

POLICY

RESEARCH

REPORTS



Getting a Fair Share for Safety

from the

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advocacy Case Studies

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Introduction

The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), one of the core Federal-Aid funding sources created under the 2006 transportation authorization law, SAFETEA-LU, funds safety projects aimed at reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries. Bike and pedestrian safety projects are eligible for HSIP funding. All public roads, including state, county, and local roads, are eligible for HSIP funding. Examples of eligible projects include bike lanes, roadway shoulders, crosswalks, other intersection improvements, and signage.

See the Advocacy Advance report on the [HSIP](#) for more information on eligibility, past spending, and program requirements.ⁱ For safety programs that fund education see “[Section 402](#) – State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program.”ⁱⁱ

States DOTs were slow to spend their available HSIP funds in the early years of the program, though they have been catching up in recent years. As of 2010, the 50 states spent 72 percent of the available total. Twenty-one states transferred a combined \$516 million, to other highway programs.ⁱⁱⁱ To date, bicycle and pedestrian projects have not received a fair share of HSIP funds. Fourteen percent of traffic fatalities nationwide in 2009 were non-motorists.^{iv} Yet, according to the Financial Management Information System (FMIS), only 6 states (CA, FL, NJ, OH, VA, WA) had HSIP funds coded as bicycle and/or pedestrian projects in 2010. Six states (AL, CA, FL, MN, NC, VA) coded HSIP funds on bicycle/pedestrian projects in 2009. (See appendix.)

This report examines some of the states that have successfully dedicated federal safety funds to reduce bicycle and pedestrian fatalities and crashes. In a number of cases, advocates have taken a leading role in ensuring the transportation agency had prioritized road safety projects for non-motorists. Hopefully, these experiences will help advocates and officials in other states access this untapped resource for badly needed bicycle and pedestrian safety projects.

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Summary of Recommendations

Although conditions and specific circumstances vary in the different states, the advice from successful advocates and officials is remarkably consistent. The most important and frequent tips require advocates to find out the answers to the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHY, and HOWs of the HSIP process.

- **Understand the HSIP planning process.** Get acquainted with the program criteria, requirements, schedule, and personnel. The following suggestions will help you do it.
- **Cultivate internal advocates.** Get to know your state's HSIP staff. Find out who else influences the relevant policies, processes, and project selection. They can include local agency staff, State Highway Safety Engineers, District Safety Engineers, and others. These folks understand the system. They are important sources of information and can be your best allies – many of them care deeply about bicyclist and pedestrian safety.
- **Cultivate elected officials.** Elected officials wield influence over programs and priorities; when they show interest, it matters. They can also be more heavy-handed. When agencies need a nudge, state legislation (or the threat of it) can produce results. The first step can be to highlight the need for safety interventions in your community. Find elected officials who care about this issue at the state and local levels. (Hint: they will care if they know their constituents care.)
- **Influence the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP).** In order for bicycle and pedestrian safety projects to be eligible for HSIP funds, the state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan must identify them as priorities. Find out if bicyclist, pedestrian, and/or vulnerable road user safety is a plan priority area and get involved with revising the plan for bike/ped improvements and data collection. (See the matrix of SHSP priorities.^v) Plans have to be revised periodically. Find out when and recommend friendly officials and advocates for the relevant committees.
- **Learn the project selection criteria.** How does the state select and prioritize safety projects? What are the performance outcomes being measured? Figure out how bicycle and pedestrian projects can compete, before the selections are finalized, to influence the project selection and prioritization process?
- **Collect crash and fatality data.** The HSIP project selection process is data driven. For projects to be funded, they need to be shown to address a proven and quantifiable safety need. Gather this data and encourage the state to develop a better statewide reporting system and GIS mapping to make this data more available to local agencies.
- **Announce the funding opportunity.** If your HSIP proposal deadlines are public, share them with state and local advocates, your constituents, and the public, and provide tips for what to emphasize in the application to make for a successful project. If not, find out and share other key deadlines, like for the Transportation Improvement Plans (TIP) and Strategic Highway Safety

Plans (SHSP).

- **Follow up.** Meet with the department and elected officials after safety projects have been selected. Thank them for funded bicycle and pedestrian safety projects, and remind them of the continued need. Follow-up with local communities that were funded for bicycle and pedestrian projects to ensure that they do a good job with the funding and that they evaluate the results. That way you can publicize how they got the funding and made the improvements to inspire other agencies to apply for HSIP funding for bike/ped in the next round.

Understand the HSIP planning process

A big part of tapping into any federal funds for bicycle and pedestrian projects is learning the lay of the land and knowing what questions to ask. Advocates who know *who* to talk to, *what* to propose, *how projects are selected and prioritized*, *why* departments fund some projects and not others, and *how* the process works will be better positioned to get their favored projects funded than those who haven't done their research. As with the other funding sources, the answers to these questions can vary by state so advocates need to start by asking questions to learn the specifics for their state.

