouragement and education programs that are largely run by volunteers. They are often associated with school groups, including wellness councils and/or parent-teacher associations.

Partnerships add value to federal funding and are essential to the success of SRTS. In Oregon, the Walk N Bike to School Committee convenes to develop a statewide strategy and support the implementation of the International Walk and Bike to School Day. Bicycle safety education programs, walking school buses, and route-planning walkabouts are all activities that Oregonians have volunteered for time and again.

Local agencies and businesses support these efforts with donated materials, printing, marketing, and staff support. In Benton County, the County Health Partnership is taking the lead to leverage many community partnerships in order to develop a countywide strategy for SRTS. In Ashland the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee has partnered with BTA instructors to coordinate bicycle safety programs and promotional efforts.

OREGON'S UNIQUE PLANNING REQUIREMENT

In 2001 and 2005 the BTA advocated and helped pass two Oregon laws that require school districts and city or county governments to identify barriers and hazards to bicycling and walking to school. The law also requires them to develop an Action Plan in order to receive SRTS funds. This requirement builds in protections that SRTS funds will be strategically used according to these coordinated plans.

These laws also slow down the Oregon SRTS program. ODOT did not provide any funding for local staff to develop action plans; a number of communities do not have the staff resources to analyze and engage the community to create these plans.

PLANNING IS IMPORTANT AND TAKES TIME

Planning is important to understand the opportunities and constraints that each community faces. Planning also takes time, and in Oregon the SRTS program will take a while to establish. Communities are moving forward with the development of Action Plans now that federal money is available. Cities are starting to post successes and more people are learning about this work.

It takes time to set up these coalitions, and even more time to develop a strategic plan for any given school. Therefore, communities that had started planning before the federal program was created are in line to receive implementation money first. **The federal program should provide flexibility and direction to DOTs to authorize community-planning grants to help generate a robust SRTS process.**

OREGON SRTS SUCCESSES ARE ONLY BEGINNING

The Oregon SRTS program, with support from the SRAC, will announce the first round of federal SRTS grants in the fall of 2007. We have already seen many successes in Oregon and look forward to participating in the implementation of the new projects.

Oregon is also in the process of developing a more robust statewide encouragement program to supplement its existing educational program. The Oregon Walk and Bike Committee is working with ODOT to increase resources to this successful event.

Schools around Oregon are waiting on federal funds to continue the good work that they began with the development of their Action Plans. Schools applied from across Oregon; from La Grande to Eugene, from Independence to Portland, and Springfield to Veneta.

In conclusion, Safe Routes to School is an important program that is laying the foundation for changing the habits of an entire generation. We are pleased to work within Oregon and proud to work with other states in making our nation safer and healthier for families and children.

Safe Routes to School is creating a stronger America; a healthier America.

I am excited to work with you and the committee in strengthening the program even further, and I look forward to your questions.

Responses of Questions by
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Questions Submitted by
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HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT SUBCOMMITTEE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

This statement responds to the question of activities that the Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA), or other organizations working on Safe Routes to School programs in Oregon, are doing to improve railroad track safety.

The BTA primarily runs bicycle and pedestrian safety programs. In our bicycle program, a ten-hour on-bike and on-street program, we briefly cover the issue of railroad track safety in regard to methods by which to safety cross tracks. That is railroad tracks can be slippery and can "suck" in a bicycle wheel leading to a crash. We teach bicyclists to cross railroad tracks at a perpendicularly.

In both our bicycle and pedestrian programs we teach proper road crossing techniques. This requires the establishment of right of way, requiring students to answer the question "who has the right of way?" We seek to tailor our program for different communities. Therefore, in areas where railroad tracks exist, whether they are urban light rails tracks or more rural heavy line rail, we attempt address these issues.

As for the Oregon Safe Routes to School program, I do not know of any community that has specifically requested railroad safety programs. In Oregon, local communities must take the initiative to apply for funding to obtain the programs. Attached is the list of applications in 2007.

Please feel free to contact me with additional questions.

2008 APPLICATIONS - (ACTION PLAN PASSED)

AGENCY (and co-applicant, if any)	School(s) that benefit	Infra funds	Project	Non-infrastructure projects submitted?	Bundled?	
Canyon City; Grant School District #3	Humbolt ES	$39,632	6 speed bumps, striping bike lane and center strip $21,714; bike rack and 2 shelters $11,313.	$1,268 Overtime enforcement,office support; (3) display boards	No	$1,268.00
City of Independence; School District 13J	Monmouth ES; Henry Hill ES; Independence ES; Talmadge MS; Ash Creek Intermed	$250,000	Continuation of Ash Creek Trail from Gun Club Rd to the 11th St. trailhead, adding 6,160 linear ft. of 10' wide concrete trail. Trail to connect Independence Elementary, as well as Talmadge Middle School.	$12,633 Staff time to conduct bicycle rodeos; stipends for WOU student assistants, reserve offcer staff time for enforcement; printing and distribution of at least 1500 copies of Ash Creek Trail and Safe Routes to School map; BTA/WPC training teachers on ped/bike safety curriculum	Bundled 5 schools	$12,633.00
Monroe Middle School, Lane Co SD 4J	Monroe MS	$45,893	construction of 33'x40" roof over existing bike cage, upgrading bike lock-up security system, adding facilities for 24 skate/long boards, installation of 1'x20' coat/rain gear storage rack	$ 14,265 2-yr funding request: FY08: Ped Safety class; bike helmets; Guardian Crossing Display Sign; office supplies/printing of route maps and parent surveys;incentives - $8,211 FY09: bike repair supplies; helmets; printing; office expenses; ped safety class; t-shirts; walk/bike incentives $6,054	Bundled with Roosevelt MS	$14,265.00
City of Portland;	Atkinson ES; Capitol Hill ES; Chapman ES; Chief Joseph pre k-5; Faubion, k-7; Forest Park ES; Gilbert Heights ES; Kelly ES; Rosa Parks ES; Sacramento ES; Sunnyside ES	$499,600	Curb ramps, curb extensions, ped refuge islands, curb, sidewalk and installation ped countdown signal heads at or near eleven elementary schools. This work currently has no identified funding source.	$100,000 2 site organizer positions to cover 11 schools over 3 school districts	Bundled 11 schools over 3 school districts	$100,000.00
City of Veneta;	Veneta ES	$170,480	McCutcheon Ave. brought up to urban standards, widening the street, adding sidewalks, curbs, gutters, McCutcheon Ave., Territorial Rd. to 8th St. (2272 feet)	$14,289 Bicycles; Helmets; tire tubes; educational materials; promotion and outreach; office expenses; SRTS manager; bike/ped safety trainers	No	$14,289.00

Corvallis 509J School District; City of Corvallis, Public Works	Adams ES	$96,335.00	1100'x8' walkway; curb cut and ramp at multimodal path end; remove abandoned crosswalk marking; install ped activated crosswalk signal on 35th St.; re-stripe parking; replace signs with signs for student drop-off/pick-up; covered bike rack	(bundled with Lincoln Elementary) Overtime enforcement Corvallis PD; SRTS curriculum; bicycle/ped SRTS safety training; grant administration; incentives for SRTS programs	Bundled between Adams ES and Lincoln ES	
Corvallis 509J School District; City of Corvallis, Public Works	Lincoln ES	$65,133	300'x8' bike/ped path connecting to Viewmont St.; 275'x8' sidewalk on east side of parking lot to school; (4) signs "student drop off and pick-up only"; shelter for bike racks, $8980; (20) bike racks, $11080;	$24,621 Overtime enforcement Corvallis PD; SRTS curriculum; bicycle/ped SRTS safety training; grant administration; incentives for SRTS programs	Bundled between Adams ES and Lincoln ES	$24,621.00
Benton County Public Works; Philomath School District	Philomath ES; Philomath MS; Clemens Primary School	$67,809	Purchase/installation of 40 bike hoops between 2 schools, Philomath elementary and middle schools; covered bike shelter at each school; purchase/installation of (2) VMS traffic-calming signs on 19th St. in front of Clemens Primary School.	$21,702 Personnel costs for student intern, Project Coordinator, law enforcement overtime, material costs for purchase of bicycles and helmets, program incentives, costs to hold/facilitate community forums, printing and publicity costs.	Bundled between 3 schools in Philomath SD	$21,702.00
City of La Grande: La Grande Central School	La Grande Central ES	$203,850	construct sidewalks in existing ROW north of Central Grade School to connect to sidewalks 3 blocks north.	$5,000 Think First and Bike Smart/Walk Smart Curriculum; Bike rodeo materials, helmets; incentives	No	$5,000.00
City of Bend; Commute Options for Central Oregon	Bear Creek ES	$79,224	completion of sidewalks along Bear Creek Rd., to the boundary of the walking zone for Bear Creek Elementary. Property to be purchased (150 sq ft)	$23,840 for Bear Creek and Juniper non-infrastructure activities: Overtime Enforcement; Bicycle Safety Education; materials/printing; safety incentives for ped/bike safety classes; safety class props, $200	Bundled Bear Creek ES and Juniper ES for non-infr activities	$23,840.00
Springfield Public Schools	Thurston ES	$214,300	contstruction of bicycle shelter w/ bike racks, plus 10"wide cocerete path leading from Thursto Rd. to new shelter, with 5' planted buffer between path and parking lot driveway.	n/a	No	

	TOTAL of qualifying INFRASTRUCTURE applications =	$1,732,256		Total of $217,618 NON-Infrastructure, in approval process now		$217,618.00
2008 INFRASTRUCTURE APPLICATIONS - ACTION PLAN (FAILED)						
AGENCY (and co-applicant, if any)	**Infrastructure Funds**	**Reason for ACTION PLAN FAIL**				
Harrisburg School District; City of Harrisburg	$6,895: button-activated and lighted ped x-walk at Diamond Hill and North 9th St.	No Action Plan submitted				
City of Pendleton	$72,180.90: McKay school ped bridge $22,959; West Hills School pathway phase 1, $72,181; West Hills School pathway phase 2, $27,269	Action Plans for West Hills School and for McKay Creek Grade School incomplete				
Lincoln City Public Works Dept.	$152,628: construction raised x-walks, connections to sidewalks, parent pick-up parking along major collector streets	No Action Plan submitted	INFRASTRUCTURE APPLICATION REQUEST: (5) radar speed signs 2/solar powerand traffic data collection, $19,425; installation for each sign, concrete base and bolted down, $500			
City of Eagle Point	$250,000: sidewalk infill and bike lane improvements	Action Plan incomplete				

STATEMENT OF

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415/454-7430

Before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
OCTOBER 2, 2007

STATEMENT OF
DEBORAH A. HUBSMITH
DIRECTOR, SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP
415-454-7430
Before the
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
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Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Duncan, and Members of the Sub-Committee. I am honored to be here today to testify on the success of the federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program.

I have been involved with community-based SRTS programs for nearly 10 years and had the privilege to help lead activities and strategies related to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's SRTS pilot program in Marin County, California, during the 2000-2001 school year. Through the pilot program, we worked in nine public schools, bringing together parents, students, school personnel and city leaders to develop interventions that would get more children walking and bicycling to schools safely. We helped to develop the 5E's for SRTS: evaluation, education, encouragement, enforcement and engineering. Through utilizing these 5E's, in only two years, we documented a 64% increase in the number of children walking, a 114% increase in the number of students biking, a 91% increase in the number of students carpooling, and a 39% decrease in the number of children arriving by private car carrying only one student.[1]

Due to the success of this federal pilot program, I worked with others to create the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, which now includes more than 300 diverse organizations and agencies such as the American Heart Association, the American Association for School Administrators, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the League of American Bicyclists, and Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.[2] The Partnership sets goals, shares best practices and assists with implementation of the federal SRTS program. Our Web site, www.saferoutespartnership.org, includes a description of ongoing progress in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. A summary matrix detailing state progress is also included on page six of this written testimony.

Overall, as the Director of Safe Routes to School National Partnership and as a member of the Congressionally mandated task force charged with developing a strategy for advancing this program nationwide, my assessment is that the federal SRTS is off to a very good start. The enabling legislation, through section 1404 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU), provided flexibility to state Departments of Transportation (DOTs) to develop programs that are unique to their communities, with 70 percent to 90 percent of funds being dedicated toward infrastructure improvements (sidewalks, pathways, intersection improvements and bike lanes), and 10 percent to 30 percent of the funds being dedicated toward non-infrastructure activities (education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation).

Statistics from the federal program implementation thus far include:

- 100 percent of the DOTs have designated an SRTS coordinator to manage the program;
- 90 percent of the DOTs have designated full-time SRTS coordinators, and the other 10 percent are now hiring to do so;
- 70 percent of the state DOTs have created multi-disciplinary advisory committees for their SRTS programs. Many advisory committess include representatives from state health departments, state education departments, law enforcement, local jurisdictions, advocacy organizations, schools and practitioners. While an advisory committee to the state DOT is not required by the legislation, theses entities are proving to be extremely valuable for helping to develop and manage SRTS programs, which include more than building infrastructure;
- 80 percent of the states have already released a request for proposals for the federal SRTS funds; and
- 60 percent of the states have announced project awards that will receive funding.

Through analyzing the SRTS programs in states and communities throughout the nation, I have noted the following successes:

First – SRTS Is Popular — and It's Working

In locations where SRTS programs were in effect prior to SAFETEA-LU, communities have seen improvements in safety, and more children are now walking and bicycling to schools. In California, a 2007 Safe Routes to School Mobility and Safety Analysis conducted by Caltrans showed that direct observations of schools that received capital safety improvements yielded walking and bicycling increases that were often in the range of 20 percent to 200 percent. The report also indicated that the estimated safety benefit of the program was up to a 49 percent decrease in the childhood bicycle and pedestrian collision rates.[3]

Second – SRTS Builds Valuable Partnerships

Most SRTS programs rely on the resources of volunteers, such as parents, students and advocacy organizations. SRTS builds partnerships among cities, schools and counties, as well as other stakeholders. Through SRTS programs, agencies that have not always worked together in the past now join forces to improve the health and safety of school children. Many successful SRTS activities include encouragement and education programs that are largely run by volunteers and are often associated with school groups, including wellness councils or parent-teacher

associations. These partnerships add value to federal funding and are essential to the success of SRTS.

Third – SRTS Reaches Low-Income Communities

The federal SRTS program provides 100 percent funding for grant awards, which means that local matching funds are not required. This ensures that the program reaches low-income and vulnerable communities where volunteers are not always readily available and local resources are in short supply. These communities often need more assistance in applying for grants and in getting programs off the ground. For example, the Active Living Resource Center's City SRTS program, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, encourages states to pay special attention and offer adequate resources to disadvantaged communities, including offering technical support to cities and school districts that have a high interest in the SRTS program but lack start-up resources.

Fourth – State Networks Are Effective and are Leveraging Federal Funds

The federal SRTS program is helping to leverage private funding entities to support SRTS programs, which is yielding even greater results. For example, with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Bikes Belong Coalition, the SRTS National Partnership launched its SRTS State Network Project in January 2007. Through the project, networks in nine key states and the District of Columbia were established to bring together leaders associated with health, education, land use, youth engagement, and bicycle and pedestrian issues to help state DOTs move their state SRTS programs forward. The effectiveness of convening these stakeholders is already apparent. In California, for example, the SRTS State Network is helping to advertise the upcoming round of project funding and identify experts for project selection committees. In New York, the SRTS State Network recently held a press conference with State Senator Antoine M. Thompson to encourage schools to participate in Walk and Bike to School Day events, and to request for the New York SRTS program to give funding assistance to schools. SRTS was subsequently covered in the *New York Times* Health Section. In Virginia, the SRTS State Network is partnering with the Harvest Foundation to fund a comprehensive bicycling and walking initiative in Martinsville/Henry County.

