



LOUISIANA STRATEGIC HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN



SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL SAFETY COALITION **Infrastructure & Operations Emphasis Area** **MEETING MINUTES**

October 26, 2011, 10:00-11:30 a.m.

South Central Planning & Development Commission, Houma, LA

Attendees

Rudynah Capone, SCPDC
Leo Marretta, SCPDC
Joshua Manning, SCPDC
Dan Magri, LADOTD
Terri Monaghan, LADOTD
Robin Romeo, LADOTD
Lyle LeBlanc, LADOTD
Dennis Hebert, LADOTD
Emery Chauvin III, LADOTD
Betsey Tramonte, FHWA
John Broemmelsiek, FHWA
Terry Arabie, Lafourche Gov't.
Lee Zeringue, St. Charles Public Works
Sgt. Matt Trahan, LSP Troop C
M/T Bryan Zeringue, LSP Troop C

Perry Blanchard, TPCG
Linda Henderson, TPCG
Josephine Rodrigue, MADD
Capt. Jamey Fontenot, Thibodaux PD
Glen Graham, ABMB
Lt. Bobbie O'Bryan, Houma PD
Capt. Tina Ledet, Houma PD
Sgt. Daniel Belanger, Houma PD
Marie Walsh, LTAP/LTRC
Jason Taylor, LTAP/LTRC
Nick Verret, LTAP/LTRC
Greg Hood Sr., ADAC
Cory Belden, Fenstermaker
Krista Goodin, Fenstermaker

1. Welcome and Introductions

At 10:01 a.m., R. Capone welcomed everyone and expressed gratitude for their attendance. This is a big day for South Central Planning and Development Commission (SCPDC) and partner agencies because after two years of working on the South Central Regional Transportation Safety Plan (SCRTSP), the team is ready to approve it. The regional plan is based on Louisiana Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) which envisions of achieving zero deaths on roadways and highways, hence the "Destination Zero Deaths" branding. The mission or goal of the plan is to reduce the number of roadway fatalities in the six-parish South Central Region of LA—Assumption, Lafourche, St. Charles, St. James, St. John and Terrebonne.

R. Capone asked attendees to introduce themselves individually. All in all, there were 29 partners in attendance. She then gave a short overview as to how the SCRTSP came to be. Data were gathered and analyzed, input was shared by partners and the public, and decision was reached after series of meetings and deliberation in the past two years. The four emphasis areas (EA) to be addressed in the plan are: Occupant Protection, Alcohol Impaired Driving, Crashes Involving Young Drivers and Infrastructure & Operations.

2. Approval of the Meeting Minutes – August 17, 2011

C. Belden made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting held on August 17, 2011 at the SCPDC Pelican Room. It was seconded by M. Trahan. No questions were raised. Motion passed.

3. Final Review of SCRTSP Action Plans & Team Leaders' Remarks

R. Capone stated that there's no need to review the plans item by item as they were previously evaluated, however, she encouraged the partners to speak up if they found something that needed to be brought up.

Alcohol Impaired Driving EA, Sgt. Matt Trahan

R. Capone asked Sgt. Matt Trahan, the Team Leader for Alcohol Impaired Driving Action Plan, to deliver his short remarks on how implementation is done and how collaboration works towards achieving the goals in this EA.

Sgt. Trahan expressed that one of the things that our region will do more proactively is doing the Train-the-Trainer Classes with LTAP to provide the law enforcement officers more knowledge on both alcohol and drug impaired driving prevention strategies. We'll continuously do DWI checkpoints and multi-jurisdictional sobriety checkpoints, which are proven to be working, as the statistics would show so.

M. Walsh expressed LTAP's huge interest in collaborating with our coalition to conduct impaired driving workshops as they're contracted by LHSC to do such types of classes.