Here are a few examples of differences among states. In Washington, Municipal Planning Organizations (MPOs) are invited to submit projects for funding.^{vi} In California, half of the funds are awarded by the state and half by localities.^{vii} The vast majority of HSIP funds are used for safety infrastructure improvements, but there are exceptions: advocates in New Jersey will find that NJDOT funds education programs through HSIP. This is because the source usually used for safety programs ([Section 402 funds](#)^{viii}) are not managed through NJDOT. In Florida, the DOT tries to address safety issues in their resurfacing projects. If the safety issue is too large or expensive to fix, it often becomes an HSIP priority. In Hawaii, the HDOT Highway Safety Office has influence over the HSIP as well as the members of the Governor's Highway Safety Committee. The Hawaii GHSC votes on funding for HSIP funds, ranking all proposals as high, medium or low priority. Knowing the particulars of your state will help you find the right partners, advocate for the right projects, and ensure that your project stays on track.

Much of the following advice focuses on helping advocates usher targeted bicycle and pedestrian projects through the HSIP process. However, much can be done to improve the safety of vulnerable road users in other safety projects as well. Stephen Read, VDOT's Highway Safety Improvement Programs Manager has trained engineers to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian safety into all projects. In fact, the best case scenario is one in which the DOT incorporates bicycle and pedestrian safety in all of their projects (Complete Streets policies) and in all of their HSIP projects. California has endorsed their Strategic Highway Safety Plan priorities for all of their surface transportation projects (more on Strategic Highway Safety Plans later).

Cultivate internal advocates

Stephen Read was twice hit by a car; once as a child and once as an adult. So, as the HSIP Program Manager for the state of Virginia, Read is motivated by both personal and professional experience to address bicycle and pedestrian crashes.

The state and local officials who manage the HSIP and highway safety are important sources of information and can be your best allies. Many of them, like Stephen Read, care deeply about bicycle and pedestrian safety. Find out who influences the relevant policies processes, and project selection. They

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can include local agency staff, State Highway Safety Engineers, District Safety Engineers, and others. These folks understand the system, have the information you need, and know how to get things done.

In South Carolina, the Palmetto Cycling Coalition has been working closely with Rob Lee, the Captain of the SC Highway Patrol and the Chair of the Vulnerable Roadway User emphasis area of the SC Strategic Highway Safety Plan. It can take some time to find your ally, so advocates build on their existing local and regional agency and elected leader relationships. “By way of a lot of phone calls and emails to various people at DOT and DPS [the Department of Public Safety], I found my way to Rob Lee,” says Rachael Kefalos, executive director of the Palmetto Cycling Coalition.

As the Captain of the Highway Patrol “he is in a position of a lot of influence but he is also quite busy and hard to get a hold of. We've been pretty lucky that most of DPS has been quite receptive to our efforts, and that I'm not limited to just Captain Lee as our connection to the Department,” Kefalos says. “Given how busy he is, I don't think we would be where we are now if it hadn't been for the openness of the Department as a whole.” As a tip to advocates looking for their own Captain Lee, Kefalos recommends being cooperative, patient and gracious: “No need to approach these people with big egos, lofty agendas and lots of Lycra. It pays off to show that you know your stuff, but are willing to play nice in the sandbox.”

Because Florida has the most bicyclist fatalities in the country, their DOT Safety Office staff members take bike and pedestrian crashes quite personally and have become internal advocates to ensure safety funding remains high. Florida advocates have also been active in pushing for higher safety funding levels.

The best internal advocates are both well positioned and sympathetic to bicycle and pedestrian safety. They can be State or District Safety Engineers, HSIP Program Managers, or in other related positions. Advocates might be surprised who could turn out to be sympathetic within the agency.

Cultivate elected officials and build public support

Mary Margot Whipple used her position as a state Senator to nudge the Virginia DOT to take action. Whipple had long been pushing for a dedicated funding stream for bike/ped projects. When her legislation started to gain traction, VDOT officials realized they had the authority to implement the policy themselves, on their terms. Rather than let the state assembly tell them how to direct funds, they decided to do it themselves. The VDOT created an internal policy to set aside 10 percent of state federal safety money for bike/ped safety. (See sidebar.)

The will to prioritize bicycle and pedestrian safety, as evidenced by Virginia, doesn't always develop organically. When agencies need a nudge, state legislation — or the threat of it — can produce results. Advocates play a key role in fostering that political support to make bike/ped safety a priority.

The best way to get officials on your side is to highlight the needs of your community and show that the issue has the support of the public. Elected officials will care about improving safety of biking and walking, if they know their constituents care about it. Darla Letourneau did just that in Florida.

