







How MPOs are Handling TAP and SRTS: Interview Findings

July, 2013

Introduction

The two year Federal surface transportation legislation, MAP-21, enacted in July 2012, gave regional governments new responsibility by ensuring that a portion of the funds in the new Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) would be allocated directly by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in large urban areas. (For more details about the program, see www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm.) The new program consolidates three long-standing programs, and proponents of the former Recreational Trails, Transportation Enhancement (TE), and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs are watching closely to see how the new program, with new rules and more constrained funding, plays out at the State, regional, and local levels.

The TAP suballocates a portion of funds to large urbanized areas (those representing populations over 200,000), with the exact amount based on population size. The authorization directs them to set up a competitive selection process to fund eligible projects. Most of the project types have to do with bicycle and pedestrian facilities, however some landscaping, scenic overlooks, and other projects are eligible. The full range of SRTS activities that was eligible under SAFETEA-LU (infrastructure and noninfrastructure) is eligible under the new TAP.

To discover how MPOs are using their new role, particularly for supporting safe walking and bicycling to school, the National Center for SRTS conducted interviews with staff members at 18 MPOs, and additional information was gathered by reviewing documents and through interviews with State SRTS Coordinators and national experts. The interviews, which took 45 minutes to an hour, included questions about what the MPOs were doing to prepare for their new role in allocating these Federal funds and how SRTS factored into their plans. The respondents were also asked about their use and awareness of the resources of the National Center for SRTS, but these responses will be addressed separately. The MPOs were selected for contact based on geographical diversity, and to some degree on past engagement with SRTS activities. They represent all regions of the continental United States, as well as MPOs representing large urbanized areas and those representing somewhat smaller population centers (all met the 200,000 population threshold). See Acknowledgments for a listing of the MPOs, States, and experts contacted and Appendix A for the interview guide.

With its small sample size, this report is not intended to be a comprehensive review of how MPOs are handling this new program, or a listing of best practices. For most of the findings the MPOs are not identified and responses are reported in the aggregate to fulfill the paper's intent to focus on range of approaches being used as well as the challenges faced by MPOs. This is a jumping off point for a discussion of the implication of these findings for the success of regional SRTS programs.

Timing: It is still early

Most of the 18 MPOs who participated in interviews (in April and May of 2013) were still very much in the process of setting up their programs. Some were unable to fully answer the questions that were part of the scan. When we asked how far they had progressed in creating a new program, the most common answer (from eight of the 18 MPOs) was that they were in the preliminary planning stages. Five of the 18 MPOs had issued applications, but this did not necessarily mean they had finalized their selection process and/or review committees. Three of the MPOs had taken almost no action, because they were waiting for direction from their State DOTs and/or from FHWA. Two of the MPOs had already programmed all of their TAP funds by choosing to use the money to finish ongoing TE projects.

Part of this delay can be attributed to the transition from SAFETEA-LU, the last Federal surface transportation authorization. A number of MPOs have agreed to requests from their State DOT to use their portion of the TAP to complete projects that received initial funding under the old TE program. For example, one MPO is using its TAP funds to finish up ongoing TE projects through 2016 and the funding has already been spoken for in two of the other MPOs interviewed. In other regions, the first year of the program will be used to advance TE projects. In one region, the MPO put out a call for proposals for the program, but subsequently learned that the State DOT had planned to use all of the funds for 2013-14 on in-progress TE projects. In addition, a number of States are still spending down SRTS funds from SAFETEA-LU. As a result, not all MPOs see an immediate need to set up a new project selection system.

The short time frame of MAP-21 is presenting a challenge for some MPOs, which typically program funds three to five years in advance. Some MPOs are issuing calls for proposals that cover a single year or the two-year bill cycle; others are assuming the program will continue in future years and are building funding programs that will extend into 2015 and beyond.

