



## Local Road Safety Peer Exchange – Region 7

### *An RSPCB Peer Exchange*

### Introduction and Background

This report provides a summary of the proceedings of the Local Road Safety Peer Exchange held in Denver, Colorado from May 31 to June 1, 2012. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) sponsored the Peer Exchange in coordination with Region 7 Local and Tribal Technical Assistance Program. Region 7 states include: Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. The goal of the Peer Exchange was to facilitate the exchange of information on local road safety and explore opportunities for greater coordination and communication between FHWA, State Departments of Transportation (DOTs), Local Technical Assistance Program Centers (LTAPs), Tribal Technical Assistance Program Centers (TTAPs), and local officials/practitioners within the States in the region. The Peer Exchange covered four key topics:

- Improving local road safety data collection and analysis;
- Increasing local agencies participation in the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP);
- Encouraging local involvement in the development and implementation of the State's Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSPs); and
- Improving interagency collaboration.

Representatives from all Region 7 states participated in the event (see Appendix A for the complete participant list). Participants from each State were charged with developing action plans at the end of the workshop for their respective states to address the four key topics noted above. The action plans identify objectives to address each issue, as well as resources and champions to achieve those objectives.

### Peer Exchange Proceedings

The format of the Peer Exchange consisted of peer presentations on noteworthy practices, followed by breakout sessions and action planning on each of the four key topics (see Appendix B for the agenda).

Following each presentation session breakout groups consisting of a mix of representatives from different organizations were formed to discuss the topic. Groups were then convened by State to develop action plans to address local and rural road safety in their respective states. Action plans included:

- Strategies for consideration/implementation;
- Resources needed for implementation; and
- Champions to lead implementation.

### ABOUT THE PEER EXCHANGE

FHWA's RSPCB Peer-to-Peer Program (P2P) supports and sponsors peer exchanges and workshops hosted by agencies.

#### Date

May 31 – June 1, 2012

#### Hosts

Colorado Local Technical Assistance Program

#### Key Participants

Representatives from:

Colorado

Iowa

Kansas

Missouri

Montana

Nebraska

North Dakota

South Dakota

Wyoming

FHWA Office of Safety

U.S. DOT Volpe Center

**FHWA's Office of Safety  
sponsors P2P events.**

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## Welcome

The Division Administrator of the FHWA Colorado Division Office welcomed participants to the Peer Exchange and discussed FHWA safety goals, programs and opportunities. He emphasized FHWA's commitment to reducing the disproportionate share of fatalities and serious injuries that take place on rural roads through data-driven approaches to safety planning and investment.

The FHWA Office of Safety Local and Rural Road Safety Program Manager provided an overview of the workshop event and asked participants to introduce themselves and share their expectations. Expectations included:

- To share ideas and learn from others;
- To learn more about FHWA programs;
- To broaden perspectives and coordinate better with others; and
- To learn how to better support local governments.

## Presentations

### Safety Data Collection and Analysis - Noteworthy Practices

The first peer presentations covered the topic of Safety Data Collection and Analysis. Discussion focused on practices used by States to improve local road safety data collection, make local data more accessible and support the analysis of local data.

#### Nebraska: Local Roads Volume Data Collection

Representatives from the Nebraska LTAP and the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) provided an overview of local road safety data collection activities and issues in Nebraska. NDOR is pursuing several initiatives to enhance local roads data collection:

- Working with local law enforcement agencies to increase electronic reporting;
- Promoting the use of hand-held global positioning system devices; and
- Providing training, technical assistance and equipment to locals to collect information on local road traffic volume counts and speed data, as well as local road asset inventories.