Challenges and Opportunities Lie Ahead

Starting a new federal program at the state level takes time, and as we work to implement SRTS programs in all 50 states, there are a number of challenges we are facing. But I believe with the help of Congress and the federal government, we can turn these challenges into opportunities.

First Challenge: The Popularity of SRTS Has Resulted in Local Demand Exceeding Available Funds

In most states where application guidelines have been released, the amount of funding requested for program implementation has vastly exceeded available funds. Several states report that requests have been more than five times greater than the available funding. Here are a few examples:

- The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department received 67 proposals requesting $8.7 million for their first round of SRTS grants. They were able to award $2.3 million in funding for 37 projects.

- The Kentucky SRTS program received 70 grant applications totaling more than $10 million for $2 million that was available to be awarded for their second round of funding in the spring of 2007.
- The New Jersey Department of Transportation received a total of 274 proposals for $75 million in the program's first round of SRTS grants. They awarded $4.15 million in SRTS grants to 29 communities across the state in July 2007.

Congress has the opportunity to enable children – and all people -- to walk and bike safely within their communities by increasing funding for SRTS in the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU so more projects can be funded.

Second Challenge: Federal Requirements Are Delaying Grant Administration and Can Lead to Frustration

Federal requirements for funding allocations and construction of small SRTS projects mirror those for large state highway projects. This fact, coupled with state-specific requirements, means that considerable time and effort are needed to administer small grants. In several cases, state DOTs announced grant awards to project applicants, who in turn expected implementation to take place in the near future. However, due to complicated contract and federal requirements, many programs that were expected to start in the beginning of the school year have been delayed by several months or, in some cases, up to a year. Such delays have frustrated parents and school and city volunteers, sometimes decreasing the local momentum for the SRTS program. Some local communities have not applied for SRTS funding due to the amount of administrative work involved in applying for and implementing small SRTS federal projects.

Congress has the opportunity to enable more communities to become involved with SRTS by streamlining burdensome paperwork requirements during the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU.

Third Challenge: Improving Data Collection and Evaluation

We are pleased that the National Center for SRTS developed student tally and parent survey forms to help evaluate the federal SRTS program, and we feel that the federal government should be doing more to advance data collection for this new program.

The federal government has the opportunity to help the U.S. DOT and states to better develop a performance-based analysis of SRTS.

We are encouraging the U.S. DOT to develop methods to routinely collect pedestrian and bicycle safety and use data from states at the same time that they collect data related to roadways and highways. We also urge that the National Household Travel Survey be funded and implemented in 2008 throughout the United States (not just in states that can purchase add-on questions). We also request that new questions be added to the U.S. Census to better track school trips, modes and distance.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not address criticisms that have been made with regard to the use of federal transportation funds for pedestrian and bicycle programs such as SRTS. To address these claims, I will point out that:

- The $612 million for the federal SRTS program is only 0.2 percent of the overall funding that was provided through the $286.5 billion SAFETEA-LU transportation bill.

- Some communities report that 20 percent to 30 percent of morning peak-hour traffic is generated by parents driving their children to schools.[4] Getting more children walking and bicycling safely could reduce this traffic congestion and ease air pollution around schools.

- Many states and schools are facing rising costs related to school transportation, and SRTS provides for a low-cost method to improve the school commute. In Massachusetts, for example, communities are starting to eliminate busing to cut municipal costs. As a result, more students will be walking and bicycling to schools, and it is imperative to make these commuting modes safer.

- Physical activity among U.S. children has plummeted; a third of our nation's young people are obese or overweight, and the rates are climbing quickly. In the past four decades, the obesity rate for children ages 6 to 11 has jumped almost fivefold (from 4 to 19 percent) and has more than tripled for adolescents ages 12 to 19 (from 5 to 17 percent).[5,6,7] For the first time, significant numbers of U.S. children are developing obesity-related diseases that previously were considered "adult" illnesses, such as type II diabetes and high blood pressure. There are high costs associated with these health concerns, and SRTS programs can help to address them by increasing safe, convenient opportunities for children to be physically active.

- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, from 1992 to 2001 there were 6,679 pedestrian fatalities among children under the age of 15. This number represents 12.6 percent of all pedestrian fatalities for that 10-year time period.[8] In 2002, nearly 288,900 children under the age of 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for bicycle-related injuries. Nearly half (47 percent) of children ages 14 and under who are hospitalized for bicycle-related injuries are diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury. Infrastructure and non-infrastructure improvements funded by SRTS will decrease childhood bicycle and pedestrian collisions and save lives.[9]

- Getting more children to walk and bicycle to schools throughout the United States also decreases energy use and reduces carbon emissions, which are priorities for our nation.

In conclusion, Safe Routes to School is an important transportation program that is on the right course for improving communities throughout the United States. It is laying the foundation to change the habits of an entire generation.

Safe Routes to School is creating a stronger America; a healthier America.

The United States can be proud of the Safe Routes to School program.

I am excited to work with you in strengthening the program even further, and I look forward to your questions.

STATE	D.O.T. SRTS COORDINATOR HIRED	ADVISORY COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED	APPLICATION GUIDELINES RELEASED	PROJECTS SELECTED
Alabama	★	In Progress		
Alaska	★			
Arizona	★	★	★	★
Arkansas	★	★	★	★
California	★	★	★	★
Colorado	★	★	★	★
Connecticut	★	In Progress	★	★
Delaware	★		★	★
D.C.	Interim			
Florida	★		★	★
Georgia	★	★		
Hawaii	Interim		★	
Idaho	★	★	★	★
Illinois	★	★	★	In Progress
Indiana	★	★	★	★
Iowa	★	★	★	★
Kansas	★	★	★	★
Kentucky	★	★	★	★
Louisiana	★	★	★	★
Maine	Interim		★	★
Maryland	★		★	★
Massachusetts	★		★	★
Michigan	★	★	★	In Progress
Minnesota	★	★	★	★
Mississippi	★	★	★	★
Missouri	★	★	★	★
Montana	★	★	★	★
Nebraska	★	★	★	★
Nevada	★	★	★	
New Hampshire	★	In Progress	★	In Progress
New Jersey	★	★	★	★
New Mexico	★		★	★
New York	★		In Progress	
North Carolina	★			
North Dakota	★	★	★	★
Ohio	★	★	★	
Oklahoma	★	★		
Oregon	★	★	★	In Progress
Pennsylvania	★	★	In Progress	
Rhode Island	★	★	★	
South Carolina	★	★	★	In Progress
South Dakota	Interim			
Tennessee	★	★	★	In Progress
Texas	★	★	★	In Progress
Utah	★	★	★	★
Vermont	★	★	★	★
Virginia	Interim	★	★	★
Washington	★	★	★	★
West Virginia	★	★	★	★
Wisconsin	★	★	★	★
Wyoming	★	★	★	★

Safe Routes to School: Early Success Stories

To date, much of the national effort has been focused on helping states start their programs. Following are some examples of early success stories collected by the SRTS National Partnership from across the United States.

California: State SRTS Program is Effective and Popular
In its first call for SAFETEA-LU grant proposals, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) received 455 project requests for a total of $178 million. Caltrans was able to award $45 million in federal grants for 88 projects. The funding distribution for the federal program includes: 70 percent for infrastructure (capital) projects; 10 percent for a single statewide program to develop standardized training, promotional materials and other SRTS statewide resources; and 20 percent for local non-infrastructure (education, encouragement and enforcement) projects. The new federal funds augmented a well-established state SRTS program that Caltrans had been operating since state legislation was first approved in 1999. A January 2007 report from Caltrans evaluating the first six years of the state program shows that it is effective -- and popular. Direct observations of schools that received safety improvements yielded walking and bicycling increases that were often in the range of 20%-200%. The report also indicated that the estimated safety benefit of the program ranged from no net change to a 49% decrease in the collision rate among children. The demand for SRTS programs in California is great—each call for applications has resulted in approximately five times more requests than the available funding can support.

Florida: Teaching Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety
Unlike other states, Florida has already solicited SRTS proposals for all five years' worth of federal SRTS funding (2005-2009). The seven Florida DOT districts received the applications, selected projects and secured approval from the state SRTS coordinator for each five-year work program. The program already is making progress. For example, the Volusia County School District used federal funding to expand the existing elementary bicycle and pedestrian safety program to include seven elementary schools. The project used the existing Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education program to encourage teachers to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian safety into their curriculum. As a result of this effort, four new physical education teachers from Flagler County schools have been trained to teach bicycle and pedestrian safety at their schools.

Idaho: Building Sidewalks for Elementary School Students
In Sandpoint, Idaho, Principal Anne Bagby recalls many close calls between automobiles and students walking to Farmin Stidwell Elementary School. And until recently, the children had no choice but to walk in the street to get to school, because there were no sidewalks. Together, Sandpoint and the school district requested a SRTS federal grant to create a sidewalk on nearby Madison Street. The Idaho Transportation Department approved the application, and the city contributed additional funding to expand the sidewalk project.

Massachusetts: Teaching Second-Graders Pedestrian Safety
In Massachusetts, the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT), through its MassRIDES Office, contracted with the nonprofit organization, WalkBoston, to provide pedestrian safety training to

second-graders at seven elementary schools. The program was very successful. With a budget of approximately $11,000 for spring 2007, the program recruited 35 parent volunteers and reached 425 students. The EOT has had numerous requests for the safety training program and is expanding the program in fall 2007 and 2008.

Michigan: A Collaborative Effort Reaches More than Half of the State's Counties
In the spring of 2006, the Michigan Department of Transportation awarded a $3.25 million multi-year contract to the Michigan Fitness Foundation (MFF) to continue its SRTS program work. MFF, in turn, is contracting with a number of groups for assistance: the Michigan Department of Community Health, Michigan State University and MSU Extension, Wayne State University, Programs to Educate All Cyclists, League of Michigan Bicyclists, Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance and Michigan Association of Planning. This collaborative effort will help build SRTS programs to serve students across the state. To date, 223 schools have registered for SRTS, 17 regional trainings have been held, and 547 people across the state have been trained. These schools represent 100 districts and 57 percent of the counties in Michigan.

Minnesota: Supporting Education and Infrastructure Projects
The Minnesota SRTS program is managed by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, which awarded $1.55 million in funding in April 2007. More than $1.3 million funded 13 infrastructure projects, including major sidewalk improvements and extensions, trail connections, lighting and safety and driver-feedback signage. The remaining funds supported 10 non-infrastructure projects for safety education programs, SRTS studies and planning projects, and the implementation of a bicycle and pedestrian curriculum at Duluth public schools.

Mississippi: Sidewalks and a "Bike Rodeo" for Students
Students of Central and Fifth Street schools in West Point, Mississippi, will be among the state's first to benefit from the SRTS grant program. The problem is serious. Mayor Scott Ross said, "I have personally seen kids poised on Main Street, ready to run out between breaks in traffic to cross the street." With a grant for $563,064, the city plans to implement sidewalk and bicycle-route infrastructure projects and will begin informing residents about the coming changes through events, billboards and pamphlets. West Point police officers will conduct safe pedestrian and cycling demonstrations for students and the city plans to host a "bike rodeo" to teach students safe cycling practices. For its first round of funding, the Mississippi Department of Transportation received $8.5 million in grant requests for $3 million in available funding.

Missouri: Students Get Aboard the "Walking School Bus"
Over the last three years, trained volunteers and parents have built a successful Walking School Bus (WSB) program in Columbia, Missouri. Every day, WSB volunteers walk groups of eight to 12 children to school. The program, which was created through a partnership between the PedNet Coalition, Columbia Public Schools and the Columbia/Boone County Health Department, is designed to encourage children to walk to school. According to PedNet, the most common reasons parents give for driving their children to school include fears for the child's safety (if the student walks alone) and time and convenience issues that prevent parents from walking with their children. The WSB program works to remove these barriers. In 2006-2007, more than 160 children from six schools registered for the WSB program and walked to school every day on 14 different routes. In June 2007, the Missouri Department of Transportation

awarded 46 SRTS grants that will benefit students attending 96 schools throughout the state. The department plans to sponsor a statewide conference on SRTS featuring a discussion of PedNet's successful WSB program.

New Mexico: Traffic Calming and Increased Cycling
The Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) initiated an SRTS pilot project during 2006-2007 at the Hillrise Elementary School, a rapidly urbanizing area in a semi-rural location. The pilot program was based on following the Five Es for SRTS, including the re-striping of two streets. Surveys conducted at the beginning and end of the school year showed a 7.3 percent reduction in trips to school using the family car and a fourfold increase in the percentage of bicycle trips. In addition, the results of a traffic-calming project on Missouri Avenue showed that drivers were more mindful of the posted speed limit. Specifically, results showed that the percentage of drivers speeding 10 or more miles per hour decreased by two-thirds in each direction, and the percentage of drivers speeding five or more miles per hour decreased by almost half in each direction. The MPO reports that these are highly visible, easily replicated successes that can be applied at a local level, even on a small budget.

Oregon: More than 30,000 Students Learn from Bicycle Education Course
The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) manages the state's SRTS program with support from the ODOT SRTS advisory committee, which includes a diverse array of members and liaisons from the transportation, health, education and police departments. In the fall of 2007, the ODOT will announce funding decisions for new applications. The state is also in the process of developing a statewide encouragement program to supplement its existing educational program. One project stands out: since 1998, more than 30,000 Oregon students have received the nationally recognized, 10-hour, in-class and on-the-street bicycle education course, which is funded by ODOT and taught by the nonprofit Bicycle Transportation Alliance.

Tennessee: MPO Takes the Lead on Safe Routes to School
The Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is working with parents, administrators, and teachers at local schools to promote walking and bicycling to school and to find solutions where walking and bicycling are unsafe. Two Knox County schools have active Safe Routes to School programs so far: Bearden Elementary and Beaumont Elementary. The TPO is now working with Fountain City Elementary, Gresham Middle, and Sarah Moore Greene Elementary to also establish SRTS programs at these schools; they will be applying for funding to make improvements near these schools in the spring of 2008. The Knoxville SRTS programs includes events that encourage families to try walking and bicycling to school, safety training for children and drivers, and planning for sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike paths that might be needed near area schools. The TPO has been working in partnership with other local government and nongovernmental entities including: the Knox County Health Department, the city and county engineering departments, the Knoxville Policy Department, Knox County Sheriff's Office, Safe Kids Coalition, parent teacher organizations, the school board, and individual school administrators. The TPO has also designed a transportation planner on staff who provides information on how to start a SRTS program within the region. In addition to the Knoxville schools, they have advised the Town of Farragut, in Knox County, and the City of Maryville, in Blount County.

Texas: Community Organizations Host Safe Kids Week Event
The Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) first call for project proposals ended in May 2007, and projects were awarded four months later. But earlier this year, the SRTS program already was touching the lives of students in Texas. To celebrate the 2007 Safe Kids Week in Amarillo, community organizations hosted an event at Will Rogers Elementary School on May 4, 2007. The event provided entertaining family training to help children avoid bike injuries. More than 500 students rotated through the booths to receive safety advice at the day-long event. The non-profit Texas Bicycle Coalition SRTS program provided expert safety tips on helmet use, bicycle safety and bicycle maintenance.