After the Alliance for Biking & Walking's [2010 Benchmarking Report](#), Transportation 4 America's "[Dangerous by Design](#)," and [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) data showed that Florida is the most dangerous state in the country for pedestrians and cyclists, Darla Letourneau, of the advocacy group BikeWalkLee, released [a report](#) calling on Florida to "allocate a 'fair share' of its federal safety funds to pedestrian/bicycle safety projects, reflecting their share of all traffic fatalities (21%)."^{ix} The report drew from the Advocacy Advance reports on [HSIP](#) and [Section 402](#). Letourneau's report critiqued the state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan for not setting workable performance measures and for not driving FDOT's spending on safety. In addition to calling for a fair share for safety, it requested legislation to ensure that FDOT allocates "all the federal safety funds (both the annual federal allocation and any balance forward from previous years) for safety improvement projects." Efforts like this bring bicyclist and pedestrian safety to the attention of lawmakers and demonstrate the need for proper safety investments.

Influence the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)

In order for bicycle and pedestrian safety projects to be eligible for HSIP funds, the state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan must identify them as priorities. Advocates should find out if bicyclist, pedestrian, and/or vulnerable road user safety is an emphasis area in the state's plan. Plans are revised periodically. Advocates should find out how and when this happens. (See the matrix of SHSP priorities^x and see the call out box for more on SHSPs.)

Virginia's 10 percent set-aside policy

After elected officials in the Virginia State Assembly began pushing for a dedicated funding stream for bicycle and pedestrian safety, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) decided to create an internal policy that would set aside 10 percent of the state federal safety money for bike/ped safety. The 10 percent figure was arrived at because bicycle and pedestrian fatalities make up about ten percent of the traffic deaths in Virginia.

Initially, projects were taken from Transportation Enhancements lists and funded by HSIP funds. Then official looked at how non-motorized safety was approached in other states, like California, and eventually created their own guidelines for selecting projects: "[Framework for Selection and Evaluation of Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Projects in Virginia](#)". They shifted from looking at intersections to focusing on entire corridors.

Information on Virginia's Bike and Pedestrian Safety Program can be found here:

http://www.virginiadot.org/business/ted_app_pro.asp#download

^xThis is an Advocacy Advance Project — a partnership between the League of American Bicyclists and the Alliance for Biking & Walking.

Advocates in Hawaii worked hard to shape the state's SHSP. Their experience shows the opportunities and challenges offered by the Strategic Highway Safety Plan process and accessing HSIP funds. Laura Dierenfield, executive director of PATH: Peoples Advocacy for Trails Hawaii, served on the Bicycle Committee for Hawaii's Strategic Highway Safety Plan. She was tapping to take over from the resigning chair because of her involvement in bicycle advocacy. She says that bicycle and pedestrian safety was chosen as an issue area because of the long time work of advocates to raise awareness of the issue.

"Bike and Pedestrian advocates have been at the table for nearly all major transportation planning initiatives over the last quarter century in Hawaii," she says, "so I think that including bike/ped was not considered a stretch within the Hawaii SHSP. Another reason bike/ped was included is that Hawaii does have major issues with ped/bike safety. We are consistently in the top 10 most dangerous places to be a bicyclist or pedestrian and drivers here are very aggressive due to major congestion, poor connectivity and terrible land use planning that has resulted in people living far from their workplaces and suffering horrendously long daily commutes."

In terms of advice for advocates, Dierenfield reiterates the importance of making the right connections. "I think that the most important thing is to establish relationships with leaders at the State Transportation Agency, whether that begins with the Bicycle Coordinator, or letters right to the Director, or another method."

Dierenfield also emphasized the point that, unfortunately, the work is not finished once the plan is agreed upon. There are major implementation challenges. They include: competing with other emphasis areas for priority actions, limited financial and partner resources to carry out strategies, and getting the attention of key leadership within the Attorney General's

California and Safe Routes to Schools

There are many local funding opportunities for safety programs in California, but the potential for tapping into federal HSIP funds was too great for Safe Routes to School advocates to ignore. When the 2005 federal transportation re-authorization law (SAFETEA-LU) required Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSP), three dozen California bicycle and pedestrian advocates met in Sacramento to discuss how they'd approach safety issues. They endorsed the 16 AASHTO recommended safety priorities – including one for pedestrians and one for bicyclists. Caltrans created work groups for each "challenge areas." Deb Hubsmith and the SRTS network made sure that bicycle and pedestrian advocates were in all of the major working groups including intersections, drunk driving, and off-road collisions, not just the pedestrians and bicyclists groups, to make sure that their interests were represented. For bike and pedestrian committees, advocates were selected as co-chairs alongside officials.

The committees produce detailed reports on safety, crashes, and fatalities. Advocates wrote a white paper making the case for a 20 percent set-aside for bicyclist and pedestrian safety. Though it was not successful, Hubsmith says that "overall the process elevated the importance of bike/ped safety." Caltrans now uses the framework developed during the SHSP process for all of its transportation spending.