#### Iowa: Local Road Data Collection and Analysis

Representatives from the Iowa LTAP described road safety data collection and analysis activities in Iowa. The Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) collects 80 percent of crash data electronically. Electronic data collection was made possible through a grant from Iowa's Safety Bureau, which allowed IDOT to purchase dashboard laptops for local law enforcement agencies. IDOT is now working to enhance data accessibility and analysis and is pursuing research on various safety countermeasures. Notable efforts currently underway in Iowa include:

- Developing accessible web-based crash data reporting and analysis tools such as:
  - Crash Mapping and Analysis Tool (CMAT);
  - Incident Mapping and Analysis Tool (IMAT); and
  - Safety Analysis, Visualization and Exploration Resource (SAVER)
- Using road safety audits to plan, implement and evaluate safety countermeasures;
- Researching crash mitigation methods on unpaved rural roads and traffic control at low-volume intersections; and
- Evaluating countermeasures such as Safety Edge and narrow width rumble strips on low volume rural roads.

#### FHWA: Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

The FHWA Office of Safety HSIP Program Manager gave an overview of the HSIP, a core Federal-aid program that can be used for infrastructure-related safety improvements on all public roads. HSIP is a Federally-funded, State-administered



program. The program supports strategic safety planning, data-driven roadway safety management, and infrastructure-related safety improvements. HSIP funds both site-level and systemic infrastructure investments identified in the SHSP.

HSIP includes several programs:

- The Railway-Highway Grade Crossing program;
- SHSP, a data-driven statewide plan that helps identify key needs and guides investment funding for both engineering improvements and behavioral safety programs;
- The High Risk Rural Road Program (HRRRP)<sup>1</sup>, a set aside from the HSIP for eligible rural roads.

FHWA encourages State and local officials to use a systemic approach to identify and address roadway safety issues. A systemic approach uses statewide data to associate different types and frequencies of crashes with different types and characteristics of transportation facilities. The approach allows States to address safety issues in a more proactive and cost-effective manner.

The HSIP Program Manager noted that LTAP/TTAPs can play an important role in helping local officials identify and develop safety projects and apply for HSIP and HRRRP funding. FHWA provides a variety of resources including web-based training, tools, manuals and peer exchanges that can help LTAP/TTAPs guide locals to HSIP funding.

### **Breakout Groups**

Table 1 summarizes the result of facilitated discussions on challenges and effective strategies associated with improving local road safety data collection and analysis.

**Table 1. Local Road Safety Data Collection and Analysis - Challenges and Noteworthy Practices**

Topic	Challenges	Noteworthy Practices
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of coordination between agencies that collect and analyze data</li><li>• Lack of knowledge, champions, resources among local agencies for collecting and using data</li><li>• Slow reporting/processing of data</li><li>• Crash data lacks important features</li><li>• Crash underreporting</li><li>• Local system is not well-defined</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide training to locals on data collection and analysis</li><li>• Promote and fund the use and streamlining of electronic records</li><li>• Improve local access to data</li><li>• Conduct traffic data collection audits to assess data collection processes</li><li>• Share data collection equipment</li></ul>

### **Strategic Highway Safety Plan Local Involvement – Noteworthy Practices**

Participants then heard from their peers regarding strategies to improve local involvement in strategic highway safety planning activities.

#### **Montana: Outreach to Locals**

The Assistant Public Works Director for Lewis and Clark County in Montana described the role locals play in Montana's SHSP process. Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) develops two safety planning documents with local support:

- The Community Transportation Safety Plan (CTSP) is a collaborative effort involving local and tribal governments and outlines a program to provide technical and financial assistance to local communities. The goal of the CTSP is to

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<sup>1</sup> Under MAP-21, the High Risk Rural Road Program set-aside is eliminated.



identify partnerships, prioritize projects, and develop educational and programmatic strategies to implement and monitor safety assistance to local communities.

- The Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP) is a data-driven statewide plan with emphasis areas across the 4Es (engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency services). Montana uses the CHSP to engage stakeholders across the State and identify risk areas.

Local officials participate in the CHSP planning process, but they face challenges identifying safety risks because they have limited access to data and lack the ability or funding to analyze data. Montana has recently started developing smaller county and community safety plans.