Virginia: Strong Training and Evaluation Efforts Build Capacity
Created in September 2006, Virginia's State Advisory Committee includes representatives from BikeWalk Virginia, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the Departments of Health, Education, Motor Vehicles, Conservation and Recreation, and the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals. The Virginia SRTS program provides training upon request and also attempts to provide free training for all applicants. Evaluation of all VDOT-funded projects is required and includes parent and student surveys, crash data when relevant and anecdotal data indicating safety improvements. Virginia's commitment to training and evaluation is already showing promise. The Harvest Foundation, based in Martinsville/Henry County, provided a three-year $1.56 million grant to support walking and bicycling in the local community. In addition to supporting safer routes to school, these changes will also enhance the county's attractiveness as a business location and destination for environmentally sustainable tourism and development.

West Virginia: Parent Surveys Provide Key Data, Build Support
In August 2007, the Berkeley County Board of Education and the West Virginia Department of Transportation agreed to spend nearly $85,000 in federal SRTS grant money for sidewalks at two area schools. Officials in Berkeley County reviewed routes to school and collected data before submitting the grant application. Superintendent Manny Arvon reported that about 1,200 students reside in the immediate area and hundreds of new housing units have been built, which has resulted in a large number of children walking to and from school. Parents also were surveyed to determine if they would walk their child to school or allow their child to walk to school if sidewalks were installed. Two phases of the Berkeley County SRTS program soon will be under way, adding walkways to existing crosswalks and blinking lights near both North Middle School and Opequon Elementary School. The program will also include a SRTS campaign to educate residents, students, school staff and parents about the benefits of walking and bicycling to school safely.

More details and links to additional state success stories are available online at: www.saferoutespartnership.org.

Endnotes

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2) A full list of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership's affiliate is available at: http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/about/1733

3) Safe Routes to School Mobility and Safety Analysis, California Department of Transportation. January 2007. Available at: http://repositories.cdlib.org/its/tsc/UCB-TSC-RR-2007-1/

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November 1, 2007

Chairman Peter DeFazio
c/o Peter Gould, peter.gould@mail.house.gov
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
B-370A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Response to question from Representative Grace F. Napolitano

Chairman DeFazio:

Thank you again for asking me to testify before the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit on October 2, 2007 regarding Safe Routes to School.

This letter (sent electronically and via postal mail), provides responses to the two questions raised by Representative Grace F. Napolitano. I have included her original question in bold, followed by my response.

1. Ms. Hubsmith, you have assisted with the implementation of California State's Safe Routes to School Program (SR2S) and the Federal Program (SRTS). Please compare and contrast these programs? Is one program more effective than the other?

In 1999, the State of California passed AB1475 (Soto) becoming the first state in the nation to create a Safe Routes to School (SR2S) funding program. The legislation directed the state's federal safety funds to be split via a one-third formula (1/3 for local road safety, 1/3 for highway safety, and 1/3 for SR2S). In 2002, the program was renewed through SB10 (Soto), and in 2004 it was renewed again via SB1087 with a sunset date of January 1, 2008. On October 14, 2007, Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB57 (Soto) which enables $52 million in state SR2S funding to be spent after the January 1, 2008 deadline of the previous legislation, and creates a framework for the Legislature and the Governor to consider annual state allocations for SR2S as part of the state budget negotiations.

During the six-year time period from 2000 to 2006, an average of $24.25 million was made available on an annual basis through the California Department of Transportation for SR2S projects that met the legislative criteria of reducing injuries and fatalities near schools and increasing walking and bicycling activity among students at elementary, middle and high schools. Caltrans made competitive grants available to local cities and counties primarily for capital projects, with an allowance for up to 10% of the project funds to be spent on education, encouragement and enforcement activities. Starting with SB10, the legislation also allowed for California to "swap" the federal safety funds for state funding, allowing for easier administration, quicker implementation and reduced overhead.

Safe Routes to School Safety and Mobility Analysis, a Report to the California Legislature, was published in January 2007 and details progress made on the California SR2S program in its first six years, as well as recommendations for the future. A total of 2,843 applications were submitted and 570 projects were funded from 2000 through 2006. In addition, the California program contributed $144,041,998 during the six year time period, for total project costs of $190,766,177 (which were supplemented by local or other matching funds).

What follows is my analysis of how the SR2S and SRTS programs compare and contrast.

1) Matching Funds: The California SR2S program required a 10 percent match and the federal program is funded at 100 percent. The federal grant program makes it easier for low-income communities and schools to apply, which is a positive improvement.

2) Educational Aspects: The California SR2S program only allowed for 10 percent of the overall project funds to be used for education, encouragement and enforcement, while the federal SRTS program mandates that from 10 to 30 percent of the funds must be used for non-infrastructure. The federal mandate for non-infrastructure is good, as it allows for large-scale educational programs which improve safety and motivate changes in behavior. The state program only allowed for the 10 percent to be used on the school(s) directly being served, and in many cases when construction costs increased, the educational component that were originally planned were eliminated.

3) Advisory Committees: Caltrans established a SR2S Advisory Committee when the program was first created, with multiple stakeholders to help develop the guidelines and decision processes. The federal guidance for the SRTS program helped provide reason for Caltrans to further expand their existing advisory committee, bringing in valuable new perspectives.

4) Eligibility: The federal SRTS program cites cities, counties, schools, school districts and non-profits all as eligible recipients of funding, which is positive, as schools and non-profits are often in the best position to implement non-infrastructure projects. The state SR2S program only allows for cities and

counties to apply, as the funds are primarily for construction. The SR2S program allows for schools serving grades K-12 to benefit from funding awards, but the federal SRTS program limits those awards to grades K-8. While I would like to see the reauthorization of SRTS expanded to serve grades K-12, I do feel that it was appropriate to start the federal program in grades K-8, with the limited amount of funding that is available.

5) Title 23 Requirements: Unfortunately, the Title 23 requirements in section 1404 for the SRTS funds are delaying the implementation of contracts and adding costs to the construction and execution of projects. The California SR2S program was able to streamline the process, allow for more funding to be spent on the actual projects.

6) Evaluation: The state SR2S program mandated an evaluation and a report to the Legislature on the success of the program (which resulted in the aforementioned Safety and Mobility Analysis). The federal SRTS program does not require evaluation, but does ask for the development of a National SRTS Task Force to develop a strategy for advancing SRTS.

7) Clearinghouse: The federal SRTS program mandated the creation of a national Clearinghouse for SRTS. The state SR2S program did not mandate any such entity; however, with federal SRTS funds, the State is creating a Safe Routes Resource Center that will be managed by the University of San Francisco and the California Department of Public Health.

8) Demand: For both the SR2S and SRTS programs, Caltrans has consistently seen qualified application requests totaling five-times the amount of funding over what is available to be programmed. This demonstrates the tremendous latent demand for the program.

In closing, in many ways, the California SR2S program inspired the federal SRTS program. The federal SRTS program legislation did make several improvements upon the California SR2S program, however, issues related to improving evaluation and reducing overhead still need to be addressed at the federal level for Safe Routes to School.

2. Ms. Hubsmith, I am a strong supporter of Railroad Safety Awareness program as many of the schools in my district are within blocks of railroad tracks. It is a safety risk when students have to cross these railroad tracks in order to get to school. Students have been injured and killed in my district by playing on the railroad tracks. How is Safe Routes to School funding being used to support infrastructure safety upgrades around grade crossings? How is Safe Routes to School funding being used to support non-infrastructure railroad safety awareness programs?

Railroad safety infrastructure programs are eligible under section 1404 for the federal SRTS program as long as improvements are made along a route to a school, serving children in the range of grades K-8, within two miles of a school. In addition, non-infrastructure railroad safety awareness programs related to the trip to and from school is also an eligible expense under the federal legislation and guidance.

Each State Department of Transportation develops its own application guidelines and scoring criteria for project funding requests which must be consistent with the section 1404 SRTS legislation.

In California, the Highway Crossing Safety Program provides approximately $15 million each year for railroad safety crossings. This funding comes from a percentage of the state's Highway Safety funds. Other states also receive railroad crossing funding based on a percentage formula. Clearly, this amount of money is not large enough to fulfill the mission of making railroad crossings safe.

Smaller funding streams, such as SRTS and the railroad safety crossing funds can be used to help fix existing railroad crossing that have dangerous conditions; however, most capital railroad crossing projects are very expensive, and unfortunately, this generally makes them cost prohibitive for maximum funding award amounts that are set by state DOTs due to the limited amount of SRTS funds that they receive annually. Many U.S. states are only receiving $1 million/year in SRTS funds, which is generally not even enough money to fix one railroad crossing. That being said, local cities and counties should be encouraged to identify railroad crossing that are on routes to school, and to apply for project-specific funding that meets the criteria of the SRTS program.

In addition to fixing existing railroad crossing problems, a long term approach should be utilized in all states. Schools, cities and railroads should be further educated about the dangers of railroad crossings and measures should be taken as part of the original design and environmental review process for any capital project to ensure that pedestrian safety measures are analyzed and fully incorporated into overall project plans and budgets for both railways and highways. The environmental mitigation for these large projects should pay for making safe pedestrian crossings, such as grade separation, fencing, lighting, signage and other measures. If federal funds are used for railroad projects, ADA issues must be considered so the railroad should be responsible for ensuring pedestrian safety, including crossings.

Operation Lifesaver is a successful national program that operates in many U.S. states to promote education, enforcement and engineering for railroad safety. The California Operation Lifesaver Program includes two full-time staff and 200 volunteers. In 2006, California Operation Lifesaver Volunteers provided 950 presentations reaching 41,976 students. Of those, 325 presentations were done for grades K-8, reaching 25,982 students.

Organizations such as Operation Lifesaver are eligible to apply for SRTS non-infrastructure funds, and I understand that the California program will be submitting such

an application for the upcoming deadline. Operation Lifesaver has study guides for teachers, lesson plans for students, and many educational materials to promote safety. An FHWA representative from Ohio recently indicated that the Ohio Operation Lifesaver Program has been very effective in reducing pedestrian crashes involving school-age children. It's likely that non-infrastructure grant applications submitted by Operation Lifesaver to state DOTs for SRTS funding would be very competitive and compelling as part of the grant review process.

The National Center for Safe Routes to School, which has the FHWA Clearinghouse contact, will be compiling data on all projects that are funded with SRTS federal funds. If the project sponsor lists a component of the project as having a railroad safety crossing, then the National Center should be able to compile a list in the future of projects of this nature that have been funded through SRTS funds.

* * * * *

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and to respond to these questions. I look forward to continuing to work with you and the Committee on Safe Routes to School.

Sincerely,

Deb Hubsmith, Director
Safe Routes to School National Partnership

KANSAS
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Kathleen Sebelius, Governor
Deb Miller, Secretary

http://www.ksdot.org

TESTIMONY OF

MS. LISA KOCH, AICP
COORDINATOR, KANSAS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM
KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT

OCTOBER 2, 2007

Lisa Koch, AICP
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Testimony of Lisa Koch, AICP
Coordinator, Kansas Safe Routes to School Program
Kansas Department of Transportation
Before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Highways and Transit

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee. My name is Lisa Koch, and I am the Coordinator of the Kansas Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program at the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) in Topeka, Kansas. In addition to my oral testimony today, please accept my written testimony, which I have submitted for the record.

Thank you for holding this timely hearing on the status of the federal Safe Routes to School program, which was funded through the passage of SAFETEA-LU in 2005. Since the passage of SAFETEA-LU, the 50 State Departments of Transportation and the Department of Transportation for the District of Columbia have been working to create SRTS programs that meet the needs of their varied constituents. My comments today will focus on the SRTS program that has been created at KDOT as an example of how the federal guidance for the SRTS program has been interpreted at the state level. The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Program Guidance for the Safe Routes to School Program is included in my written testimony for reference.

KDOT started their Safe Routes to School program in early 2006, just months after receiving guidance from the FHWA. The speed at which KDOT moved is notable, as it required the creation of a brand new staff position and new external and internal budget items that, in a bureaucratic setting, can be a time-intensive assignment. KDOT supported this program from the beginning, and knowing that there wouldn't be much time to prove its viability during the life of SAFETEA-LU, moved aggressively to start their program. After selecting a Coordinator, a Steering Committee was created that included internal KDOT staff from Planning, Traffic Safety, Public Involvement, and Bicycle and Pedestrian programs, as well as staff from other State agencies (Department of Health & Environment and Department of Education) and non-profits organizations (Safe Kids Kansas and the American Heart Association).

After a public information campaign and an application process, KDOT selected its first 24 Safe Routes to School projects in October of 2006. In the year since that time, KDOT has worked aggressively to educate the public about the holistic nature of the Safe Routes to School program and has selected over 20 more projects in its second year of funding.

During the creation of the Kansas SRTS program, KDOT relied heavily on the guidance set forth by the FHWA. Specifically, we focused our approach around the four program objectives that were described in the guidance. I would like to review these objectives and while doing so, inform the Subcommittee as to how the Kansas SRTS program interpreted the objectives.

Objective 1: Enable Participation on a Variety of Levels

The focus of this objective is to ensure that Safe Routes to School programs are flexible enough to work with both traditional and non-traditional recipients of transportation funding. The flexibility also allows programs to be implemented at different levels, from single-school programs to state-wide initiatives.

Although the KDOT has worked with non-traditional highway partners through the Transportation Enhancement (TE), Safety, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) programs, Safe Routes to School took the approach to a new level. In the first year of funding, of the 24 projects awarded, KDOT awarded SRTS funds to six school districts. In the second year of funding, of the 20 projects awarded, KDOT awarded SRTS funds to three school districts and one non-profit agency. Even in those programs that were awarded to Cities, Counties or Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), a partnership between these local entities and their respective school district(s) were required.

The flexibility of the guidance has allows us to appropriately fund programs at all levels. Our smallest programs focus on single-school initiatives, where there are specific traffic or personal safety concerns that are not allowing children to walk or bicycle to school. Our largest programs are being implemented with two of the Metropolitan Planning Organizations in Kansas. These programs focus on regional programming, such as walking school bus programs or safety education.

Objective #2: Make the Program Accessible to Diverse Participants

The focus of this objective is to ensure that state SRTS programs are accessible to schools in rural, suburban and urban settings, especially those communities that have fewer resources and limited ability to afford new initiatives.

Meeting the needs the diverse population in Kansas is very important to members of the Kansas SRTS Steering Committee. At the first meeting of the Steering Committee, members addressed the concern that most communities in Kansas would not be familiar with the SRTS concept and would turn in applications that did not support the holistic nature of the program. The Steering Committee was concerned that, with the wrong design, the program would become a "free sidewalk" program and would not focus on the community-based issues that effect children's travel patterns. Because of this concern, the Steering Committee determined that a Phased Approach would be the best design for the Kansas SRTS program. The Kansas SRTS phased program includes a Phase 1 program, in which applicants can ask for funding to create a holistic SRTS Plan, and a Phase 2 program, in which applicants can ask for funding to implement a SRTS Plan that includes all "5 E's" (education, encouragement, enforcement, engineering, and evaluation) or "4 E's" (education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation) if the program only includes soft-side measures. Potential applicants that already have a SRTS Plan that meets specifications can move directly to the Phase 2 program.

KDOT has seen great success with the phased approach. Of the 24 projects funded in the first year of the program, 22 were Phase 1 projects. The two programs that received Phase 2 funding in the first year had been promoting a "5 E" program, without even knowing about the SRTS concept. This example speaks to the intuitive nature of the SRTS concept; that the most successful programs include not only engineering, but education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation as well.