Occupant Protection EA, Capt. Jamey Fontenot

Capt. Jamey Fontenot of Thibodaux PD is the Team Leader for this EA. He said that the seatbelt enforcement campaigns throughout the area will be continued. Since education is a big portion in what we do, we'll keep using the radio, TV and newspapers in putting out good information about seatbelt use. "Using the seatbelt is not only the law but it's very important because it saves lives!" Spreading the "Buckle Up!" campaign is going to be expanded. He emphasized the importance of coordinating with the school resource officers in getting the word out. Also, he stated that we're taking part with LHSC's Click it or Ticket Campaign as well as daytime and nighttime seatbelt checkpoints. A little more time will be aimed on nighttime checkpoints.

B. Zeringue suggested that our region should have more certified Child Passenger Safety (CPS) technicians, and more importantly, certified CPS instructors because we do not have any instructor from our region. Special needs CPS technicians are also a need in our region since we only have Michael Toups from Houma PD as one. Wal-Mart is on board with our CPS efforts and they'll allow us to utilize their stores/parking lots to promote child passenger safety. "Proper installation of child seats is a big, big issue."

M. Walsh announced that LHSC is giving a big push for pick-up truck seatbelt enforcement around Click it or Ticket mobilization period. Reaching out to the municipal associations would be a good strategy to tap the trucker/male demographics. Discussion further ensued.

R. Capone acknowledged the arrival of G. Graham, L. Marretta, G. Hood and L. LeBlanc.

Young Drivers EA, M/T Bryan Zeringue & Lt. Bobbie O'Bryan

B. Zeringue announced that the Sudden Impact Program was started two years ago which originally debuted in New Orleans. In our region, it was piloted at Vandebilt Catholic High School. Dealing with the public schools is quite a challenge. They can't give us a whole day that is really needed for the entire program. South Lafourche is cooperating with us, though. They get the program concept. The other schools only allow 9 minutes to do a presentation, which is better than nothing. The driver's education content needs to be addressed in general. The whole curriculum needs to be changed.

B. Zeringue emphasized that their approach is not to preach but to let the young drivers understand the consequences of their choices. The young drivers need better understanding about the vehicle dynamics, and this can be highlighted in driver's education classes. Besides Vandebilt and South Lafourche, the Sudden Impact Program has by far been conducted in Assumption High, HL Bourgeois and Ellender this year. B. Zeringue added that they also wanted to get into the hospitals for this program, but the problem is logistics. J. Rodrigue raised a question on Red Ribbon Program. B. Zeringue and G. Hood responded that it is still going on but it's not as big as before. The challenge is: Most schools are more inclined into more academic activities than driving-education-related activities. G. Hood suggested that we gain much participation from the school administrations themselves to get the program up and running again like in the past. Integration into the curriculum would be helpful. L. Henderson expressed empathy on how it is a challenge to do outreach in schools. Discussion further ensued.

On behalf of Lt. Bobbie O'Bryan, Sgt. Belanger remarked that Houma PD is pretty much actively involved with all of the State Police's young driving education programs. He mentioned that school orientations for new students are a perfect opportunity to do a five-minute to ten-minute spiels to promote driving safety. To encourage more participation from local folks especially during community outreach events, putting out big signs would make a difference. Other venues for driving education are the church groups, public libraries and neighborhood watch locations. Presentations at parish council meetings could also earn us a buy-in from the local officials.

On the other end, B. Zeringue asked L. LeBlanc about the possibility of getting a trailer sign that our region can all share when we do seat checkups. It worked out great when we used such signs during a seat checkup in Gramercy. Further discussion ensued.

B. Zeringue also announced that they're also targeting the 5th Graders in getting the safety driving messages across in the same way as it is done in the Sudden Impact Program which is primarily for high school students. R. Capone welcomed Lt. Bobbie O'Bryan's arrival.