(Deb Hubsmith and Jessica Meaney, Jan 20, 2011)

Office, police, the state DOT, county transportation and planning agencies to implement strategies.” Nonetheless, Dierenfield says HSIP has funded \$125,000 in bicycle and pedestrian projects, focused primarily on Bicycle and pedestrian education and motorist awareness. Hawaii’s advocates have also successfully worked together to bring a number of workshops to the state and they’ve convinced the state to program \$92 million over the next six years to bicycle and pedestrian projects statewide.

Dierenfield shares a story that highlights the need for advocates to stay engaged in the process, even after the SHSP is written. She says, “NHTSA did an audit of the Safe Communities program back in March of 2010 and that resulted in some changes in the way they allocate funds. Unfortunately for bicycle projects, this gave HDOT an excuse not to fund bicycle safety as it’s not officially one of NHTSA’s 14 priority areas. I feel this is a major setback to funding bicycle safety initiatives.”^{xi}

Deb Hubsmith, director of the [Safe Routes to School National Partnership](#), offers several good pieces of advice to help advocates shape or improve their state’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan:

- Get involved early and make sure that there are bicycle and pedestrian committees. Ideally there are separate bicycle and pedestrian committees because the needs can be unique
- Make sure to get advocates on all committees that affect bicycle and pedestrian safety and do outreach to get people to the big statewide public meetings
- Point out the percentage of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities in the state and the need for equity – in Florida it’s 21 percent, in California it’s 20 percent, in Virginia it’s 10 percent.
- Work with DOT staff to get internal champions. (As Palmetto Cycling Coalition’s Rachael Kefalos says: “So much of our success as bicycle advocates is about having an internal champion.”^{xii})
- Once the plans are adopted – make sure that there is some relationship to programming HSIP and other funding. In California, Caltrans says that they are now using the SHSP as a framework for all funding allocations, not just the HSIP. “This has helped Safe Routes to School (SRTS), as we’re continuing to get \$24.25 million a year in state funding for SRTS, partly because SRTS was the #1 walking strategy,” Hubsmith says.
- Get the DOT to calculate what percentage of projects they fund through HSIP to serve bicyclists and pedestrians, or get a dollar amount. It is possible to use the Financial Management Information System (FMIS), though it only counts money spent on standalone bicycle and pedestrian projects, not the bicycle or pedestrian share of other projects. “Last year 27 percent of the HSIP funding including bike/ped in some way in their projects,”^{xiii} according to Hubsmith.

Strategic Highway Safety Plans

By Chris Gladora and Darren Flusche

Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSPs) are statewide comprehensive plans that identify and prioritize highway safety concerns and provide action plans for addressing them. Including bicycle and pedestrian safety in a SHSP establishes a strategy for reducing bicyclist and pedestrian fatalities and injuries and allows States to access funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) requires each state to complete a SHSP. SAFETEA-LU established the [Highway Safety Improvement Program](#) (HSIP), designed to reduce highway fatalities by doubling funds for infrastructure safety. States must create a SHSP in order to be eligible for these funds.

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the SHSP and its requirements and offer suggestions for how bicycle and pedestrian advocates can influence their state's SHSP. The appendix shows the SHSP emphasis areas for every state in the nation and Washington, D.C. so that advocates can easily identify where bicycle and pedestrian safety falls, if at all, in their state's plan. Since the allocation of federal funding from the HSIP is dictated by the SHSP's emphasis areas, it is essential that bicycle and pedestrian safety are priorities in a state's plan in order to direct funding to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and safety programs.

Overview of the SHSP

The ultimate goal of the SHSP is to reduce highway fatalities and injuries on *all public roads*. According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the plans help states reach this goal by requiring them to “identify and analyze highway safety problems and opportunities, include projects or strategies to address them, and evaluate the accuracy of data and the priority of proposed improvements.” The plan must be based on “accurate and timely safety data, consultation with safety stakeholders, and performance-based goals that address infrastructure and behavioral safety problems on all public roads.” In addition, the HSIP requires states to develop an evaluation process to assess results and set priorities for highway safety improvements.

In essence, the SHSP document is a data-driven, four to five year plan that integrates statewide goals and safety programs in order to provide a comprehensive approach to highway safety. The document is the culmination of a collaborative process that includes requirements outlined by SAFETEA-LU but can be tailored to each state's needs. The responsibility of facilitating this process, drafting the plan, and implementing it falls to the state.