Objective #3: Promote Comprehensive SRTS Programs and Activities

The focus of this objective is to ensure that SRTS programs have the greatest opportunity for success by promoting a comprehensive approach. A comprehensive "5 E" SRTS program includes the following elements:

- Engineering – Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and establish safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways.
- Education – Teaching children about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills, and launching driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools.
- Enforcement – Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure traffic laws are obeyed in the vicinity of schools (this includes enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrians in crossings, and proper walking and bicycling behaviors), and initiating community enforcement such as crossing guard programs.
- Encouragement – Using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling.
- Evaluation – Monitoring and documenting outcomes and trends through the collection of data, including the collection of data before and after the intervention(s).

All SRTS programs that are funded through the KDOT are required to be comprehensive. The comprehensive nature of the program begins with the planning process. The KDOT requires that the planning process involve a diverse group of participants, including but not limited to: school district officials, officials from the City/County/Metropolitan Planning Organization, local law enforcement, public health practitioners, parents, students, neighbors, local businesses, and advocacy groups. The SRTS plan is also required to be comprehensive, with initiatives for all "5 E's" or "4 E's" if no engineering solutions are required.

The comprehensive approach has been very successful for the Kansas Safe Routes to School program as it has served to weed out the applicants that are only interested in receiving funding for engineering improvements. The projects that we fund are willing to work for the funding that they are provided. The programs that they have created will serve as great success stories for the federal Safe Routes to School program.

Objective #4: Maximize Impact of the Funds

The focus of this objective is to ensure that our limited funds are used effectively. The Federal guidance states that "…programs should maximize use of the most effective physical treatments and designs to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and use, as well as the most effective approaches in the areas of safety education, encouragement, and enforcement."

Apportionment for the federal Safe Routes to School program was based on data for Kindergarten-8th grade enrollment per state. Based on the this calculation, Kansas is a Safe Routes to School low-apportionment State, which means that our program funds are limited to approximately $1,000,000 per year. With such a small amount of funding per year, KDOT must be cost-effective with the programs that we select. KDOT's Phase 1 programs have a cap of $15,000 and KDOT's Phase 2 program has a cap of $250,000. Both amounts allow local sponsors to build a successful program, but it does require them to be creative about determining the most effective treatments.

KDOT has found that the most successful Safe Routes to School programs are those that make appropriate physical changes around the school zone, but focus most of their energy on the soft-side elements, specifically encouragement programs.

In my conversations with other SRTS Coordinators, there is agreement that the SRTS program is working. They appreciate the flexible nature of the program because it allows for creativity and for programs to be tailored to meet the needs of their constituents. The common complaints from Coordinators are that more funding is needed to meet the needs of their applicants. In Kansas, even with our strict requirements, KDOT still turns down over half of applicants due to limited funding. Coordinators also would like more guidance on how to apply this program to Tribal Governments and feel that the Federal-Aid requirements are too extensive for such a low-cost program. The Federal-Aid requirements that are placed on the SRTS program are more stringent than those placed on the Transportation Enhancement program. The small towns that I work with do not have the staff to work through this process, therefore projects have to be let through the State Department of Transportation, which extends the timeline of projects and is more expensive.

When I speak to the local communities that have been funded through the Kansas Safe Routes to School program, they also agree that this program is working. A specific interaction that reminded me of the importance of these types of programs occurred when I met with leaders from a small town in southeastern Kansas two weeks ago. I asked them why the needed a program like Safe Routes to School. They said that their city of around 1,500 people was on the verge of dying. Their population was aging and their children were leaving for college or better opportunities. Special programs like Safe Routes to School would help city leadership to encourage families to move to this town to raise children. Increased livability factors would encourage industries to locate near this town. Having a more walkable community would allow their aging population to

maintain their independence, instead of perhaps having to leave their home for care facilities.

In my opinion, rural communities are where this program is having the most impact. The programs that occur in the cities and suburban areas are doing well and are necessary, but $250,000 in a city of hundreds of thousands of people has a relatively small impact on overall travel patterns. $250,000 in a town with a relatively small population has a massive, lasting impact; the type of impact that can galvanize an entire town to change their future.

In closing, I would like to thank Chairman DeFazio for providing me with the opportunity to testify today. On behalf of the 51 Safe Routes to School programs, I would like to publicly acknowledge the fantastic work of the Safe Routes to School affiliated staff at Federal Highway Administration Headquarters and at the State Divisions. I would also like to acknowledge the impeccable work of Lauren and her staff at the National Center for Safe Routes to School. The work that they do in assisting the state coordinators is extraordinary and will have a lasting effect on the Safe Routes to School movement. Again, thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Supporting Materials:

FHWA Guidance – Safe Routes to School Program

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Federal-aid Safe Routes to School Program (hereinafter referred to as SRTS Program) was created by Section 1404 of the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users Act* (SAFETEA-LU), signed into Public Law (P.L. 109-59) on August 10, 2005. The SRTS Program is funded at $612 million and provides Federal-aid highway funds to State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) over five Federal fiscal years (FY2005-2009), in accordance with a formula specified in the legislation. These funds are available for infrastructure and noninfrastructure projects, and to administer State Safe Routes to School programs that benefit elementary and middle school children in grades K-8. The Federal-aid SRTS Program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Safety.

This document provides SRTS Program Guidance for State DOTs and other stakeholders involved in implementation and administration of SRTS programs. Guidance is provided to enable the states to move quickly and confidently in creating SRTS programs and spending program funds. This Program Guidance provides information to implement the legislation, and where it is presented, ***text from the legislation is in bold, italic font***. While this Guidance addresses most aspects of the SRTS Program, it may not answer every question that has been, or is likely to be raised. Additional guidance will be provided throughout the first few years of the SRTS Program as questions are asked, clarifications are needed, experience is gained, and various approaches are tried and evaluated.

SRTS Program Purpose

Section 1404(b) of the legislation describes the purposes for which the SRTS Program was created:

(b) PURPOSES.--The purposes of the program shall be-

1. ***(1) to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school;***
2. ***(2) to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and***
3. ***(3) to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.***

These stated purposes describe the overall intent of the SRTS Program. Different locations are likely to develop different initiatives and projects that address one or more of the purposes, but the overall SRTS Program within a State must meet all of these stated purposes. FHWA expects that States will develop many different approaches within the framework of the legislation and this guidance to serve these purposes.

SRTS Program Outcomes

Safe Routes to School is a cross cutting program. There are many possible outcomes as a result of successfully implementing projects and activities at the State and local level. These desired outcomes help clarify the broad purposes stated in the legislation and can assist implementation, including overall development and administration of State programs. They can be used to help evaluate potential projects, as well as understand the factors that affect the success of different activities, projects, and programs.

Desired outcomes of the Safe Routes to School Program include:

- Increased bicycle, pedestrian, and traffic safety
- More children walking and bicycling to and from schools
- Decreased traffic congestion
- Improved childhood health
- Reduced childhood obesity
- Encouragement of healthy and active lifestyles
- Improved air quality
- Improved community safety
- Reduced fuel consumption
- Increased community security
- Enhanced community accessibility
- Increased community involvement
- Improvements to the physical environment that increase the ability to walk and bicycle to and from schools
- Improved partnerships among schools, local municipalities, parents, and other community groups, including non-profit organizations
- Increased interest in bicycle and pedestrian accommodations throughout a community

Comprehensive Nature of SRTS Activities – The "5 E's"

FHWA recommends that SRTS efforts in the United States incorporate – directly or indirectly – five components, often referred to as the "5 E's". The 5 E's are:

a. Engineering – Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and establish safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways.
b. Education – Teaching children about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills, and launching driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools.
c. Enforcement – Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure traffic laws are obeyed in the vicinity of schools (this includes enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrians in crossings , and proper walking and bicycling behaviors), and initiating community enforcement such as crossing guard programs.
d. Encouragement – Using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling.
e. Evaluation – Monitoring and documenting outcomes and trends through the collection of data, including the collection of data before and after the intervention(s).

Funding Levels

The SRTS Program is funded at $612 million and provides Federal-aid highway funds to State DOTs over five Federal fiscal years (FY2005-2009), in accordance with a formula specified in the legislation. FHWA will apportion SRTS funding annually to each State, in conjunction with regular Federal-aid highway apportionments.

SRTS Annual Funding Levels	
Fiscal Year	**Funding**
2005	$54 million
2006	$100 million
2007	$125 million
2008	$150 million
2009	$183 million

Funding Level by State

FHWA has developed a State-by-State breakdown of apportionments for FY 2005 – FY 2009. Future apportionments for FY 2007 – FY 2009 were projected using FY 2006 factors. FY 2007 – FY 2009 apportionments are provided for planning purposes only. The actual apportionments for FY 2007 through FY 2009 will be based on the latest available data; consequently, apportionments in those years may differ from the estimates presented **here**.

Program Funding Framework

The legislation established a number of parameters related to program funding which address the following items:

- **Apportionment Formula**--Funds are provided to each State and the District of Columbia by formula based on the State's percentage of the national total of school-aged children in grades K – 8. As described above, apportionments will be updated by FHWA as new national enrollment data becomes available.
- **Minimum Allocation**--No State shall receive less than $1 million in any fiscal year.
- **Infrastructure and Noninfrastructure Funds**—Funds are made available for two different types of projects (infrastructure and noninfrastructure), with not less than 10 percent and not more than 30 percent of each State's apportionment required to be spent on noninfrastructure activities.
- **Duration of Availability**—Funds shall be available for obligation in the same manner as if such funds were apportioned under chapter 1 of title 23, USC; except that such funds shall not be transferable and shall remain available until expended.
- **No Local Match Permitted**—the Federal share of the cost of a project or activity shall be 100 percent.
- **Set-Aside for Administrative Expenses** --Prior to distributing funding to the States, FHWA may deduct up to $3 million each year for administrative expenses to carry out the SRTS Program.

Reimbursement Program

The SRTS Program is a reimbursement program for cost incurred. It is not a "cash-up front" program. Costs incurred prior to FHWA project approval are not eligible for reimbursement.

Supplements Existing Programs

The SRTS legislation supplements, rather than replaces, current funding streams that support walking and bicycling transportation. States may find that they have more applicants than they can fund through the Federal-aid SRTS Program. Maintaining existing funding sources will help alleviate gaps between funding requests and available SRTS Program funds.

Existing state and local SRTS programs should therefore be sustained and coordinated with the Federal-aid SRTS Program. Existing programs and policies that will use SRTS Program funds should be brought into alignment with the overall purposes, desired outcomes and objectives of the SRTS Program, as well as the technical requirements of Section 1404.

II. STATE PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

DOT Program Administration Overview

The legislation includes a number of provisions that directly address how the SRTS Program is to be administered by the States:

Administered by State DOTs

Consistent with other federal aid highway programs, SRTS funding is to be administered by the State Department of Transportation.

- ***(d) ADMINISTRATION OF AMOUNTS.--Amounts apportioned to a State under this section shall be administered by the State's department of transportation.***

Coordinator Requirement

The legislation requires a full-time position for State programs, and provides resources to fund these positions.

- ***(3) SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL COORDINATOR.--Each State receiving an apportionment under this section for a fiscal year shall use a sufficient amount of the apportionment to fund a full-time position of coordinator of the State's safe routes to school program.***

As stated in the Explanatory Statement accompanying SAFETEA-LU, the State SRTS Coordinator position in each State is to be funded from the infrastructure portion of a State's SRTS Program apportionment. [FHWA memo of September 26, 2005 provides guidance relating to the Coordinator position.] In addition to the salary and fringe benefits of the Coordinator, other costs that are necessary and reasonable for the efficient performance of the Coordinator's duties (e.g. travel, training, etc.) that are allowable under OMB Circular A-87 may be charged to SRTS funds. Indirect/administrative costs incurred by a State Transportation Department for other aspects of administering the SRTS Program also may be allowed if the State has an indirect cost rate established and approved in accordance with OMB Circular A-87. (OMB Circular A-87)

Specifies Eligible Recipients

The SRTS legislation identifies eligible funding recipients, which may include nontraditional partners of State DOTs. Many projects may be grassroots driven and project sponsors may be school or community based groups.

- ***(e) ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS.--Amounts apportioned to a State under this section shall be used by the State to provide financial assistance to State, local, and regional agencies, including nonprofit organizations, that demonstrate an ability to meet the requirements of this section.***

SRTS Program Development

FHWA recognizes that no single approach to program administration is superior or appropriate for all State DOTs; States vary greatly in size and potential numbers of schools to be served, and SRTS funding varies in a corresponding manner. The approach of combining funding for infrastructure projects and noninfrastructure activities into one program is somewhat unique in transportation and may not be easily accommodated by the existing administrative and program structures in many State DOTs.

FHWA encourages State DOTs to develop creative approaches to program structure and project implementation procedures, with the goal of best meeting the objectives described below. As the legislation requires the FHWA to report to Congress on the progress of this program, and also requires the FHWA to establish a Task Force to study effective strategies, FHWA anticipates that the SRTS Task Force will review State programs in the future to identify how the objectives are being met.

Objectives of SRTS Programs

The following four objectives should be considered in structuring programs at the State level:

- **Objective 1: Enable Participation on a Variety of Levels**

  State programs should be accessible to a wide variety of project sponsors and partners (including those that are non-traditional recipients of transportation funding, such as parent-teacher organizations and other nonprofit organizations).

  SRTS programs can be implemented at different levels – at a single school, a cluster of schools, on school system or region-wide basis, or in some cases on a statewide level. There are some activities that are more effective when implemented on a region-wide or school district basis, such as incorporating pedestrian and bicycle safety into school curricula, and media outreach efforts. State programs should therefore consider a structure that enables project applications to be submitted by a single school, or by applicants that represent multiple schools.

- **Objective #2: Make the Program Accessible to Diverse Participants**

  State programs should be easily accessible to schools and communities in rural, suburban and urban settings, especially those with fewer local resources and limited ability to afford new initiatives. This is particularly important, as school zones in low income areas often have higher than average child pedestrian crash rates, and have the greatest need for a SRTS program, yet may have limited resources to access these funds. In addition, there are many States with a high percentage of rural schools that should be given the opportunity to participate in this program in an appropriate way.

States are encouraged to review and analyze bike and pedestrian crash data and consider setting aside some funds to provide assistance to schools in areas with higher than average child crash rates. Targeted outreach and technical assistance efforts may be required to ensure that low income communities in urban or rural settings can fairly compete for SRTS funds. Assistance may be needed with technical assessment, preparation of grant applications, or capacity development. Careful development of project selection criteria will also help reinforce the importance of addressing equity issues in SRTS programs.

- **Objective #3: Promote Comprehensive SRTS Programs and Activities**

  State programs should foster projects that combine engineering improvements along with education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation activities at the same schools. This may be accomplished by including funding for activities that address the five components ("5 E's") in most or all funding awards, or requiring local applicants to demonstrate how components that are not included in the application are already being addressed in the school or within the school's immediate community.

- **Objective #4: Maximize Impact of the Funds**

  State programs should maximize use of the most effective physical treatments and designs to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and use; as well as the most effective approaches in the areas of safety education, encouragement, and, enforcement. In addition, the program structure should encourage timely and expeditious implementation and cost-effective expenditure of funds. It also can be valuable to have SRTS funds leverage additional funds from other sources, and that materials produced be easily adaptable for use by other communities. (Note that no funding "match" is permitted. See section on "Project Selection Criteria" for additional information about leveraging and see section "Utilizing Related Funding Sources" for information about other funding sources.)