Infrastructure and Operations EA, (team leader to be appointed yet)

R. Capone confessed how this EA has been quite a challenge to develop and it just got recently reviewed and finalized at some point. This is where the engineers, planners, designers and public works folks come in helpful towards achieving infrastructure goals—improving local & state roads, doing road safety audits, putting up signs, restriping the pavements, etc.

4. Appointment of Team Leader for Infrastructure & Operations

R. Capone asked the attendees to nominate somebody to be the Team Leader for this EA. L. Henderson brought up P. Gordon's name. P. Blanchard was also nominated by a bunch. L. Marretta spoke up that the SCPDC and partners have been heavily involved in the behavior modification of highway safety efforts. The one thing that we haven't been actively engaged in is the engineering side of things. Thanks to DOTD for the additional funding to make this happen! L. Marretta appealed that the parishes should send their public works folks and engineers to get involved in this process. T. Monaghan suggested that we appoint two team leaders. Discussion later ensued on Local Road Safety Program.

R. Capone asked everybody to make the appointment of team leaders official. P. Blanchard and T. Arabie were both appointed. T. Monaghan pointed out that each parish should have a team leader whom will all comprise the SCRTSP infrastructure subcommittee. L. Zeringue from St. Charles is in attendance. R. Romeo spoke of the urban system funds which are for MPO projects that normally cover overlay projects but may also be used for safety projects.

G. Hood made a motion to appoint P. Blanchard as the team leader, T. Arabie as the assistant leader and L. Zeringue as a member representing St. Charles. It was seconded by L. LeBlanc. G. Hood further suggested that the other parishes be advised to appoint their representatives. A subcommittee meeting should be conducted with all the parish representatives.

5. Local Road Safety Program (LRSP) Minute

M. Walsh elaborated on the Local Road Safety Program that LTAP has been contracted by DOTD to do. Funds are available for improving the safety of local roads. Crash data have been gathered on the local road systems and high-crash locations are identified.

LTAP is now working with HTMPO in gathering traffic counts. M. Walsh encouraged the representatives from each of the parish to sit down with her team and explored the possibilities of implementing local road safety projects in their respective areas. Their goal is to come up with parish-wide approaches such as focusing on horizontal curves that have certain roadway characteristics. It's a long, cumbersome process, but with everyone's cooperation, it would ease things out. LRSP can fund up to \$500,000 for each parish per year. The first step is to look at the data, and then get together with parish representatives, and finally develop the types of projects to be done. LTAP will also collaborate with law enforcement agencies in getting crash data and get a better picture of our region. Her goal between now and December 2011 is to meet up with the parish engineers/public works directors and come up with project recommendations to be included in the LRSP's lineup for 2012. B. O'Bryan raised a question about a safety concern on a road that's not actually supported by data. J. Taylor has done preliminary compilation of crash data and narrowed down the list of the streets based on where the high roadway departure or intersection crashes have occurred between 2006 and 2010. Discussion ensued.

P. Blanchard said he would want to meet up with Houma PD and LTAP to look at the data and proceed from there.

6. Additional Input/Comments from Partners

L. LeBlanc shared input on how it works with DOTD using state safety funds. He said that whenever they find an area where there's high crash rate or just normal crash rate, he and D. Hebert come up with a proposal and submit to LADOTD Headquarters. For instance, they submitted a project on LA 308 in Thibodaux—from St. Patrick to Tiger Drive where people usually run into ditches. The projects range from restriping to turning lanes to driveway improvements, etc. They're always looking for locations where they can use the funds to improve road safety. L. Marretta told everyone about the "yellow sheets" that the coalition uses to gather safety concerns from partners and the public to be referred to LADOTD. This can be a good conduit that will allow us to use the available financial resources that LADOTD has allotted for safety.

7. Adoption of the South Central Regional Transportation Safety Plan

Sgt. M. Trahan made a motion to approve all four action plans of the South Central Regional Transportation Safety Plan (SCRTSP). It was seconded by G. Hood Sr. Motion passed.

