



## Safe Routes to School Subcommittee

October 16, 2015  
10:00 – 11:30 am

### Participants

Al Grandy  
Dirk Siebenbrodt  
Kristen Brookshire  
Sara Merz  
Elizabeth Sharpe  
Karen Rindge

Stephen Sposato  
Laura Sandt – via telephone  
Lynn Edmonds  
Danny Johnson  
Jennifer Delcourt  
Kenneth Withrow

### Welcome and Introduction

Mr. Kenneth Withrow called the meeting to order and began the meeting with introductions. Ms. Amy Sackaroff had to miss the meeting due to family illness.

### Setting Speed Limits for School Zones

Following introductions, Mr. Al Grandy of NCDOT's Division Five office addressed the Subcommittee concerning NCDOT's criteria for determining speed limits for school zones. Mr. Grandy stated that in order for a school zone to be enacted, the school must front the road that it sits on. He noted that there have been exceptions to that rule due to public outcry (i.e. Banks Road Elementary School near Fuquay-Varina). Mr. Grandy also noted that NCDOT, by general statute cannot lower a speed limit by more than 20 mph. In all cases, NCDOT works to have speed zone consistency along roads leading to the school and beyond the school property. The Subcommittee members inquired Mr. Grandy on the requirements of speed zones based on the location of pedestrian accommodations. Mr. Grandy stated that speed zones are included along roads with existing sidewalks. Also, crosswalks will be installed at location where existing sidewalks are within the vicinity of the school. NCDOT staff will evaluate a school's pedestrian activities during the school's initial opening and closing hours. There is no specific threshold of walkers needed in order to secure a school zone reduction. Mr. Grandy noted that while there are procedures to address school safety along roads, NCDOT does not want to penalize the general public for their needed use of the road. Mr. Sposato posed the question of what can be done from a proactive stance to address school speed zones; and Mr. Grandy noted what had been done for Rolesville High School. The speed limit for Rolesville Road in the vicinity of the school was reduced from 55 mph to 45 mph. Mr. Grandy suggested that Wake County Public School System contact NCDOT's district engineer. The district engineer and staff will monitor the school situation. To initiate any pedestrian safety activity for a particular school, Mr. Grandy recommended that citizen's talk with the school principal first; who will then proceed to contact the proper transportation professionals. The typical NCDOT procedure for school zone installation includes signs, mph postings, and the hour limits for the speed zone requirements. Also NCDOT installs thermoplastic road markings (NCDOT also maintains the markings and signs). The school flashing lights are installed by the local school system (and are maintained by the local school system). Studies have shown that the flashers are ineffective. Ms. Pullen noted that in New York City, a bill was passed to reduce the speed around schools during school hours to 20 mph.

**ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Withrow noted that this was an informational item; therefore, no action was taken.

### **Wake County Public School System – Walk Zones**

Mr. Steve Sposato of the Wake County Public School System had given a presentation concerning the “No Transport – Walk Zones” as used by the county during the August 21 meeting; and is continuing that discussion during this meeting. He passed out Wake County’s current standards and was looking for feedback on possible improvements. Ms. Sposato noted that Wake County has both policies and practices. The policies are created by the School Board. The practices are executed by the Wake County staff members. The policies are driven by the school bus transportation of Wake County Public School system. The Subcommittee discussed the item and will continue their discussion for future meetings.

ACTION ITEM: The Subcommittee was informed to review the Policy, and recommend changes. .

### **Program Elements**

Mr. Withrow briefly talked about the Program Elements that can be implemented by the Capital Area MPO. The Program Elements would include a goal to encourage Wake County Public School System to pursue a “Complete Streets” profile for roads and streets within the vicinity of schools. Prior to adopting a “Complete Streets” profile, the Wake County Public Schools System needs to adopt the resolution encouraging the school system to adopt Safe Routes to School policies.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Withrow will provide a draft copy of the resolution encouraging Wake County to adopt SRTS policies.

### **Updates on John Rex Endowment Child Pedestrian Safety Grant**

Ms. Nancy Pullen provided updates based on funding by the John Rex Endowment to the UNC-HSRC. The five schools are Ligon Middle School and Bugg Elementary School in Raleigh, Lincoln Heights Elementary School in Fuquay-Varina, Northwoods Elementary School in Cary, and Hodge Road Elementary School in Knightdale. Ms. Jennifer Baldwin with AltaPlanning, is working on the school Action Plans and has scheduled Steering Committee meetings with three of the five schools. The other two schools will be scheduled shortly. The Action Plan for each school will include both short term and long term changes. Ms. Kristen Brookshire has gone to all of the schools to drop off instructional letters and forms (travel tallies and parent surveys) to collect base data. Spanish versions of the former material are available as well. Kristen has also been interviewing the planners from each municipality to gather information on existing municipal policies and practices for walking and biking (and what will be some opportunity points). Ms. Laura Sandt has been working on the project website. The domain name is “SafeRoutesWakeCounty.org”. The website will give the general public an idea on what Safe Routes to School is; as well as a place for parents and teachers of the five schools to see current and future activities, news, and events. Links to other relevant resources will be provided. The timeframe for activating the website will be in November. Ms. Jennifer Delcourt suggested adding “Active Routes to School as a link.

ACTION ITEM: The Subcommittee will provide comments and suggestions to Ms. Laura Sandt.

### **Walk to School Day Updates**

Ms. Jennifer Delcourt noted that as of October 16 there were 24 Walk to School activities in the area. One of the notable schools was the Scotts Ridge Elementary School event; since the school just recently open this school year. Ms. Pullen noted that there was a record number of Walk to School Day events statewide (157 events in 2014 and now 211 events in 2015).

### **Other Business**

Ms. Sara Merz mentioned the Wake County AHA's SRTS Workshop on Thursday, November 12; and Ms. Nancy Pullen mentioned the Statewide Active Routes to School Conference November 18 in Chapel Hill.

### **Adjournment**