

Safe Routes Idaho

Convening Notes

June 6, 2019



Introductions

The convening grew by eight attendees from last year as twenty three people from seven SRTS programs around Idaho as well as four ISG staff attended the second annual Safe Routes Idaho convening – a total of twenty seven people. This total includes Idaho Transportation Department staff from three of the six districts as well as additional ITD headquarters staff, COMPASS and LHTAC staff.

Safe Routes Idaho – Idaho SRTS report – Elaine Clegg (ISG)

The participants learned about the ISG Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program and received the draft second annual report of SRTS activity in the state that touched on the importance of collecting and reporting data. Report and PowerPoint attached.

Deep Dive

Lisa Brady, Treasure Valley YMCA SRTS – Bike Clubs, Pre-Driver's Ed

- Lisa presented on the Treasure Valley YMCA program work to create bike clubs. These clubs go out into the streets and learn “in action” on outings throughout the community. She also shared her experience creating a bike program. The bike program is the “pre-driver’s ed” and allows students to experience the roadway as bike/peds before learning behind the wheel of a car.

DaNiel Jose, Bonneville Metropolitan Planning Organization SRTS – Walking School Bus

- DaNiel presented on a BMPO program using jackets to designate walking school bus volunteers. Adult volunteers, some whom already walk with students, are asked to be the walking school bus contact. They receive a bright “school bus” yellow jacket for easy identification. Concerns were raised about districts unwilling to support the program due to liability fears. BMPO uses parents who have already passed through the school district volunteer and background check process. *ISG is still researching answers to the issue of liability.*

Erin Bacon, University of Idaho SRTS-Moscow – Various programs

- Erin presented several ideas they have used in the Moscow program.
 - Helmet Recess Students bring helmets out to recess and are assisted with fit, given a new helmet if needed and given the opportunity to decorate it with stickers. They then spend the entire recess playing in their helmets, which helps normalize the idea of wearing a helmet.
 - “Parent Champions” Erin finds and coordinates with a champion at all the schools she coordinates; they are key to SRTS participation and success.
 - Polar Walk this is a popular wintertime walk playing to the colder climate. Students bundle up and are given hot cocoa as incentive.
 - Event Poster Art Art class students compete to design event posters.

SRTS performance measurements, manual counts – Deanna Smith (ISG)

The participants were shown the importance of understanding the “why” behind collecting data in order to inform the “where and how”. The group then walked through the data collection sheet and prepared for on-the-street practice. Additionally ISG has created a form to collect data on bicycle and pedestrian behavior around schools (*attached*).

Practice count – Participants practiced using the bike/ped count sheet (*attached*) to get a feel for any questions they might encounter in implementing a count in their communities. A count training summary is available at:

<https://www.idahosmartgrowth.org/counts-matter/>

Idaho TAP Program brief – Ryan McDaniel (ITD)

Ryan McDaniel, ITD TAP program manager, presented to the group with ITD updates. The ITD TAP district coordinators present were reintroduced. ITD has created a GIS database of all TAP and SRTS projects it has funded. This includes information for projects, completed and underway. *There will be a web link coming soon.*

Although the federal legislation that governs the TAP program is set to expire at the end of FY2020 ITD is going to proceed as if the program will be extended, either through a new bill or a continuing resolution. ITD will take applications for funds for three funding years FY21, FY22 & FY23 beginning September 15th 2019 starting with pre-applications. The new schedule will include a pre-application period, ITD risk assessment/screening review period, full application period lasting at least 3 months and scoring completed in early March. All projects chosen will be entered in the GIS system. The ITD TAP Program Manual is being updated for this application round and comments were taken from the group about the manual. More information will be shared about the application process as soon as it’s available. ITD is developing a Coordinated Communication Plan for the TAP application period. The purpose is to build awareness of the TAP program among cities, counties, highway districts, MPOS and more. The hope is that this will spur early coordination among stakeholders in developing projects.

Finally, there was discussion about whether noninfrastructure SRTS programs are still limited to K-8 or if they could be extended to K-12. One impact of this is what can be done for drivers training. Discussion centered on including 9-12 students as volunteer teachers, peer instructors or potentially unpaid interns for programs aimed at K-8 students. *See below in discussion section for more information.*

Children Pedestrian Safety program brief – Amanda LaMott (LHTAC)

Established in 2017 by House Bill 334 (H334); the “Children Pedestrian Safety Act” authorized use of state surplus funds to address safety issues on the state and local system. LHTAC and ITD staff developed a joint program administered through LHTAC. The program was not extended for FY20, but there is momentum to extend it in FY21. <http://lhtac.org/programs/children-pedestrian-safety-program/>

Project Types Included: 1) Paths/sidewalks along or adjacent to an existing roadway, 2) Connecting sidewalks/paths between two terminal points, 3) Pedestrian crossing facilities across an existing roadway including signing and/or signalization.