South Central is the first region to have adopted a regional plan in the whole state of Louisiana.

8. LADOTD's Remarks

T. Monaghan said that the SCPDC and safety coalition have done a great job, and we're the first to complete a regional plan. She thanked everyone for their efforts.

K. Goodin raised a question on how to proceed as far as implementation and funding are concerned now that the plan is adopted.

D. Magri expressed his hope that the team leaders and partners would be guided by the action plan. He encouraged us to report the progress of the plan during our safety meetings. The regional plan itself opens up the funding mechanisms to obtain funds. The infrastructure funding sources were discussed earlier such as the Local Road Safety Program and state-level DOTD funds. As these plans marry each other, DOTD would see that implementation of projects are brought down to the local level. He referred everyone to work with M. Walsh of LTAP and the infrastructure subcommittee in securing for local road funds. On the non-infrastructure side, DOTD provides FLEX funds which FHWA allows the DOTD to use for seatbelts, alcohol and young driver programs. DOTD has chosen to work with LHSC and they're now in the process of flexing some funds which will enhance existing occupant protection and seatbelt enforcement activities.

D. Magri added that the regional plan is a justification when applying for grants through LHSC as well. Louisiana also receives 154/164 transfer funds which initially started out as highway construction dollars and because we don't have numerous losses dealing with DWI on the books, they transferred to the behavioral programs. The bulk of the money comes back to LADOTD for improving infrastructure types of safety projects. The other portion of the funds is used for alcohol impaired driving programs. The regional plan enhances the coalition's ability to go after some of the existing funding sources and increases focus on the areas of emphasis. He congratulated everyone for completing and adopting the plan. The timing is great because LADOTD just rewrote the statewide Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). LADOTD ensured that they will work with us in implementing the strategies of the plan.

L. Marretta spoke of how SCPDC has received a Safe Community Grant through LHSC that takes care of the behavior modification side of safety. A lot of work has been carried upon throughout the decade. The new component, which is the infrastructure improvement side, is new to the coalition. It is incorporated into the non-infrastructure efforts that the Safe Community Partnership has been doing since 1999. Now that we have this regional safety plan in place, he asked LADOTD to provide specifics about implementation, how to obtain the funds & how to spend them, and how to proceed to get the work done.

For one, D. Magri encouraged all to inform LADOTD of an area where safety is a concern so that they can evaluate it and implement some improvements. T. Monaghan announced that crash data are posted online; contracted partners like LTAP and HTMPO can access them. She also mentioned about Safe Routes to School being another funding source for infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects.

R. Romeo told everyone about Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) as another funding source for bike and pedestrian safety projects. Discussion further ensued.

9. 2012 Meeting Schedules

R. Capone and L. Marretta told everyone about the meeting schedules of other committees under the Transportation Division of SCPDC. R. Capone asked for any suggestion as to how often and when does SCRTSP committee meet. L. Marretta suggested that the folks involved in the regional safety plan can meet before or after the Safe Community Partnership Meeting so that they don't have to come back for a separate meeting. A 10-minute coordination meeting would do. T. Monaghan also suggested that the subcommittee of each emphasis areas to coordinate amongst each other, too. Side meetings will be helpful. She also offered the assistance of their planning consultants to help facilitate the meetings.

B. Tramonte asked how the regional plan meshed with the Safe Community plan. R. Capone clarified that the Safe Community Partnership's Action Plan is focused on the non-infrastructure efforts which are actually being formalized in this newly adopted regional plan, with the addition of the infrastructure component. L. Marretta said that the SCRTSP is a living plan and it may change or progress along the way.

B. Zeringue asked if there was a possibility to meet up with all the CPS technicians in our region for coordination in order to avoid duplication of seat checkups on the same day. In that way, we would not get shorthanded with technicians.

10. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:32 a.m. was made by G. Hood, Sr. and seconded by L. LeBlanc. Motion carried. Lunch was served immediately.