Additional information is given for several of the objectives identified above within the text of this Guidance.

Statewide Multidisciplinary Coordination

FHWA encourages State DOTs to collaborate with other agencies and interested organizations within their State to create and implement a plan for how to best accomplish the purposes of the SRTS Program described in Section 1404. Integrating the State SRTS Program with multiple State agencies, such as bicycle and pedestrian programs, highway and traffic safety groups, environment and planning groups, law enforcement, public health officials, and boards of education, etc., will make the program outcomes more comprehensive and more effective in increasing safety and numbers of children walking and bicycling to school. Based on experiences of SRTS programs already operating in some States, FHWA also encourages State DOTs to involve experts and professionals representing SRTS stakeholders from the fields of public health, education, child safety, bicycling and walking and others as appropriate to assist with development and implementation of the program.

SRTS Program Administration

Minimum Infrastructure and Noninfrastructure Spending

FHWA anticipates that State DOTs need guidance on how to address both noninfrastructure and infrastructure activities in their program administration process. The legislation specifies that 10 to 30 percent of each State's funding is to be spent on noninfrastructure activities:

1. ***(B) ALLOCATION.--Not less than 10 percent and not more than 30 percent of the amount apportioned to a State under this section for a fiscal year shall be used for noninfrastructure-related activities under this subparagraph. (Sec 1404(2) (B))***

The intent of this language is to ensure that education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation activities are included as a significant part of SRTS activities. States and communities should combine these activities with engineering modifications to encourage an approach to SRTS that both results in safer walking and bicycling environments and encourages more walking and bicycling to school.

Program Administration Models

With the requirement that both infrastructure and noninfrastructure activities be funded by the SRTS Program, States will need to develop administrative procedures that can accomplish this task. FHWA encourages State DOTs to develop administrative procedures that effectively accommodate both infrastructure and noninfrastructure activities. The following are examples of program administration models: (this list is not intended to be comprehensive)

1. **One Agency/One Application:** Program is administered by one single agency through one single application process. A State may decide that each application must consist of both infrastructure and noninfrastructure activities (or require evidence that both types of activities will be undertaken even if one is not part of the SRTS funding request) in order to ensure a comprehensive and integrated project at each location. States that use this approach should strongly consider development of a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency committee to evaluate project applications and recommend projects for funding. Additionally, States should consider using a separate rating system for the two different components within a single application and make grant selections based on the cumulative total. If a State decides that they will consider applications for infrastructure only and noninfrastructure only activities, the administration of SRTS should enable both types of projects to be evaluated fairly.
2. **One Agency/ Multiple Applications:** Program is administered by one single agency through more than one type of grant application process. The State DOT could run distinct competitive grant application processes for both the infrastructure and noninfrastructure portions of funding. In this scenario, applicants should be required to show that their programs are comprehensive, i.e. infrastructure projects should be part of a larger effort that includes the five components of SRTS activities ("5 E's").
3. **Multiple Agencies (Split Program):** Program funds are separated into infrastructure and noninfrastructure categories and administered by different divisions of DOT, different State agencies, or a nonprofit organization. The State DOT could provide funding to another state-level department or a nonprofit organization (e.g. health department, office of traffic safety, a bicycle and pedestrian safety department within the DOT, a University, or a non-governmental organization) to administer the grant applications and evaluation components for the noninfrastructure requirements. This entity would then report to the State DOT who remains responsible for the administration and stewardship of the SRTS Program, regardless of whether a different entity is administering parts of the Program.
4. **Phased Program:** Program funds are given in "stages:" 1) initial grants are given to provide technical assistance, assessment and project/activity planning support, 2) follow up funds for execution of infrastructure and noninfrastructure projects. The State DOT could provide a portion of the noninfrastructure funding to a service provider (i.e. through a competitive bid process) with demonstrated success in conducting community-based SRTS training, assessment and technical assistance. This third party would be responsible for training schools regarding the development of SRTS plans, and in providing technical assistance where needed. Schools would then be eligible for a "second stage" of funding once their SRTS plans are completed. This option may be desirable in States where there is a need to target low income and/or rural areas.

Regardless of how each State structures its SRTS Program and project application process, FHWA strongly recommends that infrastructure and noninfrastructure activities be coordinated in order to achieve successful outcomes.

Recommended Evaluation of SRTS Programs

Ongoing review and evaluation activities associated with SRTS programs are vital for the continual improvement of each program (and for the study and development of a strategy for advancing SRTS programs nationwide, as called for in Section 1404). FHWA is required to report to Congress on the progress of the SRTS Program, and therefore requests that States gather and provide the following information with respect to the expenditure of these funds:

Evaluation of Safety Benefits

Understanding safety outcomes provides information about how SRTS activities reduce fatalities and injuries, as well as reduce risk associated with walking and bicycling to school. FHWA acknowledges some challenges in evaluating crash data with respect to the success of SRTS programs. Crash reporting systems generally do not distinguish if pedestrian and bicycle crashes occur during the trip to/from school. Also, to measure program effectiveness in terms of crashes, it is appropriate to review accident data 3 years prior and 3 years following the implementation of a comprehensive SRTS program. Funding cycles are likely to be considerably shorter than this timeframe.

For this reason, FHWA will accept other methods of evaluating the safety benefits of the program, such as changes in public perception of safety, the effect on safety behaviors among participants of SRTS programs, or increased awareness of safe walking and bicycling practices.

Evaluation of Behavioral Changes

Understanding the effect of the program on the number of students who walk and bicycle, versus arrive/depart from school via other modes of transportation provides information about how SRTS activities affect the behavior of students and motorists. States are asked to measure this change by collecting information prior to the start of SRTS programs, and then after such programs have been established in participating schools. Care should be taken to compare outcomes based on similar conditions (i.e. weather, regular day or contest day, etc.). FHWA recognizes that where programs are being implemented specifically to reduce hazards for children already walking and bicycling to school, this would not necessarily be an appropriate evaluation measure.

Evaluation of Other Potential Benefits

In addition to the two categories listed above, States may choose to evaluate their programs in terms of:

a. The number of new partnerships created as a result of the program,
b. The number of students and/or schools reached through the program,
c. Measurements of student health, air quality, congestion, and other metrics noted or implied by the legislative purposes of the program, and
d. Improvements to the built environment that benefit the ability to walk and bicycle to and from schools (i.e., the number of new facilities, miles of sidewalks, etc.).

Additional guidance will be provided in the future with regards to the evaluation of program success. Recommended data collection forms that would allow for standardized data collection across States also will be provided. Preliminary forms for collecting before-project data will be

provided soon so States can consider including the forms in their call for applications. It is anticipated that a more comprehensive package of standardized evaluation tools, including post-project forms, will be provided in time for program and project evaluations.

Project Selection

Each State DOT develops its own procedures and policies for soliciting and selecting projects for funding, including but not limited to, selection criteria, funding cycles, grant amounts, time limits, etc. This Program Guidance provides the broad outlines and requirements a State should follow when implementing its Program. As stated in the Conference Report for SAFETEA-LU, ***"States should be encouraged to create competitive application forms, criteria, and evaluations that are appropriate for the two different types of projects."*** **(SAFETEA-LU, Joint Explanatory Statement of the Committee of the Conference, Report 109-203, pp. 866-867)**

Regardless of how each State structures its SRTS program and project application process, FHWA *strongly recommends that infrastructure and noninfrastructure activities be coordinated in order to achieve successful outcomes.*

Projects Competing from Different Jurisdictional Levels

SRTS activities occur at three jurisdictional levels – at the school level, on school system or region-wide basis, or in some States, on a statewide level. The right structure for balancing spending at these different levels will vary from State to State. FHWA recommends that State SRTS Programs develop an application process that ensures project applicants will compete only with other project applicants proposing activities at the same level. These levels can be described as follows:

- **Individual school-based projects:** There should be opportunities for individual schools (or a cluster of schools in close proximity) to submit applications for funding. FHWA recommends that infrastructure projects be coordinated with noninfrastructure activities to encourage comprehensive programs at the school and community level. Infrastructure-only projects should primarily be focused at locations where walking and bicycling to school is already occurring at high levels and remediation of unsafe conditions or facilities is needed. Noninfrastructure-only projects at the school-level may be appropriate where a safe built environment for walking and bicycling already exists.
- **Multi-school projects:** This category includes school district-based projects, multi-district, city, county or other sub-state or regional configuration. In many cases, these projects will be primarily noninfrastructure activities and relate to training, education, encouragement, and enforcement activities. Projects that address school curriculum and training, walk to school day promotion, and media-oriented strategies are likely to be more effectively administered and implemented at some collective level above the individual school.
- **State-wide activities:** Examples of State-level activities include training, publication and distribution of materials, providing a pool of engineering expertise and/or safety educators for schools to draw upon, or mounting a media campaign or State curriculum initiative. Whether States undertake statewide activities will depend on State-level needs, interest and policy. The potential effectiveness of statewide SRTS activities may also depend on the size of the State. In some cases the State health, education, Office of Highway Safety or other agency, or statewide public interest group will want to address the issue on this scale.

Funding Set-Asides

States may want to evaluate what needs or priorities they have for encouraging activity at any or each of these levels, and consider setting aside portions of the SRTS funding for projects at one or more of each level. Statewide projects might include those that the State DOT itself has an interest in undertaking.

Project Selection Criteria

Project selection criteria should require applications to address both infrastructure and noninfrastructure activities, regardless of whether the grant is requesting one type of funding, or both. Applicants should be permitted to show evidence that they are either planning these activities (either through funds requested through the Section 1404 Program or other sources) or already have adequate programs to address the other "E's" that are not included in the current application.

FHWA recommends that States establish and consider multiple eligibility criteria including, but not limited to:

- Demonstrated needs
- Identification of safety hazards
- Potential of proposal to reduce child injuries and fatalities
- Potential of proposal to create a safer walking and bicycling built environment within approximately two miles of a school
- Potential of proposal to encourage walking and bicycling among students
- Identification of current and potential safe walking and bicycling routes to schools
- Number of child pedestrians or bicyclists currently using routes
- Number of child pedestrians or bicyclists anticipated to use routes
- Community support for application

The above approach also allows SRTS activities to leverage other potential funding resources as mechanisms to fund these activities. However, Section 1404 clearly states that the Federal share of the cost of the project shall be 100 percent (Sec. 1404(i)), therefore States are not permitted to require a funding match. In order to leverage other funds, though, States may consider giving further consideration to applicants that have secured additional funding or resources. However, to protect the ability of disadvantaged communities to compete effectively, equal weight must be given to applications from schools or communities with fewer resources at their disposal.

Sample application materials are provided in the Appendix.

Public Involvement in Project Selection

FHWA recommends that States include some level of public involvement as part of the project selection process, due to the unique nature of SRTS programs and the need for multiple perspectives in decision-making. For example, when advancing projects under the FHWA Transportation Enhancements and Recreational Trails Programs, many States engage public stakeholder committees in the project selection process. The committees may include representatives of user groups and other affected parties. Such committees could also work with the State's SRTS Coordinator to guide the overall direction of the State's SRTS program activities, and help to ensure that it consistently serves the Program purposes set forward in SAFETEA-LU.

III. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITES

Funding Categories

Funds are available for infrastructure-related projects and noninfrastructure-related activities:

1. ***(1) INFRASTRUCTURE-RELATED PROJECTS.-- (A) IN GENERAL.--Amounts apportioned to a State under this section may be used for the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure-related projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school,…***
2. ***(2) NONINFRASTRUCTURE-RELATED ACTIVITIES.-- (A) IN GENERAL.--In addition to projects described in paragraph (1), amounts apportioned to a State under this section may be used for noninfrastructure-related activities to encourage walking and bicycling to school,… (Sec. 1404(f))***

Projects and activities in each category should directly support increased safety and convenience for elementary and middle school children in grades K-8 to bicycle and/or walk to school. Projects may indirectly benefit high school age youth or the general public, however these constituencies cannot be the sole or primary beneficiaries.

Infrastructure projects constructed with these funds must be accessible to persons with disabilities, per the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) at 28 CFR Part 36, Appendix A, as enforced by the U.S. Department of Justice and FHWA, and as required under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Eligible Infrastructure Projects

SAFETEA-LU specifies that eligible infrastructure-related projects include ***the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure-related projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school, including***

- ***sidewalk improvements,***
- ***traffic calming and speed reduction improvements,***
- ***pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements,***
- ***on-street bicycle facilities,***
- ***off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities,***
- ***secure bicycle parking facilities, and***
- ***traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools. (Section 1404(f)(1)(A))***

Given the general guidelines established in the legislation, each State DOT will be responsible for determining the specific types of infrastructure projects that are eligible for this program. Below is a list of potential infrastructure projects that some States have used for existing SRTS or related programs. This list is not intended to be comprehensive; other types of projects that are not on this list may also be eligible if they meet the objectives of reducing speeds and improving pedestrian and bicycle safety and access.

- **Sidewalk improvements**: new sidewalks, sidewalk widening, sidewalk gap closures, sidewalk repairs, curbs, gutters, and curb ramps.
- **Traffic calming and speed reduction improvements**: roundabouts, bulb-outs, speed humps, raised crossings, raised intersections, median refuges, narrowed traffic lanes, lane reductions, full- or half-street closures, automated speed enforcement, and variable speed limits.

- **Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements**: crossings, median refuges, raised crossings, raised intersections, traffic control devices (including new or upgraded traffic signals, pavement markings, traffic stripes, in-roadway crossing lights, flashing beacons, bicycle-sensitive signal actuation devices, pedestrian countdown signals, vehicle speed feedback signs, and pedestrian activated signal upgrades), and sight distance improvements.
- **On-street bicycle facilities**: new or upgraded bicycle lanes, widened outside lanes or roadway shoulders, geometric improvements, turning lanes, channelization and roadway realignment, traffic signs, and pavement markings.
- **Off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities**: exclusive multi-use bicycle and pedestrian trails and pathways that are separated from a roadway.
- **Secure bicycle parking facilities**: bicycle parking racks, bicycle lockers, designated areas with safety lighting, and covered bicycle shelters.
- **Traffic diversion improvements**: separation of pedestrians and bicycles from vehicular traffic adjacent to school facilities, and traffic diversion away from school zones or designated routes to a school.

Planning, design, and engineering expenses, including consultant services, associated with developing eligible infrastructure projects are also eligible to receive infrastructure funds.

Project Location

For infrastructure projects, public funds must be spent on projects within the public right of way. This may include projects on private land that have public access easements. Public property includes lands that are owned by a public entity, including those lands owned by public school districts. Construction and capital improvement projects also must be located within approximately two miles of a primary or middle school (grades K – 8). Schools with grades that extend higher than grade 8, but which include grades that fall within the eligible range, are eligible to receive infrastructure improvements.

For projects on private land, there must be a written legal easement or other written legally binding agreement that ensures public access to the project. There must be an easement filed of record, which specifies the minimum length of time for the agreement to maximize the public investment in the project. The project agreement should clearly state in writing:

- The purpose of the project.
- The minimum timeframe for the easement or lease.
- The duties and responsibilities of the parties involved.
- How the property will be used and maintained in the future.

The project must remain open for general public access for the use for which the funds were intended for the timeframe specified in the easement or lease. The public access should be comparable to the nature and magnitude of the investment of public funds.

Reversionary clauses may be appropriate in some instances. These clauses would assure that if the property is no longer needed for the purpose for which it was acquired, it would revert to the original owner.