FHWA guidance on SHSP's (A Champion's Guide to Saving Lives) suggests states consider the following activities when developing their SHSPs:

- Gaining leadership support and initiative
- Identifying a defender
- Initiating the development process
- Gathering data
- Analyzing data
- Establishing a working group
- Bringing safety partners together
- Adopting a strategic goal
- Identifying key emphasis areas
- Forming task groups
- Identifying key emphasis area performance based goals
- Identifying strategies and countermeasures
- Determining priorities for implementation
- Writing the SHSP

An important part of the SHSP process is to prioritize highway safety problems so that federal funding is used effectively. States are required to use data to quantify problems in their state in order establish key emphasis and create a benchmark for safety improvements. Once the key emphasis areas are identified, state DOTs must also create an action plan for each area. The action plans must include implementation details – the who, what, when, where, how, and performance measures.

States must report annually on their progress. "To ensure that the program is being implemented as intended and that it is achieving its purpose, an annual report on the HSIP implementation and effectiveness is required by 23 U.S.C. §148(g) and 23 CFR 924," says the FHWA HSIP reporting guidance. "Furthermore, State Departments of Transportation (SDOT) that can clearly demonstrate the success of the safety program, through regular reporting, can use the report to communicate to others within their State about the importance of continuing to focus on improving highway safety."

Snapshot of the nation: summary of SHSPs by State

The appendix features a list of each state's SHSP emphasis areas with bicycle and pedestrian safety highlighted. Of all 50 states and Washington DC, 28 percent of the plans specifically include bicycle safety in their emphasis areas, 36 percent include pedestrian safety, and 30 percent include both bicyclists and pedestrians as "vulnerable" or "special" road users. However, 17 states (34 percent) do not include bicycle or pedestrian safety at all in their emphasis areas. Most of these states are located in the north or southeast of the US.

Of the states that included bicycle or pedestrian safety in their emphasis areas, none ranked bicycle safety as their number one priority. Only one state, Nevada, ranked pedestrian safety as its number one priority. The majority of States ranked impaired driving, seat belt usage, and aggressive driving as their top priorities. States that included bicycle and pedestrian safety in their plans within a vulnerable or special users category also included other users, such as motorcyclists, truck drivers, and elderly drivers in the category. For more information, a link to every state's full SHSP is included in the appendix.

Learn the project selection criteria

In order to get bicycle and pedestrian safety projects funded, advocates need to know how to propose a project that fits the criteria. They need to find out: How the state selects and prioritizes safety projects? What are the performance outcomes being measured? How can bicycle and pedestrian projects compete?

Below are examples from a handful of states' guidance and application documents.

In [Virginia](#) project eligibility and requirements vary by project type. Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Program projects require a risk analysis and they must encompass the following:

- (1) Projects need to be relevant to the program purpose of reducing crashes or risks for bicyclists and pedestrians within a transportation network.
- (2) Proposed improvements must match existing hazardous situations.
- (3) The proposed project cost must be less than \$500,000.
- (4) Applicants must demonstrate that projects will meet all the necessary guidelines and standards for design and construction to ensure that approved projects will be completed in a reasonable time period. For example, proposal for the installation of a traffic signal should provide a traffic signal warrant analysis.
- (5) All projects must upgrade non-standard safety features to existing standards, when those features are within the scope and work area of the project. Requests for exceptions to this requirement will follow the appropriate procedures. Further, all projects must meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).^{xiv}

Florida's Project Prioritization Process

Projects in Florida are prioritized through Community Traffic Safety Team, made up of first responders, city planners, and active citizens. It sets priorities for their community, county, or region before reaching the FDOT District Safety Engineer.

The engineers still need to do traffic studies and cost-benefit analyses – even where there is strong public or political support. Therefore, officials recommend that advocates have good data and have a sound solution that fits within the framework of what can be done within HSIP guidance.

Typically, it is city and county commissioners and managers, as well as MPO staff, who expect FDOT to be responsive to these issues. For them it is a huge mechanism for pushing quality of life and safety that is desired by constituents. Work with them to advance your project.

In accordance with the HSIP requirement, FDOT maps the [five percent](#) high crash corridors and intersections. They then overlay bike/ped crashes over the rest of the crash data. They found that the same high crash corridors that were bad for bicyclists and pedestrians were bad for cars.

They are now working on creating a separate 5% report for the vulnerable user category.

[Minnesota](#)'s guidance states "Funding is for roadway construction and reconstruction projects designed to decrease the frequency and/or severity of vehicular crashes. These crashes can involve pedestrians, bicycles, and other non-motorized vehicles" while noting that the improvement must address areas with a crash history, must be permanent, and cannot be used to fund right of way costs.^{xv}

[North Carolina](#)'s divides eligible locations into three categories: intersections, sections, and bicycle/pedestrian intersections. The document identifies 2014 potentially hazardous intersections and 556 potentially hazardous "sections" and 77 potentially hazardous bicycle/pedestrian intersection.^{xvi} Advocates could push for projects on these 77 intersections.