The Montana LTAP/TTAP plays a role in assisting locals improve transportation safety. Significant efforts of the Montana LTAP/TTAP include:

- Participating with locals to conduct road safety audits and collect and analyze safety data.
- Hosting annual conferences to bring together local safety stakeholders.
- Helping local governments access Federal resources and learn about national campaigns such as Towards Zero Deaths.

### **Kansas: Local Coalitions**

Representatives from the Kansas DOT and LTAP described several safety practices that were of great interest to peer exchange participants.

- Kansas has formed a Local Road Safety Support Team including representatives from the 4Es to develop and implement an updated SHSP.
- The Local Road Safety Support Team is working to form local safety coalitions modeled after the Destination Safe Coalition, a partnership between local agencies involved in improving transportation system safety.
- Kansas' updated SHSP includes local system safety statistics and specific activities and tools to address crashes on the local system.
- KDOT revamped its HRRRP to expand the types of improvements eligible for funding.
- The Data Support Team to the SHSP is working to improve the accessibility, accuracy and completeness of local roads data.
- KDOT has established a Federal funds exchange program, which allows local governments to exchange Federally-allocated funds from the Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Highway Bridge Program (HBP) for State funds to accelerate project delivery.

### **Breakout Groups**

Table 2 summarizes the result of facilitated discussions on the challenges of local agency involvement in the SHSP process, strategies to address challenges and priorities.



**Table 2. Local Agency involvement in the SHSP - Challenges and Noteworthy Practices**

Topic	Challenges	Noteworthy Practices
SHSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not all locals are invited to participate</li> <li>• Invited locals may not participate</li> <li>• Lack of understanding of benefits/incentives of local participation</li> <li>• Lack of resources for locals to participate</li> <li>• Need for clear local/tribal role</li> <li>• Lack of policies, skills, and resources to implement proactive, systemic approaches</li> <li>• Lack of leadership to champion locals</li> <li>• Lack of local safety data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain benefits of diverse, local participation</li> <li>• Reach out to key local stakeholders</li> <li>• Get MPOs involved</li> <li>• Brand and promote the SHSP statewide</li> <li>• Hold safety summits and invite locals/elected officials/tribes</li> <li>• Use a consultant or LTAP to develop the SHSP</li> <li>• Evaluate implementation of the SHSP to promote local involvement</li> <li>• Provide training on systemic approach</li> <li>• Consider a Federal funding exchange that exchanges Federal funds intended for local projects with State funds</li> <li>• Establish local road safety coalitions</li> </ul>

## Local Agency Participation in the HSIP – Noteworthy Practices

The next set of peer presentations focused on how agencies are improving utilization of the HSIP for projects that address local safety issues.

### Missouri: Local Involvement in HSIP

A traffic safety engineer from the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) discussed MoDOT's approach to safety. Traffic fatalities in Missouri peaked in 2005 and have since declined. Traffic fatality rates in Missouri are now less than the national average. MoDOT has identified 14 counties in Missouri where two-thirds of the fatalities on local roads have occurred. Many of those fatalities occur at curves and local intersections. In response, MoDOT has adopted a data-driven approach to addressing local safety. Two effective efforts were highlighted:

- Installing chevrons on curves to provide better guidance to drivers; and
- Using an advisory committee and public hearings to identify priority traffic corridors and redesign intersections in those corridors.

The presenter described MoDOT's approach to one priority corridor, US 54, where MoDOT is redesigning high-risk intersections.

### Wyoming: Rural Road Safety Program

A program manager from Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) described how Wyoming uses HRRRP to fund local safety projects. Wyoming LTAP has worked with WYDOT to develop and implement a methodology to identify, fund and administer local safety projects. The methodology uses ten years of crash data and the results of windshield surveys to develop weighting factors for the roadway environment. The factors are combined into crash and geometric ratings which are then used to prioritize high-risk sites. The methodology has helped WYDOT identify low-cost and high-impact projects like signs, striping, rumble strips and delineation projects. For example, Wyoming has used HRRRP funding to implement a statewide sign program to fund new safety signs for local agencies.