Real Property Acquisition

For real property acquisition, all project sponsors must comply with the provisions of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970. Regulations imple-

menting this Act are found in 49 CFR Part 24. These regulations will be applied to evaluating the acquisition of real property and any potential displacement activities. See http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/realestate/ua/index.htm.

Eligible Noninfrastructure Activities

SAFETEA-LU specifies that eligible noninfrastructure activities are ***activities to encourage walking and bicycling to school, including***

- ***public awareness campaigns and outreach to press and community leaders,***
- ***traffic education and enforcement in the vicinity of schools,***
- ***student sessions on bicycle and pedestrian safety, health, and environment, and***
- ***funding for training, volunteers, and managers of safe routes to school programs. (Section 1404(f)(2)(A))***

The above categories are broad in nature. There are several sources of information available nationally that provide further guidance on noninfrastructure activities, such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) *Safe Routes to Schools: Practice and Promise*, and NHTSA's *Safe Routes to School Toolkit*.

Existing SRTS programs have used noninfrastructure funds for the following purposes:

- Creation and reproduction of promotional and educational materials.
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety curricula, materials and trainers.
- Training, including SRTS training workshops that target school- and community-level audiences.
- Modest incentives for SRTS contests, and incentives that encourage more walking and bicycling over time.
- Safety and educational tokens that also advertise the program.
- Photocopying, duplicating, and printing costs, including CDs, DVDs, etc.
- Mailing costs.
- Costs for data gathering, analysis, and evaluation reporting at the local project level.
- Pay for substitute teacher if needed to cover for faculty attending SRTS functions during school hours.
- Costs for additional law enforcement or equipment needed for enforcement activities.
- Equipment and training needed for establishing crossing guard programs.
- Stipends for parent or staff coordinators. (The intent is to be able to reimburse volunteers for materials and expenses needed for coordination and efforts. The intent is not to pay volunteers for their time. In some cases, however, a State may permit paying a stipend to a "super volunteer" to coordinate its local program(s). This is an important possibility to keep open for low-income communities. It may be beneficial to set a limit on the maximum value of a stipend, such as $2000/school year.).
- Costs to employ a SRTS Program Manager, which is a person that runs a SRTS program for an entire city, county, or some other area-wide division that includes numerous schools. (Program Managers may coordinate the efforts of numerous stakeholders and volunteers, manage the process for implementation at the local or regional level, and may be responsible for reporting to the State SRTS Coordinator.)
- Costs to engage the services of a consultant (either non-profit or for-profit) to manage a SRTS program as described in the prior bullet.

This listing is not inclusive, although States considering funding items not listed must ensure that the activity meets the purposes of the SRTS Program as specified by SAFETEA-LU, and that the item is generally comparable to those listed above or in the legislation.

Activity Locations

Traffic education and enforcement activities must take place within approximately two miles of a primary or middle school (grades K – 8). Other eligible activities under the noninfrastructure portion of the SRTS Program do not have a location restriction. Education and encouragement activities are allowed at private schools as long as other noninfrastructure program criteria are fulfilled.

Inappropriate Uses of SRTS Funds

States are not permitted to use Section 1404 funds for projects that do not specifically serve the stated purposes of the SRTS Program, nor should they be used for reoccurring costs except as specifically provided in the legislation. For example, in general, Program funds should not be used to pay crossing guard salaries, as these are reoccurring costs (although funds *may* be used for crossing guard training programs). Funding requests for costs that are expected to be reoccurring costs in future years should include plans for how the costs will be funded in the future and a rationale for how federal funding of 1-2 years will enable leveraging of future financial security for the activity.

The use of Section 1404 funds for projects that reorganize pick-up and drop-off primarily for the convenience of drivers rather than to improve child safety and/or walking and bicycling access is not permitted, nor should Program funds be spent on education programs that are primarily focused on bus safety. Improvements to bus stops are not eligible for this funding.

IV. SPECIFIC FUNDING GUIDELINES

Requiring Matching Funds Not Permitted

States may not require applicants to provide a funding "match" for the federal share of a project or activity under this program. The legislation states that the cost of a project or activity under this program "shall be 100 percent." FHWA interprets the Congressional intent of this requirement as a desire to protect low-income communities from being at a disadvantage when competing for funds by not requiring a match.

Leveraging Additional Funds

Experience from States with existing SRTS programs is that applications for SRTS funds greatly exceed available funding resources. When this occurs, worthy projects may not be able to receive funding due to the limited resources. Creatively leveraging funds to maximize the efficient use of SRTS funds may improve the ability of States to provide funds to eligible projects and activities. This process may not unfairly disadvantage low-income communities when competing for funds. Section 1404 funds include a requirement that the Federal share of the cost of a project or activity be 100 percent.

Utilizing Related Funding Sources

There are many additional federal, state and local funding sources available to complement the Federal Safe Routes to School resources. Funding resources that could be used to supplement the Federal Safe Routes to School activities include but are not limited to health, recreation,

transportation, physical education, law enforcement, and safety funds. Flexible transportation resources including the Transportation Enhancements Program, the Surface Transportation Program, the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program, Equity Bonus Funds, the new state Highway Safety Improvement Program, and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 402 Traffic Safety funds are available and eligible to be used for certain Safe Routes to School projects. States, either as part of their program or through SRTS project applicants, may use Section 1404 funds to attract, combine and apply many resources for the furtherance of the SRTS program purposes and objectives. Finally, many States and local communities have already established funding programs for SRTS that should remain available for projects and applications.

Multi-year Funding and Funding Cycles

Some States have found implementation of SRTS programs or activities over several years, rather than in one single school year, to be beneficial by allowing adequate time to fully establish these programs and "institutionalize" them to become a standard part of the school year. This can also be beneficial to infrastructure projects that extend over a substantial time period, and FHWA recommends that States consider accommodating multi-year activities among their eligible projects.

Considering the administrative burden of evaluating funding proposals on a yearly basis, this strategy may also lend itself to multi-year "Calls for Applications," i.e. a funding cycle that occurs every two years instead of once per year.

Project streamlining

A number of streamlining measures are available to deliver SRTS projects:

Categorical Exclusions

Except in unusual circumstances, FHWA expects that SRTS infrastructure projects will fall under the categorical exclusions provisions of 23 CFR Sec 771.117 that recognize construction of bicycle and pedestrian lanes, paths, and facilities as not involving significant environmental impacts. This will greatly streamline compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements.

TIP / STIP Grouping

Transportation projects proposed for funding under 23 U.S.C., including recipients of Safe Routes to Schools funds, must be programmed in a metropolitan planning organization's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Statewide

Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Except in unusual circumstances, SRTS projects will not be considered regionally significant as defined by 23 CFR 450.104 and may be grouped each program year by function, geographic area and/or work type in a metropolitan planning organization's TIP and the STIP, rather than listed individually. See 23 USC 134 (j) (3) for TIP. See 23 USC 135 (g) (4) (C) for STIP.

Working Capital Advance

A working capital advance may be available, on a limited basis, to local governments and non-profit organizations through the working capital advance option 49 CFR Part 18 and 19. Funds provided for this program are on a cost reimbursement basis. However, Section 49 CFR, Part 18

(for local governments) and 49 CFR, Part 19 (for nonprofit organizations) provides for a working capital advance payment option when necessary to make prompt payments for project costs. Since payments to States are governed by the Cash Management Improvement Act, this advance payment option is only available to local governments and non-profit organizations through the State DOT. The following procedures apply:

- The advance will be considered a working capital advance (see 49 CFR Part 18.21(e) for local governments and 49 CFR Part 19.22 (2)(e) for nonprofit organizations) limited to the estimated amount needed for one billing cycle. The local government will then bill the State for costs incurred. The advance will be netted out at the time of the final billing.
- To reduce administrative burden, projects with a Federal share under $25,000 that will be completed in less than one year may receive an advance for the full amount of the Federal share.
- Agreements to provide for the use of this option should be developed through the cooperative efforts of the State and the FHWA division office.

Title 23 requirements

(Updated 3/3/06)

Congress included the following statutory provisions in the Safe Routes to School Program legislation:

(i) Applicability of Title 23 – Funds made available to carry out this section shall be available for obligation in the same manner as if such funds were apportioned under chapter 1 of title 23, United States Code; except that such funds shall not be transferable and shall remain available until expended, and the Federal share of the cost of a project or activity shall be 100 percent.

(j) TREATMENT OF PROJECTS—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, projects assisted under this subsection shall be treated as projects on a Federal-aid system under chapter 1 of title 23, United States Code.

The above language means that SRTS infrastructure projects and noninfrastructure activities need to comply with applicable provisions in title 23, such as project agreements, authorization to proceed prior to incurring costs, etc. In addition, infrastructure projects under the Safe Routes to School program must comply with Davis
Bacon prevailing wage rates, competitive bidding, and other contracting requirements, etc, even for projects not located within the right-of-way of a federal-aid highway.

Since eligible subgrantees include non-traditional partners at the community level who may not be familiar with Title 23 requirements, it's important that the State fully inform potential subgrantees of these Federal requirements ahead of time. Some subgrantees may wish to seek a lead sponsor such as a county public works department that has experience with Federal construction contracts in general, and Title 23 in particular.

Grant Management

(Updated 3/3/06)

Grants (i.e. funding for infrastructure projects and non-infrastructure activities) are to be administered in accordance with the provisions in 49 CFR Part 18, the U.S. DOT's regulations that implements the government-wide Common Rule for grants and cooperative agreements to State and local governments and applicable FHWA regulations in 23 CFR.

States are to follow State law and procedures when awarding and administering sub grants to local and Indian tribal governments in accordance with 49 CFR 18.37.

Sub awards by a State to institutions of higher education, hospitals and nonprofit organizations are to be administered in accordance with 49 CFR Part 19, the USDOT regulation that implements the government-wide common rule for grants and cooperative agreements to institutions of higher education, hospitals, and non profit organizations.

Allowable Costs

(Posted 3/3/06)

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars on allowable costs that may be charged to Federal funds are applicable to SRTS grants and are incorporated by reference in regulation, 49 CFR 18.22. Section 18.22(b) lists the appropriate cost principles for various kinds of organizations:

For the costs of a	Use the principles in
State, local, or Indian tribal government.	OMB Circular A-87.
Private, nonprofit organization other than an (1) institution of higher education, (2) hospital, or (3) organization named in OMB Circular A-122 as not subject to that circular.	OMB Circular A-122.
Educational institutions.	OMB Circular A-21.
For-profit organization other than a hospital and an organization named in OMB Circular A-122 as not subject to that circular.	48 CFR Part 31. Contract Cost Principles and Procedures, or uniform cost accounting standards that comply with cost principles acceptable to the Federal agency.

Audit requirements for grants and subgrants are found in 49 CFR 18.26 and 49 CFR 19.26, which refer to OMB Circular A-133: *Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.*

In general, costs are allowable, as specified in the appropriate OMB Circular listed in the table above, if the costs are necessary, reasonable, and benefit this program. Unallowable costs are those for purposes not related to this program.

OMB Circular A-87 lists Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments:

- Attachment A covers *General Principles for Determining Allowable Costs.*
- Attachment B covers *Selected Items of Cost.* Among the selected items is compensation for personnel services. Generally, reasonable personnel services related to a project are allowable.
- Attachment C covers *State/Local-Wide Central Service Cost Allocation Plans.*
- Attachment D covers *Public Assistance Cost Allocation Plans.*
- Attachment E covers *State and Local Indirect Cost Rate Proposals.* Although some indirect costs are allowed under the Federal regulations, some States may disallow indirect costs. If the State allows some indirect costs, the State must determine whether or not the indirect cost rates are reasonable in terms of the on-the-ground benefit for the project. See FHWA's Policy on Indirect Costs.

If the entity expending the Federal funds is not a State, local, or Indian tribal government, use the appropriate OMB Circular applicable to that entity. For example, OMB Circular A-122, Attachment A, Section C, covers indirect costs for nonprofit organizations.

Program Codes - Fiscal Management Information System (FMIS) ***(Updated on 1/24/06)***

Program codes have been assigned for the Safe Routes to School Program in FHWA's Fiscal Management Information System (FMIS). Due to the lateness of SAFETEA-LU, FHWA had to establish two sets of Programs Codes: HU series for FY 2005 and a LU series for FY 2006 - 2009.

Due to the minimum / maximum provision in law for the Noninfrastructure category, (***"not less than 10 percent and not more than 30 percent of each State's apportionment for a fiscal year shall be used for noninfrastructure"***) a 20% overlap between infrastructure and noninfrastructure funding exists.

To accommodate this 20% overlap and to ensure accurate reporting, an "Either" code has been established as a "funding source, parent code" with two subsidiary, limiting codes that roll up to the parent code. Obligations under the subsidiary codes should automatically draw down from the parent codes.

FY 2005	FY 2006 – FY 2009	Description
HU10	LU10	10% Noninfrastructure activities
HU20	LU20	70% Infrastructure projects
HU30	LU30	20% Either: Noninfrastructure or Infrastructure (parent code)
HU40	LU40	Subsidary code for 20% Either: Noninfrastructure
HU50	LU50	Sudsidary code for 20% Either: Infrastructure

It is important for program monitoring that States accurately report their expenditures using the above codes. For the "Either code" States should report how they spent their flexible 20% funding between the two categories using the subsidiary codes discussed above.

SRTS funds are available until expended (they are not subject to the usual Federal-aid highway four-year rule of availability).

Obligation Limitation

The SRTS Program is subject to the Federal-aid highway program's obligation limitation. By law, obligation limitation for formula programs, including the SRTS Program, is distributed in a lump sum to each State DOT. Within the overall limitation, each State has flexibility to choose how to use funds among the various highway programs as long as the total obligations do not exceed the set limit.

Brief background about Obligation Limitation -- Each year appropriations legislation sets a limitation on the obligation of Federal-aid highway program funds. This limitation does not reduce the amount of funding distributed, but rather limits the amount of the distributed funds that may be obligated in that year. Such limitations serve to align the funds authorized in multi-year legislation like SAFETEA-LU with more current economic and fiscal conditions as part of the required annual Federal budget process.

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STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD TO:
Highways and Transit Subcommittee of the
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Peter DeFazio, Chairman
The Honorable John Duncan, Jr., Ranking Member

Hearing on the Federal Safe Routes to School Program

October 2, 2007

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify. It is an honor and privilege to appear before you to discuss the Federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program. I also want to acknowledge this Committee, and Chairman Oberstar and his staff in particular, for their leadership in making SRTS a reality. At the outset, we at the National Center for Safe Routes to School are proud of the work we have accomplished in supporting the SRTS movement.

The Safe Routes to School concept has been described as small steps perhaps, but millions of them and all in the right direction. SRTS is a simple and powerful concept. Where it is safe, encourage children to enjoy the walk to school as generations before them did. Where it is not safe, bring together the community partners and resources to make it safe. Unfortunately, in some places, children are walking and bicycling to school in unsafe conditions. Often, this is in urban, low resource areas. These children deserve better. Other children have great places for walking and bicycling with few using them. Some communities need to be reminded of the benefits and fun of walking together.

The National Center works with the Federal Government, all 50 States and the District of Columbia, and local programs throughout the country to help implement Safe Routes to School programs. We are pleased that our partners in this endeavor include the American Association of State Transportation Organizations, America Walks, the Governors Highway Safety Association, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, and Toole Design Group. We provide training, technical support, and general expertise about SRTS to agencies and the general public. We also work to promote participation in SRTS programs and increase the profile of the Federal SRTS Program. We are also closely involved in tracking the development, implementation, and growth of the overall SRTS program. My testimony today is based in large part on what we are learning from stakeholders about all aspects of implementing and operating SRTS programs.