Project Specifics: 1) Max award \$250K, 2) State funds – no match required, 3) One application per eligible jurisdiction, 4) Funds used for materials or contractor only

2018 Summary – \$~2M Awarded

- 70 applications requesting over \$12M, 15 projects awarded in:
Moscow, Marsing, Caldwell, Burley, Carey, Oakley, Firth, Blackfoot, Shelley, Ashton, Driggs, Idaho Falls, Teton, Butte County, Teton

2019 Summary – \$~2M Awarded

- 65 applications requesting \$12.7M, 11 projects awarded in:
Kootenai, Plummer, Sandpoint, Lapwai, Donnelly, Emmett, Twin Falls, Chubbuck, Soda Springs, Victor, Iona

Discussion – SRTS wants and needs

- **K-8 or K-12** – Clarifications were requested on whether SRTS is limited to K-8 or could serve grades 9-12. It was suggested that older students could serve as mentors, or could be included through a capstone type element. Congress will be considering this clause in a new bill this fall. ISG will follow-up with bill proposals as they come forward and provide congressional contacts.
- **Driver's Education** – Including education about pedestrians and bicyclists in the driver's training program is potentially the perfect finish to the safe routes program. Lisa Brady has taken the lead in a "train the trainers" program teaching driving instructors about the importance of including bike/ped safety in driver's training. There is a proposal to reduce the number of hours of instruction needed to get certified as a driving instructor. ISG will share information about any concrete legislation if it arises.
- **Liability** – The group was interested in the best way to cover program liability. Partnering with school districts and others who already do background checks, and budget for this by putting it in the work plan and budgets. Get a waiver* signed if needed for events and kids helping kids. *ISG will share an example.
- **Expand reach of SRTS** – Program should focus on strength and expansion of current programs vs adding more programs. Stronger is better than diluted.
- **Timing of bike events** – Weather is problematic fall and spring. Spring (May) events leave little time for good biking habits to be formed and is busy with end of year activities; the group discussed benefits of moving bike events to fall.
- **Make bike/ped counts regular** – Bike/ped counts done regularly (fall/spring) can identify trends and be used as a program metric if done near schools.
- **Trail/Sidewalk maintenance** – Specifically in winter months. The group asked for case studies of places doing this well. ISG will follow-up.
- **Route Maps** – Best practices for developing and providing students with route maps and information on snow routes was requested. ISG will follow-up.

Discussion – acquisition, storage of major equipment

Storage/Maintenance/Transport of assets – Many programs have a need to move stuff around, especially bikes and bike rodeo paraphernalia. Questions arose regarding what is best. Is it a vehicle that can accommodate bikes inside (a large van for instance) or a trailer (open or enclosed). Further questions included who would own the vehicle - which impacts insurance, storage of the vehicle, and how it would be used. One potential idea was to shift and bring the kids to the bikes instead of the other way around, although this could limit the program reach. Other possible ideas: e-bikes with hauling capacity, use of or ownership of expendable vanpool vehicles, partnership with Public Transit, and donated vehicles, and a question of whether that donation could also serve as the organization's local match for federal funding. See follow-up below.

Follow-up info about these issues:

Storage: There is no one-size-fits-all answer to secure storage; this issue is likely site dependent. If your sponsoring agency has space in secure storage facilities that is likely the best option. If not it may be that you can find a local government or school that would offer such storage. If the vehicle is covered or the storage site is covered it also allows you to store bikes and other items that you will be transporting at the same site.

Donations: The path of donating state property to SRTS includes criteria to offer it to tax-supported entities at fair market value first, then to auction and only then if no one buys at auction to donation. Tax-supported entities are not eligible for donation and it appears that four of the five agencies sponsoring SRTS are "Tax-Supported" and therefore not eligible. Your tax-supported entities would be eligible to purchase used equipment from the state at fair market value. Local donations can possibly be treated as match if a valid appraisal or valuation accompanies it; check with ITD first.

Purchase: If you would like to purchase equipment with TAP funds you may use up to \$5,000 to do so per the following: the allowable federal portion for equipment is up to \$5,000 (2 CFR 200.33, 200.48 general purpose & 200.89 special purpose equipment) ITD and FHWA must approve in advance. The process would be to identify the equipment and price and send to Ryan McDaniel who will confer with and ask for FHWA approval. If you decide to do this do not go forward with your purchase until you have received approval. If you have specific questions contact Ryan.

Grant: NHTSA funds can be used for purchasing equipment and vehicles if they are part of a project that has measurable results. The Office of Highway Safety (OHS) would welcome an application for FY21 funding to purchase a trailer for training purposes.

ISG will let you know when the application period opens.

Rent or Lease: This option relieves the need for storage, though you must budget for it and ensure that such a rental or lease is available when needed. However you would still need to have covered secure storage for any bikes or other equipment.