Program approach

While the TAP appears fairly straightforward, the MPOs contacted for this scan indicate that regional governments have varied attitudes and approaches to the new program. The scan identified at least three distinct approaches to administering the TAP. Six MPOs were creating new funding programs, four were integrating the TAP money into their existing funding program structure, and eight were following the lead of their State. Variations exist within these three approaches, particularly in how they are including (or excluding) SRTS projects.

• Stand-alone TAP applications. The MPOs creating new stand-alone TAP programs are focusing on creating new committees to help distribute funds to member jurisdictions and coming up with new project selection criteria. These MPOs are hewing to the parameters of the Federal program, but some are restricting applications to a shorter list of project types; for example some MPOs will only fund bicycle-pedestrian projects and SRTS projects. Only two of the six MPOs planning this approach as of the writing of this report had issued TAP applications or calls for proposals at the time of the interviews. One MPO, the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) is particularly notable for its enthusiastic embrace of the new program. It restructured its committees and set aside 10 percent of the funds for SRTS projects using a separate application process. Another MPO was considering a set aside, but decided instead to create a single application. The MPO plans to meet with SRTS stakeholders again after the selection of 2014 projects to decide whether to modify the process or create a separate selection system. None of the other MPOs interviewed said they had decided to set aside TAP money for SRTS. (However, some States are setting aside funds to continue a State-level program.) Most of the other MPOs in this category say they will invite SRTS

applicants to compete for funds, and may allow a modified application process for noninfrastructure projects, but they had not gotten far enough to be able to articulate potential selection criteria that would be specific to SRTS applicants. Nonetheless, some MPOs are reaching out to encourage SRTS applications, including the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), which held a half-day "SEMCOG University" education session on SRTS.

- Integrated TAP applications. Four of the MPOs have decided to integrate TAP into their existing system of regionally-specific funding categories, or into their unified call for proposals (and more may head in this direction). For these MPOs, the Federal funds they receive are just one of a number of sources of funds that are mixed and matched to support projects that meet well-defined regional transportation goals. The MPOs in this category see TAP less as a new funding program and more as simply a different set of rules they must abide by in their creative use of Federal funds. These MPOs tended to be less enthusiastic about using TAP to support traditional, SAFETEA-LU-style SRTS programs. For example, one MPO noted that it has a strong complete streets policy that requires incorporation of infrastructure for all users in almost all projects. They plan to use TAP funds to support their pressing need to fund bicycle and pedestrian capital projects. Infrastructure projects that serve schools will receive extra points in their project-selection system, but they expect to encourage SRTS applicants planning noninfrastructure activities to apply to the existing, strong State SRTS program, which is expected to continue much as before.
- Following the lead of the State. The rest of the MPOs interviewed for this project are following the lead of their State Departments of Transportation in setting up the TAP program. Two have already decided to allow all of the MPO-allocated TAP funds to be used to finish outstanding projects originally funded under the State-administered TE program; one MPO was working on creating an application process, but then acquiesced to the State's request to use all the funding to cover TE projects. Other MPOs may use a unified State application, and will then make the final selection within their metropolitan area by using new or existing committees. In some of these MPOs, their final direction is unclear: they are waiting for the State DOT to act first. This last group of MPOs sees little value in setting up a complex selection process for such small sums of money for a short-term program. For example, one MPO indicated less interest in setting up its own program and would prefer to continue its existing collaborative process with the State DOT. They are hoping the State will continue its SRTS program.

SRTS as part of TAP

These interviews made clear that it is too early to determine how SRTS projects may fare in the MPO TAP selection process. Most of the respondents said they hoped that SRTS projects would be competitive for funding under their programs, but they simply didn't know if that would hold true. In most cases the MPOs are treating TAP primarily as a continuation of the TE program, and they have not yet determined how to integrate SRTS.