With over 30 years in the transportation safety field, I have seen and been a part of many safety-related transportation programs, as well as many programs to improve conditions for walking and bicycling. Yet, I am amazed at how quickly so many States have embraced SRTS and at the commitment and enthusiasm that the State coordinators have demonstrated. This quote from a State coordinator says it all: "One of the biggest thrills I get is planting the seed of an idea in a community; being the catalyst for their change." The Safe Routes to School program is one of the most promising approaches for improving transportation safety and mobility for children ever to be developed. With its successful implementation, we should see more children walking and bicycling to school, and fewer children harmed in traffic crashes while walking or bicycling.

Our commitment to Safe Routes to School extends beyond the availability of Federal funding. Our vision for success includes three scenarios. First – available funding is spent and programs are equipped with knowledge and expertise to use the funding wisely. Second – successful programs and strategies are identified and shared so that all schools can benefit. Third – the Safe Routes to School program expands beyond the Federal funding such that safe walking and bicycling are priorities for all schools.

The Safe Routes to School Program is off to a great start because of the parents and schools who want better for their children, the advocates who are dedicating their time to where their hearts are, and the State Coordinators for whom this is not just a job but a way to improve the lives of schoolchildren.

We are at a convergence of three major issues that stand to be addressed by Safe Routes to School. The obesity epidemic and related illnesses that we are experiencing in the US have reached our children, leading public health professionals to warn that this generation of children may be the first to not live to be as old as their parents. Concern for the environment and about our dependency on fossil fuel has spurred many to look for alternatives. Walking is the form of physical activity that is the easiest to do and most affordable for all. As more and more adults and children seek the ability to walk and bicycle, we must be proactive in our efforts to make these modes safe and accessible.

With the July 2005 passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), Congress designated a total of $612 million toward developing the Federal Safe Routes to School Program. In little more than two years the U.S. Department of Transportation, working closely with the 50 States and the District of Columbia, has made extensive progress in establishing and implementing the Federal Safe Routes to School Program.

The Federal Safe Routes to School Program was established by Section 1404 of SAFETEA-LU, which listed three main requirements:

1. Establish a Safe Routes to School program.
2. Establish a national clearinghouse.
3. Create a national task force.

I am pleased to inform you that the FHWA has moved aggressively to carry out these provisions of the law. I believe we all can be proud of these accomplishments.

Key milestones include:

- **FHWA and the Department of Transportation showing dedication and a focus on successful implementation and operation of the Federal SRTS Program.** They have followed the steps that must be taken to effectively administer and guide a major funding program like Safe Routes to School.
    - DOT appointed a senior-level employee to serve as SRTS Program Manager within six weeks after SAFETEA-LU became law.
    - Shortly thereafter, the DOT issued its first notice that States should appoint a full-time coordinator to administer the state-level programs per law.
    - Within two months, the first two years of funding (FFY 2005 and 2006) were issued to the States.
    - The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued SRTS Program Guidance in early January 2006.
    - This quick Federal-level implementation allowed States to quickly advance their programs. The first State to complete a competitive project selection process, Colorado, announced its first awards to local programs in April 2006. By the time the Federal Program was one year old, 13 states had announced funding for local projects.
- **All States have established SRTS programs and nearly $100 million has been awarded.** Under SAFETEA-LU, each State is responsible for hiring a full-time Safe Routes to School Coordinator to implement the State's SRTS program. Today there are 48 permanent and 3 interim coordinators in place. The three are going through the hiring process. As of June 2007, 29 States had announced specific funding recipients totaling $94.5 million for local or statewide SRTS activities. The National Center will issue the Fall SRTS Tracking Report in about two weeks, but anticipates reporting announced funding levels of approximately $105 to $110 million from 34 States.
- **National Clearinghouse established in May 2006.** The University of North Carolina's Highway Safety Research Center was selected to operate a National Safe Routes to School Clearinghouse. Within three months of establishment, the

Clearinghouse had launched a comprehensive Web site with extensive resources, convened a meeting of State-level SRTS Coordinators, started providing SRTS training to States, and established an SRTS program tracking effort. To date, two national meetings of State coordinators have been held.

- **National SRTS Task Force established in October 2006.** With representation from a broad range of stakeholders, this Task Force will study and develop a strategy for advancing Safe Routes to School programs nationwide. The Task Force has met three times with another meeting scheduled for next month. As a member of the Task Force, I can attest that we are working hard to complete our report.

These milestones highlight in brief the remarkable progress that has been made so far in starting the Federal Safe Routes to School Program.

As the Director of the National Center for Safe Routes to School, I have been directly involved in helping to quickly develop many of the support mechanisms and tools to support the implementation of State and local SRTS programs. On our first day of operation, the National Center for Safe Routes to School recognized the need for a fast startup. With Safe Routes to School State Coordinators in place and funding already on the ground, the U.S. DOT Federal Highway Administration charged us with setting an ambitious agenda to build capacity for Safe Routes to School and supported us along the way. Within a few months of our selection, we had established a comprehensive Web site with a wide range of practical, technical, training, and promotional resources. We developed promotional and marketing materials to help increase the profile of the SRTS program. We also quickly developed and released evaluation materials, to help collect data and analyze SRTS programs. We continue to work closely with the Department of Transportation to help implement the Federal SRTS program.

One of our most immediate charges was to build capacity within the State programs to ensure the success and growth of Safe Routes to School. Within two months of beginning our operations, we convened a multi-day meeting and training session for State Safe

Routes Coordinators. We have a staff liaison available to work with each State program, and we provide direct technical support to them.

Status of State SRTS Programs

Like other federal aid programs and in accordance with the Federal SRTS Program Guidance issued by FHWA, each State administers its own SRTS program and develops its own procedures to solicit and select projects for funding. Different States have therefore implemented their Safe Routes programs on different timelines and with different processes, but all are making good progress.

The National Center for Safe Routes to School tracks a number of key benchmark measures as part of regular quarterly tracking reports. The most recent report, released in July, shows that States have announced $94.5 million in spending for SRTS programs at the local and statewide levels, and our estimate based on a preliminary examination of 3rd quarter information is that announced spending will total between $105 and $110 million. (This information is summarized in Table 1, below.)

As of June 30, 29 States had announced SRTS spending, meaning that more than half of all States have publicly announced spending. We consider that an important indicator of the increasing acceptance of Safe Routes by States.

Table 1: Announced SRTS Spending by Quarter

Quarter	Total Announced Spending	Number of States
Fall 2006	$15.8 million	13
Winter 2006	$17.6 million	16
Spring 2007	$24.3 million	20
Summer 2007	$94.5 million	29
Fall 2007	(*estimated*) $105-110 million	34

Another important benchmark we track is the current status of State SRTS application processes. As of July, 40 States had completed or were actively involved in soliciting local SRTS program applications.

Safe Routes to School has gained traction with the State Departments of Transportation that administer them. In October 2006, 49 States had permanent or interim SRTS Coordinators in place. By April 2007, all States had their Coordinators in place. As of today, only three States have interim Coordinators, but two of those are the result of vacancies created by promotions or job transfers, and all three are currently advertising for permanent Coordinators.

In my opinion, much of the success of the Federal Safe Routes to School Program rests on the shoulders of State SRTS Coordinators. They are responsible for advancing their State programs, working within bureaucracies that may not be familiar with a unique program such as Safe Routes. They must also work to educate parents, teachers, and school administrators about the benefits of Safe Routes to School activities. And Coordinators need to work with local programs to ensure the successful completion of funded programs. Without successful Coordinators, we all would face a significant uphill battle in implementing the program. But State Coordinators have reported numerous successes in starting and operating their programs. See Appendix A for program highlights provided by State SRTS Coordinators earlier this year.

Identifying Safe Routes Successes

Evaluation is a critical component to the success of Safe Routes to School at all levels. The National Center understands the importance of determining SRTS strategies that are both realistic and effective. Programs must monitor which strategies are increasing the number of children safely walking and bicycling to school. In an effort to collect national-level data on the number of children walking and bicycling to school, the National Center developed standardized forms for the collection of student travel data and parental attitudes about students traveling to and from school.

The Federal SRTS Program is overall still too young to provide useful data for evaluating overall program performance and effectiveness; it takes at least a year to collect useful or reliable data from before and after a Safe Routes project or activity occurs. The National Center is gathering data from local and State SRTS programs, and we hope to start analysis of baseline data in spring 2008, and preliminary analyses of different types of SRTS activities in summer 2008.

Until data from programs established and funded from the Federal SRTS Program are available, the National Center for Safe Routes to School is working to summarize and understand the data and results that are currently available. These results are promising and indicate strong potential for the success of the Federal Program. Some highlights of the promise of SRTS:

"Walking Wednesdays" encourage increased participation in Massachusetts.

Elementary and middle schools in Waltham, Massachusetts are using weekly walking events to spur more walking to school. One school experienced an increase from 21% to 53% of students walking to school on those days.

Increasing education and encouragement in Virginia.

The City of Alexandria in Virginia will distribute federal funds to one middle school and four elementary schools for various education and encouragement activities. Each school must participate in the annual Walk to School Day and conduct before and after evaluation to measure the success of the various program aspects.

Improving infrastructure surrounding schools in California.

With federal funds awarded to the City of Chula Vista in California, two elementary schools will receive improvements including curb extensions, setback limit lines, prominent crosswalk zebra striping, ADA-complaint pedestrian ramps and non-slip sidewalk grating.

An evaluation of California's state-funded SRTS program released in January 2007 found that Safe Routes programs increased observed walking or biking to school by 20 to 200 percent.

An earlier evaluation of California's state-funded program similarly found increases in walking and biking to school of 10 to 75 percent. Given the wide variety of school environments and differences in SRTS programs, these two reports are impressive in that of the 17 schools that reported on walking and biking levels, only 1 did not report an increase.

Data from the Marin County, CA, SRTS program has consistently shown success in increasing the number of children walking or biking to school from fall to spring.

An extensive child pedestrian safety education campaign in Miami, FL, resulted in higher scores on tests of pedestrian safety knowledge for children.

There was also a decrease in the number of children visiting or admitted to trauma centers for pedestrian injuries.

An increasing number of spatial analyses from a number of states (and using national data) that compare where students live to where their schools are located indicate that between 5 and 51 percent of students live within walking distance to their schools.

The opportunities for documenting and evaluating the Federal Safe Routes to School Program are very exciting. With participation from States and local programs, we are implementing a comprehensive program tracking system that will have information about all State programs, details of every funded SRTS activity, and results of any local evaluations using the standardized data collection forms. The resulting database will support national-level overall program evaluation, as well as evaluation of specific types of SRTS projects, activities, and programs.

Walk to School Day

One major part of the Federal Safe Routes to School Program is its participation in International Walk to School Day, which is tomorrow, October 3, 2007. This annual one-day event has proven to be one of the strongest agents for change in establishing ongoing local and school-level SRTS programs. I am proud to state the Walk to School Day started in the United States in 1997. In 2000 we were approached by Canada and the United Kingdom to launch International Walk to School Day. Last year the event was celebrated in 40 countries.

In 2006, there was participation by schools and communities in all 50 states and more schools than ever before – a total of 2,044 – registered their participation in International Walk to School events on the USA Walk to School web site (www.walktoschool.org). The National Center serves as the coordinating agency for Walk to School activities in the United States.

Walk to School events extend beyond a single day of celebration. More than 50 percent of 2006 event organizers reported that their Walk to School events resulted in policy or engineering changes that would improve safety for walkers and bicyclists, such as the addition of sidewalks, paths, crosswalks or crossing guards or required safety education.

Additional Highlights of 2006 International Walk to School Day

- More than 50% of registered schools conduct walking and/or bicycling promotional activities throughout the year
- Nearly 50% of registered events are part of a Safe Routes to School program
- More than 50% of events included children traveling to school by bicycle
- Media coverage doubled from the 2005 event, with nearly 600 news stories covering Walk to School events

We at the National Center are very excited to have the continuing opportunity to host and promote this event and watch it continue to evolve and encourage the establishment of regular and ongoing SRTS activities.

Conclusion

I would like to thank the Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Subcommittee for the opportunity to share this information with you today. I believe that if we provide our children with the ability to safely walk or bicycle to school, the Federal Safe Routes to School Program not only can provide a framework for safe walking and bicycling to school but also a new mental and physical framework for a healthier society.

Appendix A. State Coordinators' Comments

Below are some highlights of comments from State SRTS Coordinators that we collected earlier this year:

Arizona:
One of the biggest thrills I get is planting the seed of an idea in a community; being the catalyst for their change. This happened to me several weeks ago in Yuma, AZ. This is a city of approximately 40,000, not known for excelling at community- or school-related walkability or bikeability. I had organized a Safe Routes community meeting in conjunction with their local council of governments. Attendees included all the right people: school district, city police department, city transportation department, a regional transportation planning organization, a health non-profit, and two bike clubs. Before this, none of them had been in the same room together. They're now talking.
This grassroots 'model' really excites me!

Connecticut:
For International Walk to School Day, the Connecticut SRTS Program supplied slap wraps (reflective bracelets) to Connecticut schools registered on the International Walk to School website. Walk to School Day was very successful at Skinner Road School in Vernon, Connecticut, and the school has decided to continue "Walk to School Day" twice a month. The day before the event the school hands out the slap wraps to participating students. In addition to students walking, the slap wraps are given to students who are bussed. Twice a month buses drop off students with slap wraps approximately 1/2 mile from school, and they get the opportunity to walk to school.

Illinois:
- Illinois is developing an on-line School Travel Plan and Funding Application for communities to use in planning their Safe Routes to School goals and to request funding.
- Illinois will require an approved School Travel Plan from communities prior to accepting their funding application. Illinois is the one of the only states that will utilize a School Travel Plan as a pre-requisite for funding. This will allow our state to have a comprehensive plan to encourage and enhance walking and bicycling.
- Illinois has joined with a coalition of bicycle and pedestrian advocates, including the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, the League of Illinois Bicyclists and the Center for Neighborhood Technology, to create and carry out statewide Safe Routes to School training in 2007.

Iowa:
- We have had full support from Iowa DOT management and other state agencies
- We were able to get the program designed by July 1 [2006] and called for projects

- We received 97 applications for funding by the October 1 [2006] deadline

Kentucky:

- We have awarded a little over $1.7 million in grants. They were awarded to 13 communities and will effect 32 schools
- Governor Ernie Fletcher signed a proclamation to proclaim October as Walk to School Month in Kentucky
- We have developed a website specifically for the Safe Routes program, which includes lesson plans. We worked with the Education Cabinet and Eastern Kentucky University to develop the plans.

Louisiana:

- Louisiana has offered updated traffic signs to every elementary and middle school in the State. To date, 240 schools have requested a total of 4000 signs. We are currently working with local public works and DOTD districts to verify requests before disseminating signs.
- Our plan is to continue this statewide effort by offering freshly painted crosswalks to all the schools in 2007.
- We released our application for funds in November 2006. The deadline for the applications is January 16, 2007.

Maine:

- Between the Maine DOT and the Bicycle Coalition of Maine we more than doubled the participating schools from last year during October's Walk to School Month.
- Maine led the New England states for number of schools participating, with more than 60 schools from around the state holding one or more walk and bike to school events during the month. This is double the level of participation we had last year!