The first line of [California](#)'s eligibility says: "HSIP funds are eligible for work on any publicly-owned roadway or bicycle/pedestrian pathway or trail that corrects or improves the safety for its users." It also has this well-thought-out policy on rumble strips: "Installation of rumble strips or other warning devices, if the rumble strips or other devices do not adversely affect the safety or mobility of bicyclists, pedestrians, and persons with disabilities."^{xvii} California may be changing their application and measurement tool. Advocates are monitoring the situation to ensure that the new methodology will be sensitive to bicycle and pedestrian crashes.

The lesson of the above guidance is that advocates should understand the problem and have a proposed solution that fits the program requirements. You don't have to come up with detailed engineering drawings, but having ideas on how to fix the problem will steer District Safety Engineers and other officials in the direction you want.

Collect crash and fatality data

It is impossible to read anything about HSIP, or to talk with anyone knowledgeable about it, without hearing that the program is "data-driven." The program was written with the expressed purpose of addressing quantifiable safety concerns. Cynics point to this fact-based approach to explain why HSIP was under-used for several years: DOTs can't just fund the projects they intended to anyway and claim it was for safety purposes.

Successful proposals need to show that improvements will directly reduce crashes and fatalities. Traditional project identification methods of the HSIP were location-based, which made it harder for project designed for bicyclists and pedestrians, whose crashes tend to be dispersed. That has changed.

"Since SAFETEA-LU, the HSIP very much supports the use of systemic treatments and the SHSP very much lends itself to systemic treatments," says Erin Kenley, the Safety Program Implementation Team Leader in the FHWA Office of Safety.^{xviii} A systemic highway safety improvement is a particular

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countermeasure, or set of countermeasures, implemented on all roadways or roadway sections where a particular crash type is linked with a particular roadway or element.

Here are some recommendations for making the case with data:

- You need comprehensive data to be taken seriously in the SHSP process
- High Crash Corridors for motorists are often dangerous for cyclists as well. Using your state's [5 percent High Crash Corridor report](#),^{xix} look for redundancy in locations where bike/ped crashes are highest. Where there is overlap, make the case for inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian provisions in current plans
- Use [heat maps](#) to identify high bike and pedestrian crash corridors. Virginia's Stephen Read says, "You need to be able to visualize the problem. If you react to one fatality at a time, you get spotty and address things here and there. You need a systematized approach."
- If bike/ped crash history are present but represents low numbers, use a longer time frame, e.g., 5-6 years worth of data instead of 2-3 years
- Look at crash corridors instead of just intersections
- Advocates should work on quantifying the problem before skipping ahead of the solution. Know the process in which projects are developed. Understand whether the nature is infrastructure, education/behavior or enforcement problem
- See the appendix for bicycle and pedestrian fatalities as a share of all traffic fatalities in 2009 by state

The data requirements present both a challenge and an opportunity to advocates. For example, the California application requires collision data. This is labor intensive for cities to produce and many jurisdictions do not collect it. In fact, this is not unusual; a [2008 report](#) from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) concluded that many states "lacked components of the prescribed crash data analysis systems, such as a system for locating crashes and roadway data for local roads. FHWA is developing such a system for the states, but many states lack necessary data for local roads because they do not maintain or operate them."^{xx} To address this problem, Caltrans funded researchers at UC Berkeley to map fatalities with no knowledge of [GIS](#) necessary. It is currently accessible to people with a ".gov" email address. Hopefully it will soon be available to everyone. Crash data are increasingly available online and technology is developing to help planners and advocates use them to make their case.

Fatalities are the visible tip of a very large iceberg. A lack of crashes is no proof of safety. It may be a sign that most people consider their roads too dangerous to attempt. In this sense the deck is stacked against bicycle safety projects. A better safety metric may well be an increase in bicycling. Nonetheless, advocates should do their best to gather the data that will make their case.

Announce the funding opportunity

One of the strengths of a good advocacy organization is the ability to communicate and share information with its members, the public, and decision-makers. Advocacy organizations stay alert for deadlines in the HSIP project selection process and share them with their networks.

A good example of this is the Safe Routes to School network in California. HSIP is on their state-wide network monthly call agenda. They make it a priority because it's a larger pot of money than most. When they first announced the funding opportunity, they even got press coverage. They use their list serv to alert communities across the state about project selection deadlines and to solicit proposals. They also shared where CalTrans had HSIP trainings.

SRTS had hoped to work with CalTrans to create a webinar on how to make bicycle and pedestrian project applications competitive with information on the guidelines, how to apply, and what kinds of projects get funded. This didn't come to be, but would be an excellent idea for an advocacy organization to take on.

Follow up

Finally, follow up with your transportation agency, your contacts there, and the relevant elected officials after the funding cycle. Review HSIP spending, thank them for funded bicycle and pedestrian safety projects, and remind them of the continued needs for investments in the safety of vulnerable road users.