Most MPO respondents said they are strongly supportive of the concept of Safe Routes to School, and this is in line with practices common at MPOs across the country. It is common for MPOs to serve on committees making decisions about Federal SRTS funding, and many MPOs have established pedestrian and bicyclist safety as a key regionwide goal. Several of the respondents to this survey said the tremendous popularity of the SAFETEA-LU program among their member jurisdictions is driving them to ensure SRTS projects are included in their administration of TAP. While a few MPOs surveyed have had not been involved with the Federal SRTS program, most others have encouraged participation by developing educational materials or conducting events; helping schools with applications; or conducting

crash analyses or school travel plans to support applications. Furthermore, a few of these MPOs have taken a leading role in developing regionwide SRTS strategic plans, and some have used other funding sources to support SRTS; any project eligible under TAP, including SRTS projects, also is eligible under the federal Surface Transportation Program (STP).

Despite this background of support, respondents from the MPOs saw significant challenges to incorporating SRTS into the new TAP. These are discussed in the section that follows.

Issues and Challenges

Program guidance

A number of MPOs (and State coordinators) mentioned that the guidance governing TAP will make it more difficult for them to fund SRTS projects through the program.

Financial restrictions

The modest amount of funding being suballocated to the MPOs through the program was described as a significant barrier, particularly since SRTS projects must compete with general bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure needs. Funding for the overall TAP program is almost 30 percent lower than the totals for the former TE, SRTS, and Recreational Trails programs. This smaller pot of money is divided further: the State will administer more than half of the program, which includes "any area" funds and allocations designated for smaller urbanized areas. The law gives urbanized areas with populations over 200,000 responsibility for administering their own programs. In the end, the final allocation available to large MPOs can be quite small.

For example, under previous surface transportation authorization, Nashua, New Hampshire's Regional Planning Commission was active in serving on committees to help the State allocate funds for all three of the former programs. However under MAP-21, the MPO initially expected that its portion of the TAP may be less than \$100,000 a year (since this survey, the amount has been determined to be \$208,000). For the Wilmington, DE Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO), an MPO that spans two States, the Maryland portion of funding amounts to \$45,000 per year — a miniscule amount in terms of transportation funding. In addition, early on some States indicated they would stipulate that the "any area" funds would be reserved for applicants *outside* of MPO regions; the final program guidance issued by FHWA in June 2013 clarifies that jurisdictions *inside* MPOs should be eligible to compete for these funds. Our interviews took place prior to this clarification, and no respondents discussed any plans to compete for State-administered TAP funding. For some MPOs all of these indicators point to an extremely limited pot of money, and that has meant that organizing the program has remained on the back burner.

Another financial hurdle anticipated by the MPOs is the new requirement that SRTS applicants must supply matching funds. (The program under SAFETEA-LU was funded at 100 percent.) Most are concerned that this will be difficult for schools which do not have a ready source of such funds, as well as those that already view the application process as arduous. It should be noted that this may represent a significant barrier for schools in low-income areas. In a few places the State or MPO is finding a way to lower or cover the match for TAP-funded SRTS projects. For example, in Ohio, Michigan, and Florida toll revenues will be used to cover the match.

Statutory burdens

TAP requires that applicants operate under the same requirements that govern large scale Federal highway projects, and this means a great deal of paperwork and approvals. Some MPO respondents questioned whether small SRTS projects would be worth the effort. Some MPOs, such as the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) already employ a strategy of reducing regulatory burdens by reserving Federal funds for larger projects, while using local funds for smaller projects. They expect to do the same in regard to TAP. This strategy is more appropriate for MPOs which have access to non-Federal financial resources; San Diego has significant local tax revenue for regional projects, as well as access to California's State-level Safe Routes to School program. Historically, the State program has distributed three times more money in the region than the Federal program.

TAP narrowed the eligible program applicants, and this was expressed as a concern by some survey respondents. Nonprofit entities can no longer apply directly for funds to support SRTS projects, unless they qualify under one of the other eligible categories. Some State coordinators felt this could make applications more difficult, because nonprofit organizations have provided capacity that is sometimes lacking in schools and school districts. (The final guidance issued after these interviews were conducted clarifies that nonprofits are still eligible to participate as partners with eligible grant recipients). While schools are eligible grant recipients, some MPOs are also requiring that schools partner with local government bodies in order to apply to the program. The MPOs themselves are not eligible funding recipients and so must partner with another entity if they are interested in using the funds to create any regionwide SRTS planning, education, and evaluation initiatives.