### Colorado: Allocating Funds to Locals

Representatives from Colorado DOT (CDOT) explained how CDOT helps local agencies access HSIP funding. CDOT helps local agencies access HSIP funding through a streamlined application process that uses a one page application form. Local agencies provide CDOT with the location's accident history, a description of the proposed project, and the estimated timing



and cost of the proposed project. CDOT then analyzes the crash data for that locality. They use the safety performance function methodology to determine high-crash locations and perform benefit-cost analysis to determine which projects should be funded. CDOT has funded a variety of intersection and roadway segment improvements for municipalities using this methodology.

### **Breakout Groups**

Table 3 summarizes the result of facilitated discussions on the challenges of local agency involvement in the HSIP process and strategies to address challenges and priorities.

**Table 3. Local Agency Participation in the HSIP - Challenges and Noteworthy Practices**

Topic	Challenges	Noteworthy Practices
HSIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty meeting Federal Aid requirements</li> <li>• Must compete with State projects</li> <li>• Lack of awareness of program</li> <li>• Need for capable staff to connect locals to HSIP</li> <li>• Project development processes take a long time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a flexible, collaborative funding process</li> <li>• Use LTAPs to promote and provide training on HSIP</li> <li>• Bundle multiple projects</li> <li>• Fund systemic improvements</li> <li>• Screen non-State network data</li> <li>• Conduct RSAs to identify and assess projects</li> <li>• Use flex-funds to meet key non-infrastructure needs</li> <li>• Locals can hire consultants to design and manage projects</li> <li>• Federal funding exchanges</li> </ul>

### **Interagency Collaboration/Coordination – Noteworthy Practices**

The final peer discussion topic focused on interagency collaboration and coordination. Participants discussed ways to improve communication and enhance cooperation among local and state agencies.

### **LTAP Safety Program Performance**

Representatives from the FHWA Technology Transfer Partnership Program presented an overview of the activities and accomplishments of LTAP/TTAP Centers across the country. LTAP/TTAPs provide technical assistance to local agencies in four general areas: safety, workforce development, worker safety, and infrastructure management. The current efforts of the LTAP/TTAPs align with many of the priorities of FHWA and the needs of local safety officials expressed by LTAP/TTAP representatives at the Peer Exchange. The evaluation data collected by the LTAP/TTAP clearinghouse demonstrate that there are further opportunities to increase support for including:

- Road safety audits;
- Localized safety plan development efforts;
- Crash data access and analysis; and
- Integration of local agencies and LTAP expertise in the SHSP process.





## Breakout Groups

Table 4 summarizes the result of facilitated discussions on the challenges, opportunities and noteworthy practices associated with collaboration and coordination between agencies for improving local road safety.

**Table 4. Local Road Safety Collaboration and Coordination - Challenges and Noteworthy Practices**

Topic	Challenges	Noteworthy Practices
<b>Coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data is collected for specific purposes by specific agencies who don't consider how others might find that data useful</li> <li>Difficult to maintain momentum following peer exchanges</li> <li>Lack of champions at all levels</li> <li>Lack of staff and time</li> <li>Political issues can interfere with collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host regional DOT meetings and invite LTAP and locals to attend</li> <li>Use contracts to extend staff and conduct outreach and training</li> <li>Generate regional coalitions of local governments and agencies</li> <li>Include stakeholders from outside the transportation field such as health agencies and advocacy organizations</li> <li>Use LTAP as a liaison with locals</li> <li>Formalize relationships through memoranda of agreement</li> </ul>

## Action Plan Highlights

Each State group was tasked with developing an overall Action Plan encompassing the strategies they had identified to improve their local road safety program, resources to be employed in the implementation of identified strategies and a champion to assist in moving forward. Representatives from each State reported out to the group the results of their action planning sessions.