As was noted several times above, things can change in the process or requirements that can impact the ability of bicycle and pedestrian projects to compete for safety funding. Keep an eye on the system and stay alert for these changes.

Conclusion – knowledge, connections, data, results

HSIP details, like deadlines, staff contacts, and selection criteria, are different in each state, but the tactics used by successful advocates are remarkably similar. The keys are participation in the process, forming relationships with the key players, mastering program requirements and selection criteria, being armed with the appropriate data, and building a supportive political environment for bicycle and pedestrian safety. Using federal safety funds can be cumbersome for states and project sites require sufficient crash history to be selected. Therefore, states and localities with high crash figures for pedestrians and bicyclists are the best candidates for HSIP campaigns. There is certainly no shortage of useful potential bicycle and pedestrian safety projects out there – and there is plenty of unspent HSIP money in many states.

Acknowledgements

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Contact us: Let's work together

Contact the Advocacy Advance Team, a partnership between the League of American Bicyclists and the Alliance for Biking & Walking, for more information on HSIP

Contact:

Darren Flusche
Policy Analyst
League of American Bicyclists
darren@bikeleague.org
202-822-1333 X235

Brighid O'Keane
Advocacy Advance Program Manager
Alliance for Biking & Walking
202-449-9692 x 4
Brighid@PeoplePoweredMovement.org

Jeff Peel
State and Local Coordinator
League of American Bicyclists
202-822-1333 X220

For more information on accessing federal funding sources for bicycle and pedestrian projects, visit: www.AdvocacyAdvance.org

Appendix: Bicycle and Pedestrian Fatalities as a Share of All Traffic Fatalities

2009 Traffic Fatalities and Mode Share									
State	Total traffic fatalities (FARS)	Bicycle + pedestrian share of total traffic fatalities	Pedestrian fatalities (2009)		Cyclist fatalities (2009)		Combined bike/ped commuter share (ACS 2009)	Walk commuters (ACS 2009)	Bike commuters (ACS 2009)
			#	%	#	%			
USA	33,808	14%	4092	12.1	630	2	3.5%	2.9%	0.6%
Alabama	848	8%	64	7.5	6	1	1.4%	1.3%	0.1%
Alaska	64	17%	9	14.1	2	3	8.8%	8.0%	0.8%
Arizona	807	18%	120	14.9	25	3	3.3%	2.4%	0.9%
Arkansas	585	7%	36	6.2	5	1	2.0%	1.9%	0.1%
California	3,081	21%	563	18.3	99	3	3.8%	2.8%	1.0%
Colorado	465	12%	47	10.1	10	2	4.4%	3.0%	1.4%
Connecticut	223	12%	26	11.7	1	0	3.2%	2.9%	0.3%
Delaware	116	18%	15	12.9	6	5	2.7%	2.4%	0.3%
District of Columbia	29	48%	14	48.3	0	0	13.3%	11.1%	2.2%
Florida	2,558	22%	466	18.2	107	4	2.2%	1.5%	0.7%
Georgia	1,284	13%	150	11.7	21	2	1.9%	1.7%	0.2%
Hawaii	109	17%	16	14.7	3	3	5.8%	4.5%	1.3%
Idaho	226	8%	10	4.4	7	3	3.8%	2.6%	1.2%
Illinois	911	14%	111	12.2	20	2	3.8%	3.2%	0.6%
Indiana	693	8%	50	7.2	7	1	2.6%	2.2%	0.4%
Iowa	372	6%	21	5.6	2	1	4.4%	4.0%	0.4%
Kansas	386	7%	22	5.7	5	1	3.2%	2.8%	0.4%
Kentucky	791	6%	41	5.2	5	1	2.6%	2.4%	0.2%
Louisiana	821	15%	107	13	13	2	2.4%	2.0%	0.4%
Maine	159	7%	11	6.9	0	0	4.7%	4.2%	0.5%
Maryland	547	23%	113	20.7	11	2	3.0%	2.6%	0.4%
Massachusetts	334	16%	48	14.4	6	2	5.5%	4.7%	0.8%
Michigan	871	16%	118	13.5	19	2	2.9%	2.4%	0.5%
Minnesota	421	12%	42	10	10	2	3.6%	2.9%	0.7%
Mississippi	700	10%	58	8.3	10	1	1.7%	1.7%	0.1%
Missouri	878	8%	68	7.7	2	0	2.2%	2.0%	0.3%
Montana	221	7%	15	6.8	1	1	7.1%	5.4%	1.7%
Nebraska	223	5%	9	4	3	1	3.8%	3.3%	0.4%
Nevada	243	17%	35	14.4	6	3	2.5%	2.1%	0.4%
New Hampshire	110	8%	8	7.3	1	1	3.2%	2.8%	0.4%
New Jersey	583	29%	157	26.9	13	2	3.7%	3.4%	0.3%
New Mexico	361	12%	39	10.8	3	1	3.1%	2.4%	0.7%
New York	1,156	29%	306	26.5	29	3	6.9%	6.4%	0.4%
North Carolina	1,314	12%	146	11.1	16	1	2.3%	2.0%	0.3%
North Dakota	140	4%	4	2.9	1	1	4.0%	3.6%	0.4%
Ohio	1,021	10%	85	8.3	19	2	2.5%	2.3%	0.3%
Oklahoma	738	6%	31	4.2	11	2	2.1%	1.9%	0.2%
Oregon	377	11%	35	9.3	8	2	6.2%	3.9%	2.3%
Pennsylvania	1,256	12%	134	10.7	15	1	4.5%	4.0%	0.5%
Rhode Island	83	19%	16	19.3	0	0	3.5%	3.2%	0.4%
South Carolina	894	11%	89	10	11	1	2.2%	1.9%	0.3%
South Dakota	131	3%	4	3.1	0	0	4.9%	4.3%	0.6%
Tennessee	989	8%	70	7.1	9	1	1.5%	1.4%	0.1%
Texas	3,071	13%	344	11.2	48	2	2.0%	1.7%	0.2%
Utah	244	10%	19	7.8	5	2	3.8%	2.9%	0.8%
Vermont	74	7%	5	6.8	0	0	6.2%	5.4%	0.8%
Virginia	757	11%	73	9.6	11	2	2.6%	2.2%	0.3%
Washington	492	14%	61	12.4	9	2	4.3%	3.4%	0.9%
West Virginia	356	6%	21	5.9	0	0	2.9%	2.8%	0.2%
Wisconsin	561	8%	38	6.8	7	1	4.1%	3.4%	0.7%
Wyoming	134	3%	2	1.5	2	2	4.2%	3.4%	0.8%