Crossing State boundaries

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) mentioned another administrative challenge: the difficulty of running the program with different rules for Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The MWCOG staff spent a considerable amount of time negotiating to create its program, and has separate program applications for each State. In contrast, another multi-State MPO, the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) for the Kansas City region, is integrating the processes of the two States, thereby creating one process for applying for the funds. MARC is forming a new Active Transportation Programming Committee (ATP) that will make programming recommendations not only for TAP, including SRTS-type applications, but also for bicycle and pedestrian-related Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding.

Noninfrastructure program elements

SRTS is set apart from most TAP-eligible projects by its emphasis on activities to educate and encourage parents and students, as well as those enforcing traffic safety laws and evaluating the project's impact. The SAFETEA-LU funded SRTS program required that 10 to 30 percent of the program's funds go to noninfrastructure activities. Under TAP, these activities are not mandated, but are still eligible. In fact, they are the only noninfrastructure activities allowed under TAP. Only one MPO included in this scan, NIRPC, had made a clear decision to support noninfrastructure projects by maintaining the 70-30 project split. A few MPOs surveyed are creating a separate noninfrastructure application and exploring ways to ensure that such projects can compete effectively, but most MPOs surveyed say they don't expect to fund noninfrastructure activities through TAP. Respondents cited the pressing need to build infrastructure; others suggested that it isn't worth jumping through Federal funding hoops for the small amounts needed for education programs. Yet, almost all of the respondents acknowledged the value of promotional and evaluation activities, and said they would be searching for other ways to fund these aspects of the program. WILMAPCO expects to use its planning funds to help with event support; other MPOs hope that universities will continue to provide existing noninfrastructure programmatic support.

Other MPOs said they expected the State SRTS program to continue to fund noninfrastructure projects, or they mentioned the use of other Federal money, such as Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds, air quality funds (CMAQ) or general transportation funds (STP) for such projects.

Evaluation

The SRTS program has put a strong emphasis on data collection, and many States have required applicants to conduct before- and after- student travel tallies and parent attitude surveys which have been processed and recorded by the National Center for Safe Routes to School. Although data collection is often a primary MPO function, the SRTS data collection system has been handled by the schools and the States, and few MPOs have participated in it. Some of the respondents were not aware of the data resources offered by the National Center for SRTS. However, some suggested that given the impending requirement to establish clear regional transportation performance measures, they would investigate the potential to use SRTS data sources for such measures.

An issue of scale

MPO planners are struggling to fit their understanding of the SRTS program into a regionwide framework. With some exceptions, SRTS has been a program in which individual schools have applied to the State DOT for funds, and most of the MPO respondents viewed it through this lens. Some MPOs are unclear on whether their organizations, which focus on coordinating local governments to achieve regionwide goals, can or should, manage a program that focuses on serving individual schools. Respondents said they have very limited contact with school districts, which often have boundaries that do not coincide with those of the MPO member jurisdictions. In some MPOs, many small school districts operate independently of local governments, and the MPO staff worried that they would not have the capacity to help these many small districts or individual schools with the application process. Because of this, some felt the State and local entities already involved should continue to run the program. However, some MPO respondents see the need for a regional role in creating a program that works with school districts to prioritize schools according to need, in part to avoid the inequitable funding that can occur if only well-funded schools with active parents are able to apply and compete. The Miami-Dade County MPO already has a history of participating in the program in this way. The San Diego MPO is developing a regional SRTS strategy that takes equity into account. The Las Vegas MPO has expressed a strong interest in including equity measures in program selection criteria, and plans to work with and coordinate with a new SRTS coordinator hired by the school district.