Massachusetts:

- Central, Robin Hood, Colonial Park, and South School, Stoneham elementary schools are collaborating with MassRIDES to implement the Safe Routes to School program. This is the second year the schools participated in International Walk to School Day, where banners and balloons greeted students in October to encourage and promote walking to school. [The] Central School Principal… said that since the beginning of this school year "there were significantly fewer cars entering our school driveway and much more foot traffic." To continue International Walk to School Month efforts, the schools are promoting Walk to School Wednesdays during November where families come to school by foot, bicycle, or carpool. Over the next year, the schools are working on developing Walking School Buses where the students walk to school together with their parents in a group. [The] Robin Hood Elementary [Principal] believes that "the benefits of walking to school are numerous" and "by providing opportunities, such as Safe Routes, that teach healthy practices, we are teaching our children valuable life-long lessons." The implementation of the Safe Routes to School

program creates awareness among all the Stoneham elementary school students, addressing the issues of physical activity, air quality, traffic congestion, the environment, good health, and safety.

- At Jackson Street Elementary School, two parents (champions) are taking the lead in developing the Safe Routes to School program. One Walking School Bus turned into two, and now a third group of parents and students walk to school together in this Northampton neighborhood. The Traveler Ticket activity, now in its second school year at Jackson Street Elementary, encourages walking and bicycling. During the activity, the students receive 20 marks (20 trips) on their traveler ticket for walking or bicycling. The champions collect the tickets and distribute the rewards, including pencils, highlighters, and rulers. [One] champion at the school, reflects that "as one of the parent volunteers who staffs the prize table, I am pleased to see the kids very excited to turn in their tickets, receive their prize and a ticket to complete!" On special occasions, muffins, bagels, and hot cocoa greet the students arriving in Walking School Buses. The success of the traveler ticket activity and walking school buses are making a difference in students walking and bicycling to school at Jackson Street. Last spring 20% of students reported walking and 1% reported bicycling to school, this fall 25% are now walking and 8% are riding their bicycles. Student enthusiasm and parent, teacher, and principal support are creating enthusiasm and a sustainable Safe Routes to School program.
- Fifty-five children at Waltham's Whittemore Elementary School walked to school before the Safe Routes program. During Safe Routes kick-off week, approximately 197 children out of 263 walked. In addition, 117 of those students walked every day during kick-off week, earning recognition during a school assembly. Seven Walking School Buses leave for school every Walking Wednesdays.

Michigan:

- **Michigan's Handbook and Federal Funding have exposed a broad latent interest in Safe Routes and accelerated Safe Routes activity in Michigan.** The Michigan Department of Transportation and partner agencies in the state Safe Routes to School Coalition, have endorsed completion of a school Safe Routes Action Plan as a prerequisite for school eligibility to apply for federal Safe Routes funding. The plan is based on a systematic assessment of need in each of the 5 E areas. The Michigan Safe Routes to School Handbook launched last May, provides the materials and process to enable local, multidisciplinary teams to complete the plan. The time required to complete the planning process depends upon team resources, (e.g., team member knowledge, skills, and time)and ranges from 2-3 months to a school year or more. Over 120 schools have registered to begin Safe Routes to School in Michigan, using the Handbook process. Over 300 hundred individuals have been trained to assist local Safe Routes teams.

- **Safe Routes funding is the catalyst to build multi agency multi level capacity to sustain and develop initiatives, and to parlay funding from a variety of other sources to carry them out.** Safe Routes to School is both a federal

program and a movement. Early successes often illustrate the power of the movement; for Safe Routes to School it is the power to bring creative minds and devoted spirits together for the health and safety of children. Movements need champions to spread and in Michigan the synergy of multiple stakeholder groups championing SRTS for unique – but overlapping – reasons has been a visible early success. By spring, using federal Safe Routes funding, we will be engaged with 10 partner agencies to provide a training resource in all 83 counties; support assistance to schools through community health programs—coordinated school health teams and the Safe Kids Coalition; develop specialized resources to enhance our handbook to be effective with middle school students, with inner city disadvantaged neighborhoods, and with special needs kids; provide specialized marketing to professional planners, bicycle clubs and advocacy organizations, and trail development groups; and begin incorporation of Safe Routes messages in relevant sections of the state's core curriculum for elementary and middle schools. All of these initiatives are intended to institutionalize Safe Routes in organizations who will continue the outreach and assistance to schools as part of their general mission, without additional Safe Routes funding.

- **Safe Routes is becoming a catalyst program for bringing about change and renewal in neighborhoods where it shares problems and solutions with a variety of other needs/programs/initiatives.** Michigan DOT and its Safe Routes partner and contractor, the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness have launched an initiative directed at the unique needs and issues associated with the trip to school for children of the inner city. The focus city is Detroit, but the work will benefit such areas in Michigan's other urban areas. Our early finding is the presence of a wealth of grass roots and philanthropic organizations focused upon assisting inner city neighborhoods in addressing a host of social and infrastructure needs. Safe Routes achieves synergy with the missions of many of these organizations, and without the combined initiatives, Safe Routes funding alone cannot begin to address the variety of issues rendering routes to school unsafe in these areas. Because funding is the fundamental need in these areas, and is also scarce, Safe Routes becomes a catalyst. Investment in Safe Routes generates investment from a variety of public, private and non profit (philanthropical) organizations focused on the route to school, but bringing about fundamental improvement in the quality of life in these neighborhoods overall.

Minnesota:

- Our second solicitation closed in January 2007, and our third solicitation will be opening in October, 2007
- Our RFP to develop statewide educational materials is in its final development.
- We will be beginning partnership discussions with our departments of Health, Education, and Public Safety.
- In November and December [2006] we held five SRTS Application Workshops bringing the total number of individuals trained since May of '06 to 300.

Nebraska:

- Safe Routes Nebraska announced available funding in late October 2006 and received an overwhelming response of 160 "Intent to Apply" forms by December 2006 – greatly exceeding expectations within 1 month's time and demonstrating the need for safe routes funding.
- The newly launched Safe Routes Nebraska interim Web site generated over 120 hits in the first half of January alone! www.SafeRoutesNE.com

New Jersey:

- The NJ SRTS program has been a collaborative team effort. Over the last four years, the combined efforts of a consultant team and a 60-member Technical Advisory Committee has resulted in three demonstration projects and a strategic plan that won the "Outstanding Comprehensive Statewide Plan" award from the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association.
- New Jersey's SRTS team has provided a SRTS "help desk", listserv, and a web site that includes a "How to Get Started" Toolbox and many New Jersey grass roots success stories - as well as informational open houses across the state that were attended by people from over 120 communities.
- The NJ SRTS Program is a key component of Governor Corzine's Pedestrian Safety Initiative, which was announced in September 2006. DOT Commissioner Kris Kolluri announced the SRTS program at a press conference with local officials in October [2006] and our first solicitation has resulted in over 200 applications for funding.

Oregon:

Safe Routes to School matters in Oregon. Even before there was a federally-funded SRTS Program, Oregonians have promoted physical activity, bicycling and walking in our state as a commitment to a lifestyle. Our bicycle and pedestrian advocates have been in the background pushing for safe routes since 2001 and they are proud of their successes and happy to have federal funds to encourage more safe routes programs and activities. Oregon Walk + Bike to School Day, October 4, 2006, was a huge success with 90 registered schools and 20,000 kids and parents walking and biking to school. An average of 40% of student populations got active, and some schools reported up to 100% participation! There were many television, radio and newsprint articles and stories throughout the state. A statewide committee of agencies, businesses and organizations promoted the event, provided training and technical support to school organizers, and gave a box containing hundreds of incentives to each school including a multi-use helmet, backpack, stickers, zipper-pulls, carabiners, wrist bands, t-shirts, water bottles, and posters and flyers.

- In Bend, Oregon, they like to brag about the success of their Walk and Bike to School event growing from one pilot school in 2001 to three elementary and one magnet school in 2006. Walk and Bike isn't just a one-day event, but it's an activity that is encouraged year-round. It was amazing that the magnet school, with students living outside of the neighborhood school area, had parent and student commitment to reducing congestion, promoting cleaner air, and practicing physical activity. They had [the] State Representative …, who successfully

promoted the Oregon Safe Routes bill to adoption in 2005, as a Walking School Bus volunteer, ensuring lots of local media coverage.

- In Eugene, Oregon, Smart Ways to School and the suburban neighborhood school, Gilham Elementary, held a month-long contest to encourage their 550 students to walk, bike, carpool, or ride a bus to school. The campaign began Wednesday, October 4, 2006, when Gilham students and [the] Eugene Mayor … celebrated the International Walk to School Day. During the month, students earned a ticket each day they used one of the alternative travel modes. The campaign was a great success; students amassed more than 5,600 tickets as they made 49 percent of their trips to school by walking, biking, carpooling, or riding a bus!
- Finally, The City of Portland Safe Routes to School pilot program started in August, 2005, and is providing one of the nation's most comprehensive programs at 25 schools in four school districts. Funded by traffic violation fees, a contracted team of full-time Coordinators work with five schools each to develop School Teams, give technical assistance, and facilitate encouragement programs. Services include staff--led encouragement programs such as the Walk + Bike School Bus and Walk + Bike Across America, education programs taught by professional instructors such as a ten-hour in-class bicycle safety education course, a two-hour in-class pedestrian safety course, after-school bike safety club and child passenger safety for drivers. A dedicated engineering budget for each school is providing bicycle parking at each school, arrival/departure improvements, route maps for walking and biking, and other roadway projects to make walking and biking safer and more appealing. The City's goal is to reach all 180 schools with at least a minimum level of services.

Virginia:

- We went from zero program in April [2005] when I was hired to just receiving $5 million in funding requests [in December 2006] at the close of our first cycle, and we have a number of other localities that are still working on things since our first cycle was very brief (and poorly timed with the holidays).
- We managed to get support from the absolute top with strong backing from our new Governor announcing the program officially and more significantly, kept the process streamlined and simple for fast awarding of money to the selected candidates (via our Advisory Committee and subsequently VDOT Commissioner and Secretary of Transportation).
- We have managed to attract applications and proposals from a very diverse pool; citizens, localities, PDCs, schools, and even a sports promotion company that will be putting together an international level event with TV coverage which may allow us to use that as a vehicle to achieve education, outreach, and awareness of SRTS pending an arrangement that is being proposed. In short, we have managed to work with a whole host of potential partners in advancing SRTS in Virginia.

West Virginia:

- We have launched a successful Safe Routes to School grant program, which is in its first year cycle.

- We have 50 Intent-to-Apply candidates requesting over $3.4 million.

Wisconsin:
In November [2006] Wisconsin Safe Routes to School held nine Information Sessions throughout the state. Over 250 people attended the sessions with representatives from schools, pubic works, public health, law enforcement, elected officials, parents and more. In addition, representatives from both rural, urban and suburban were represented. The Information Sessions provided an opportunity for communities and schools that were new to Safe Routes to School to learn about the basics of SRTS and find out how to begin a program at their schools. The Information Sessions also provided an opportunity to distribute the newly created Wisconsin Safe Routes to School Toolkit to communities.

Information sent to Congressman Coble's office on October 22, 2007.

Below is the content from an email message we received from the new coordinator in North Carolina that shows a lot of great activity starting.

- Guidelines were written for Demonstration Grants. Thirty-two (32) schools across the state were invited to apply for these grants, which will fund a combined infrastructure and non-infratrusture projects between $100,000 and $250,000. We're looking for creative solutions to problems that we can use as prototypes for the rest of the state. The application period closes December 14, 2007.
- Guidelines are written for Non-Infrastructure Grants and Action Plan Service Awards. The call for these programs begins October 22, 2007 and closes January 14, 2008. Guidelines, Application Instructions, and Applications will be available on-line.
- Non-Infrastructure: In this cycle, $500,000 is available for grants ranging between $10,000 and $50,000.
- Action Plan Service Awards: $300,000 is available to fund Action Plans for communities that want to start a SRTS program. Rather than provide a financial award, it is a "service award." We will have consultants under contract with NCDOT available to be assigned to each community to develop the Action Plans. NCDOT, rather than the communities, will pay the consultants. We hope this will shorten the process, and get the Plans completed in a year or less. We have detailed guidelines for how to prepare an Action Plan. These will also be on-line Oct 22.
- SRTS Highway Division Funds: $200,000 has been allocated to each of NCDOT's 14 Highway Divisions (representing 5-8 counties each) for use in constructing small "spot safety" improvements. Projects will range between $10,000 and $50,000 each. Guidelines for the use of these funds were written and provided to the Divisions. The SRTS Coordinator must approve each project. We expect a lot of these projects to involve high visibility crosswalks, installation of pedestrian signals, and gap closures in sidewalks.
- National Course: we rescinded the previous requirement that all applicants must have a workshop (2300 potential applicants in the state; no can do!). We temporarily suspended the workshop program while we got the guidelines written, etc. We will begin offering the course again after the first of the year.
- Infrastructure Grants: coming in mid-2008. Guideline preparation is underway. They will range between $100,000 and $250,000 each.

SafeRoutes
National Center for Safe Routes to School

November 1, 2007

Chairman Peter DeFazio
House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit
B-370-a Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio:

Thank you for inviting me to appear before the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit as part of your October 2nd hearing on the federal Safe Routes to School program. I have received the additional question from Rep. Grace F. Napolitano and have attached her question and my written response for the record.

Please contact me if you have any questions or additional requests.

Regards,

Lauren Marchetti

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SafeRoutes
National Center for Safe Routes to School

Questions for Ms. Lauren Marchetti
Director of the National Center for Safe Routes to School
Highways and Transit Subcommittee Hearing
By Rep. Grace F. Napolitano
October 2, 2007

Question:

I am a strong supporter of Railroad Safety Awareness programs as many of the schools in my district are within blocks of railroad tracks. It is a safety risk when students have to cross these railroad tracks in order to get to school. Students have been injured and killed in my district by playing on the railroad tracks. How is Safe Routes to School funding being used to support infrastructure safety upgrades around grade crossings? How is Safe Routes to School funding being used to support non-infrastructure railroad safety awareness programs in schools?

Answer:

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a program created in SAFETEA-LU to encourage more children to walk and bike to school. By law, the funding provided for this program must be spent on projects and activities that support this goal and are within two miles of an elementary or middle school (K-8 grades). In places where railroad grade crossings pose barriers and safety concerns for children who walk and bike to school, SRTS funding may be used to undertake infrastructure safety upgrades around grade crossings. For example, sidewalk, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements such as new or upgraded traffic signals, pavement markings, in-roadway crossing lights, flashing beacons, bicycle-sensitive signal actuation devices, pedestrian countdown signals, sight distance improvements, etc, are eligible for funding under the SRTS program.

The SRTS program also includes funding for education and encouragement activities. Eligible activities include traffic education and enforcement in the vicinity of schools and students sessions on bicycle and pedestrian safety, health and environment. In communities where railroad grade crossings are a safety concern for children who walk and bike to school, SRTS non-infrastructure projects can and should incorporate railroad safety awareness into their pedestrian safety curricula.

It is my understanding that the most common ways the State SRTS programs are partnering with railroads on non-infrastructure awareness programs is through the railroads' Operation Lifesaver program. State SRTS coordinators have commented that while railroad crossing infrastructure projects can apply for funds, they must compete with all the other projects proposed across the state. The fact that most railroad crossing infrastructure projects are extremely expensive and could eat up a considerable part of the state SRTS budget is a factor in whether they get funded.

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