Fatality Source: www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/States/StatesCrashesAndAllVictims.aspx; Commuter mode share source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

This is an Advocacy Advance Project — a partnership between the League of American Bicyclists and the Alliance for Biking & Walking.



United States 1994 - 2009					
All fatalities		Pedestrian		Cyclist	
#	%	#	%	#	%
661,403	100%	78,866	12%	11,781	2%
Source: FARS www.fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/Trends/TrendsGeneral.aspx					

Appendix: State HSIP spending on Bicycle and Pedestrian projects

State HSIP spending on Bicycle and Pedestrian projects				
State	2010		2009	
	\$	per capita	\$	per capita
Alabama	-	-	\$ 4,500	\$ 0.00
California	\$ 776,250	\$ 0.02	\$ 184,253	\$ 0.00
Florida	\$ 5,548,207	\$ 0.30	\$ 5,095,716	\$ 0.27
Minnesota	-	-	\$ 138,600	\$ 0.03
New Jersey	\$ 197,995	\$ 0.02	-	-
North Carolina	-	-	\$ 490,500	\$ 0.05
Ohio	\$ 101,124	\$ 0.01	-	-
Virginia	\$ 292,881	\$ 0.04	\$ 133,761	\$ 0.02
Washington	\$ 1,380,833	\$ 0.21	-	-

Source: FHWA Financial Management Information System. States typically code projects as bike/ped if they are exclusive to bicyclist and/or pedestrian safety, therefore other HSIP funds presumable address bicycle and pedestrian safety, which are not included in the above table.

It can be difficult to account from FMIS the extent of bicycling and walking investments. If your state has successes and projects not listed in FMIS above, let us know at info@advocacyadvance.org. We would like to hear about them. We will update this report as we learn additional best practices.

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- ⁱⁱ Advocacy Advance Report, “Section 402 – State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program” http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/reports/pdfs/section_402.pdf
- ⁱⁱⁱ FHWA, “SAFETEA-LU Obligation Rates for the Highway Safety Improvement Program,” http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip/gen_info/slorhsip/; Flusche, Darren, “States still slow to spend safety funds,” BikeLeagueBlog.org <http://www.bikeleague.org/blog/2010/10/states-still-slow-to-spend-safety-funds/>
- ^{iv} FARS <http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/Main/index.aspx>; <http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/Common/ViewTextOrExcel.aspx>
- ^v Link to Strategic Highway Safety Plan report and priority matrix
- ^{vi} Macek, Ian, Washington State Bicycle Coordinator, phone conversation, January 2011
- ^{vii} Hubsmith, Deb and Jessica Meaney, phone conversation, January, 20th, 2011
- ^{viii} Advocacy Advance Report, “Section 402 – State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program” http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/reports/pdfs/section_402.pdf
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- ^{xvii} http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/HSIP/Documents/HSIP_Guidelines.pdf
- ^{xviii} Kenley, Erin, email to the author, Wed, 4/27/2011 PM
- ^{xix} <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/guides/guide040506.cfm>
- ^{xx} <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0935.pdf>