Another perspective

Several of the people interviewed from the MPOs have a different view of Safe Routes to School. While our questions centered on the Federal SRTS *program*, they regard safe routes to school as a *principle*, and one they are committed to pursuing. While their efforts may not look like the "5E" approach used under SAFETEA-LU, they are funding their own SRTS initiatives, supporting strategic planning to ensure a more effective and equitable program, and integrating children's needs with other regionwide transportation goals. A few examples are provided below:

• The Nashville MPO considers its Active Transportation program as a primary way to create safe routes to school: most projects funded have helped provide school access, and proximity to schools is a primary project selection criterion. The region set aside money from their Federal Surface Transportation Program funds for the program with both infrastructure and noninfrastructure components. Since it also provides safe routes to parks, community centers, and other destinations, it garners more support.

- The Miami-Dade County MPO has worked with its large countywide school district to create a strategic, crash-based approach to choosing schools to receive SRTS support. They have cooperated with a regionwide WalkSafe education program run by the University of Miami, which has shown impressive results in reducing child pedestrian injuries. But the MPO is concerned about the administrative burden of a Federal program that requires a detailed application procedure aimed at individual schools.
- As previously mentioned, the MPOs serving San Diego, California, and Columbus, Ohio, take a
 complete streets approach to all of their transportation projects. Both place a high priority on
 safety around schools, using a variety of State and Federal funds to support SRTS activities. Both
 have also made commitments to improve the health of citizens of all ages by increasing physical
 activity. Neither limits their view of the future of SRTS to its eligibility under the TAP.

Conclusions

These interviews show that the challenges of incorporating SRTS into TAP are balanced by a new opportunity for regional governments to directly address children's safety on the way to school.

Safe Routes to School elicits strong interest from counties and cities, and the MPOs that serve them are aware and supportive of the concept. In most places they have not, in the past, had a formal role to play. The TAP gives them that role, but its effective use depends upon growing beyond the common perception of SRTS as a small-scale program rooted in individual schools.

MPOs have the capacity to help 'scale up' Safe Routes to School into a movement that has a significant, regionwide impact on child safety and physical activity. They can be a bridge between the local application of safety measures, and the need to show a regional and national impact on child health and safety. MPOs have much to offer the SRTS movement; specifically:

- Their focus on strategic planning and data collection means they can help school districts and their member jurisdictions rationally choose the schools most in need of safety interventions instead of depending on the enthusiasm of the schools that have the resources and capacity to fill out an application. The regional governments of Miami-Dade County and San Diego are leading the way in this approach, and Miami-Dade has also used SRTS funds to support a regionwide, evidence based safety curriculum called WalkSafe. This comprehensive approach is clearly working: Miami-Dade County has seen a 68 percent decrease in the number of child pedestrians hit and seriously injured by cars since 2001.
- They are in the forefront of the federally-mandated move toward more accountability to specific outcomes. They are in the position to take the strong evaluation component of SRTS, with its wealth of classroom-level travel data and parent attitude surveys, and scale it up into a model of performance measurement. A partnership between MPOs, schools, and SRTS proponents could create a compelling new data resource, one unmatched in the transportation sector.
- Their detailed understanding of Federal and regional funding sources means they are in a good position to find ways to augment the funding available through TAP with money that is more conducive to creating an equitable regionwide program structure. Some MPOs are already

looking to fund nonmotorized and SRTS programs through CMAQ funding, the Surface Transportation Program, or the HSIP. A few MPOs can draw from regional funding sources, such as bond measures. If they are used to create regionwide programs, they can benefit from the economies of scale and provide unified educational and promotional resources that benefit all schools, whether or not they are TAP grant recipients.