Key actions included:

- Improving data collection through electronic reporting;
- Providing training for local agencies on data analysis techniques and the use of data tools;
- Improving access to data for local agencies;
- Providing technical assistance through LTAP Centers – data analysis, project identification and application;
- Providing resources to LTAP Center for a Safety Circuit Rider;
- Using Road Safety Audits to identify projects on local roads to use HSIP funds;
- Investigating the applicability of a funds exchange program;
- Dedicating a specific percentage of HSIP funds for local road safety projects;
- Streamlining project delivery process;
- Encouraging local agency participation in SHSP;
- Building local and rural safety coalitions;
- Encouraging the development of Local Road Safety Plans;
- Reaching out to local agencies through State DOT Districts and Rural Planning Organizations; and
- Collaborating with behavioral safety stakeholders.

## Feedback and Suggestions

In their evaluations, many participants stated that they particularly appreciated the opportunity to get to know each other better and exchange ideas. However, several suggested that greater involvement from FHWA Division Offices or local agencies would have been valuable. Participants were excited to learn about innovative strategies adopted in other States such as local safety coalitions and State/Federal funding exchanges. They wanted to learn more about how to:

- Accelerate the project delivery process;
- Improve local access to Federal funding; and



- Engage emergency medical services and law enforcement.

Many participants planned to implement the new ideas they learned at the peer exchange in their own States. Most importantly, participants were able to work together across agencies to develop action plans for their respective States.





## Appendix A: Event Registrants

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## Appendix B: Agenda

### LOCAL ROAD SAFETY PEER EXCHANGE AGENDA

Crowne Plaza Hotel Denver International Airport

*Thursday, May 31, 2012*

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 8:00 am  | Registration/Coffee  |
| 8:15 am  | Welcoming Remarks – John Cater, CO FHWA Division Administrator   |
|          | Workshop Overview – Rosemarie Anderson, FHWA Office of Safety  |
| 8:30 am  | Participant Introductions  |
| 9:00 am  | Presentations - Data Collection on Local Roads <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Nebraska: Local Roads Volume Data Collection</li><li>○ Iowa: Local Road Data Collection and Analysis</li><li>○ FHWA: Highway Safety Improvement Program</li></ul> |
| 10:00 am | Break  |
| 10:15 am | Breakout Groups – Improving Local Road Data Collection and Analysis  |
| 11:45 am | Lunch  |
| 12:30 pm | Presentations - Strategic Highway Safety Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Montana: Outreach to Locals</li><li>○ Kansas: Local Coalitions</li></ul>  |
| 1:15 pm  | Breakout Groups – SHSP and Local Involvement Challenges  |
| 2:45 pm  | Break  |
| 3:00 pm  | Presentations - Highway Safety Improvement Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Missouri: Local Involvement in HSIP</li><li>○ Wyoming: Rural Road Safety Program</li><li>○ Colorado: Allocating Funds to Locals</li></ul>                     |
| 3:45 pm  | Breakout Groups – HSIP Project Selection and Implementation  |
| 5:00 pm  | Wrap Up and Adjourn  |



## LOCAL ROAD SAFETY PEER EXCHANGE AGENDA

Crowne Plaza Hotel Denver International Airport

*Friday, June 1, 2012*

- 8:00 am Welcome and Logistics
- 8:15 am Recap from Day 1
- 8:45 am Roundup of LTAP Safety Data Program Performance
  - Cameron Ishaq and Jeffrey Zaharewicz – FHWA-LTAP Clearinghouse
- 9:15 am Breakout Groups – Challenges and Opportunities with Collaboration
- 10:00 am Break
- 10:15 am Report Out
- 10:45 am Lessons Learned – Action Plans
- 11:15 am Report Out and Next Steps
- 12:00 pm Wrap Up and Adjourn