- They can integrate child pedestrian and bicycle safety with complimentary programs that can vastly expand the reach of SRTS. A few MPOs have created a schools component to their Transportation Demand Management program, creating "Schoolpools" and other activities to change the school commute. The Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments is integrating its TAP with its Transportation/Land Use Connection program, to focus resources into regional activity centers. In MPOs such as MORPC in Columbus, Ohio, a Complete Streets commitment means MPOs are in a position to direct more general-purpose transportation dollars into creating safer school infrastructure, perhaps freeing up dedicated SRTS funding to support the other four "Es." They are also an ideal forum for addressing the thorny issue of where schools are built; their land use planning function can be an avenue for prioritizing school sites with better bicycle and pedestrian access. This is the case in San Diego, where the regional commitment to SRTS is interpreted as including an effort to do a better job of choosing sites for new schools.
- The MPOs can also be leaders in making SRTS part of a larger commitment to creating 'safe routes to everywhere,' as demonstrated in the approach being taken by Nashville, Columbus, and San Diego. The MPOs in these regions have taken the initiative to develop an overarching regional vision for safe transportation and complete streets. The staff expertise in long-range planning and citizen engagement make the MPO the perfect avenue for such a big-picture realignment of transportation goals.

These potential avenues for MPO involvement in creating safe routes to school have been explored in only a few regions. They may not be pursued in regions that continue to hold a narrow view of SRTS as part of the Federal TAP. It is clear that TAP will, by itself, be a limited resource for improving safety around schools during the implementation of MAP-21. For some MPOs, the short timeframe and modest allocation available in the two-year authorization has not inspired them to integrate SRTS into their programs. Nonetheless, the legislation brings a new player to the SRTS table by giving MPOs new decision-making power over SRTS funding. The MPOs that see the long-term potential for the program are already looking for best practices in project selection and in evaluation. MPOs that see the SRTS program as a way to accomplish regional goals are welcoming the opportunity to engage school districts, parents, and students as stakeholders in the regional transportation discussion.

Acknowledgments

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MPOs:

Atlanta Regional Commission

Denver Regional Council of Governments

East Central Wisconsin RPC

Maricopa Association of Governments (Phoenix AZ)

Metropolitan Council (Twin Cities, MN)

Miami-Dade MPO

Mid-America Regional Council (Kansas City, MO)

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (Columbus)

Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NH)

Nashville area MPO (TN)

New Orleans Regional Planning Commission

Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (Hammond/Gary)

Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (Las Vegas)

San Diego Association of Governments

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (Detroit)

Spokane Regional Transportation Council (WA)

Washington Metro Council of Governments

Wilmington Area Planning Council (Delaware)

State SRTS Coordinators:

Bryan Armstrong, Michigan

Charlotte Claybrooke, Washington

Dawn Foster, California

Tim Mitchell, Minnesota (Bicycle and Pedestrian Section Director)

Kathy Ridnour, Iowa

Rob Williams, Virginia

Julie Walcoff, Ohio

Other experts consulted:

Wesley Blount, Federal Highway Administration

Jill Chamberlain, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota Safe Routes Network

Christopher Douwes, Federal Highway Administration

Darren Flusche, League of American Bicyclists

Tham Nguyen, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Margo Pedroso, Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Robbie Webber, State Smart Transportation Initiative

State Smart Transportation Initiative members during their conference, "Making the Most of the Transportation Alternatives Program," May 7-8, 2013.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

CONTACT NAME:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Prior to each interview, we will look on the MPO's home page to see if they have issued a TAP application and review it; if so this will shorten and sharpen the interview.

SRTS MPO Scan questions:

The National Center for Safe Routes to School is conducting interviews with staff from large Metropolitan Planning Organizations to assess their plans for administering their portion of the new Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The interview will focus on how the MPOs intend to incorporate Safe Routes to School projects into the program, and will also ask about resources that would be useful to you while developing this new program.

- A. **Primary Questions about SRTS and TAP intentions** (with follow-up questions)
- Has your MPO been involved in any Safe Routes to School activities in the past, and if so, what are they?
 - Do any of your planning documents incorporate SRTS goals?
 - o Does your MPO have a relationship with the State SRTS Program?
 - Have you worked together in the past?
 - Do you have plans to work together under MAP-21?
- What are your plans for administering the Transportation Alternatives Program?
 - At what stage is your MPO in planning for the program? (Could range from already having applications material out the door, or just starting planning)
 - Who at your MPO will be administering TAP? (may find out here that the State will still be the primary implementer, or that there is someone else we need to talk to)
 - How will projects be selected? Do you have applications you can send us? [If not found during website scan]

SRTS programs are eligible for TAP funding. This is now the only type of TAP project that is eligible for noninfrastructure use. Specifically, funds can be used for 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.

- Do you plan to incorporate the opportunity to fund noninfrastructure activities into your funding process, and if so, how so?
 - What role might your MPO play in helping member jurisdictions launch comprehensive programs, particularly those with an emphasis on education, encouragement, or evaluation?
- What barriers do you perceive to incorporating SRTS into your regional work? [make suggestions if they are vague]:
 - Completely unaware of the program, the amount awarded, and/or the deadline for spending it

- Was unaware that TAP could be used for SRTS
- o Plan to use TAP to fulfill backlog of infrastructure projects
- No priority among our members for SRTS
- o SRTS is too small-scale for our attention at a regional level
- o other

[If the informants are planning on incorporating SRTS into their programs, or are intrigued at the potential for doing so, ask the questions in section B: If they are not planning or interested in incorporating SRTS into their programs, move on to section C.]

B. How the Center's resources can be useful to administration of the TAP program.*

The National Center for Safe Routes to School has been providing support for the Safe Routes to School Program since its inception. The center provides a number of resources and wants to find out if any of these resources would be helpful as you roll out your MPO-level TAP programs.

One set of resources are aimed at developing and running a SRTS program, and includes:

- program guides and best practices on what other MPOs are doing (including the report from this project)
- event support for walk and bike to school days (refer to websites)
- application templates
- training webinars and workshops
- Would any of these resources be useful to your MPO? Which ones? [explain resources further if necessary; have samples on hand]

Another set of resources center around supporting local travel data collection and tracking announced projects. Let me tell you a little about each and ask for your reactions.

- 1. The National Center developed a data system to help local program planning which includes two parts: (1) data collection forms, consisting of a classroom tally of travel modes and a parent survey, and (2) data processing services. Right now, more than half of States require communities to use the Center's forms. Communities can either enter their own data from the completed forms or send them to the National Center for entry. Local programs receive a summary report that explains the results of their collected information. SRTS State Coordinators have access to this data and the system could allow MPO-level access to local data, which the Center issues as Travel Talley reports, [see excerpt from Travel Talley] which enables assessment of behavior before and after a SRTS initiative. The parent survey is filled out by parents aimed at determining their attitudes, concerns, and interests around their children walking to school.
 - Would this data service be useful to your MPO? How could you envision using it?
- 2. The National Center hosts a database and a map with announced funding (show map with MPO display). The map allows viewing of project locations and some general information. It requires someone to provide the information. The value has been that people can understand where their transportation dollars are going without having to wait for formal obligation.

 Would this database and map be useful to your MPO? How could you envision using them?

If yes: This requires sending announced project information to the National Center. Is there someone at your MPO who would be willing to do this? Is it more likely to be done at the State level? Would it be easier to report if it included all TAP projects, not just SRTS?

 Are there any resources I have not mentioned that would be helpful to you in setting up and running a regional SRTS program?

C. Barriers to inclusion of SRTS in program selection

- Why have your plans so far for the TAP not considered inclusion of a SRTS component?
- What might motivate you to consider including SRTS in your TAP program?

| * The respo | nses to the | questions in | n this sectior | n are not d | covered in | this repor | t; they are | e being | compiled |
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| separately b | y the Natio | nal Center f | or Safe Rou | tes to Sch | ool. | | | | |

The National Center for Safe Routes to School serves as the Federal Highway Administration's information clearinghouse for the federal Safe Routes to School program, providing technical assistance, training, marketing, data management and program evaluation. The National Center supports local, state and national level efforts to increase opportunities for students and families to safely walk and bicycle to school. Established in May 2006, the National Center is housed at the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center.