

RSA Newsletter



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Greetings

By Becky Crowe, RSA Program Manager
FHWA Office of Safety

Just as the trees and flowers are blooming this spring, so too is the use of Road Safety Audits (RSA). News is coming in from across the Nation about how agencies are applying this effective countermeasure. What started as a process for evaluating the safety performance of an existing road or intersection has grown into a process that agencies are integrating into the Safe Routes to School program, livability initiatives and healthy community plans. I hope these articles will provide you with some new ideas on how to “Spring” into action and apply RSAs on your roads! Enjoy!

For more information, please visit:

<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/rsa>

or contact Becky Crowe,
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Rhode Island Completes Multimodal Transportation Safety & Efficiency Assessment for the InterLink at TF Green Airport.



In January, Rhode Island applied FHWA’s RSA approach uniquely to evaluate the safety and efficiency of travel to, from, and around the InterLink. The InterLink is a new facility that connects commuter rail, rental cars, public and intercity bus transit, pedestrian/bike, and air travel together within an urban location. For more information on InterLink visit <http://www.pvdairport.com/main.aspx?guid=577CEE19-1579-46CB-9A70-6381B7B51D18>.

The 13-member RSA team was formed from members of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT), Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC), Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA), City of Warwick, the FHWA RI Division, and consultants. State, local, and airport campus roads were assessed along with other accessible loca-

tions (e.g. garage and train platforms). The 76 recommendations that resulted from the RSA covered physical improvements as well as safety and efficiency strategies that were grouped into near-, intermediate-, and long-term implementation periods.



IMAGE COURTESY of VHB, Inc.

Examples of near-term (0-6 months) strategies include:

- Small Signing
- Signal Timing
- Reflective Delineators
- Parking Capacity Upgrades

Examples of intermediate-term (6 months-2 years) strategies include:

- Large/Overhead Signing
- ADA Upgrades
- Road Diet
- Ground Level Pedestrian Access to Skywalk Bridge

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Examples of long-term (2+ years) strategies include:

- Redesign Channelized Turns
- Add East-West Corridor
- Coordinate the RSA Final Report with Development District Plans/Improvements and with the TF Green Airport Improvement Program

Another unique aspect of this assessment is that the strategies could be incorporated into plans under development by the various stakeholders including: the Warwick Station Development District Master Plan, the Airport Improvement Program, and RIPTA's plan to service this district. A final report was completed in April. Recommendations for near-term implementation are being completed this construction season and intermediate-term recommendations are scheduled to be completed during the 2012 construction season.

For more information about Rhode Island RSA activities, please contact:

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IMAGE COURTESY of VHB, Inc.

El Paseo RSA Exemplifies How Livability Starts with Safety

In the spirit of incorporating safety into livability projects, the FHWA Office of Safety partnered with the FHWA Office of Planning and Environment in October 2010 to sponsor an RSA on the El Paseo Road Corridor in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The El Paseo Road corridor is one of four selected from across the country to receive an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) technical assistance grant. It also is the only corridor to have EPA partnering with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and FHWA. The EPA technical grant focused on guiding the planning process to a shared vision of a revitalized transportation corridor. The RSA was geared to accomplishing a safety examination that would ultimately help assist the City create a transportation plan. In addition, the agencies involved wanted to develop a comprehensive planning approach and a potential working model for future use.

Secretary LaHood identified livability as a key priority for transportation and his vision is that "transportation policies focus on people and communities who use the transportation system."

A multidisciplinary team consisting of transportation professionals from RoadRUNNER Transit, Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Las Cruces Public Works, Las Cruces Police Department, the New Mexico Department of Transportation, the FHWA New Mexico Division Office and RSA technical experts performed the RSA. The team spent two days studying

the corridor using aerial photographs and on-site visits. As part of the field review, the team took guided driving tours both during the day and at night to record issues faced by drivers. The team met with the Director and staff from the Public Works Department to discuss many of the corridor's long-term problems, as well as proposed projects. The team also met with representatives from Las Cruces Public Schools to outline short- to long-term issues and projects at Las Cruces High School.

The RSA Final Report summarized the issues identified during the audit and

The RSA was a major success as the Final Report was ultimately endorsed by the City Council at their meeting on Tuesday, February 22, 2011.

provided short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations to resolve them. The Public Works Department is already moving forward with several of the proposed

improvements, and the Traffic Operations section is replacing deficient mast arms and signs and scheduling the additional signal head installations at some of the traffic signals. In addition, the Project Development section is reviewing median design at specific intersections and is pursuing funds for an improvement project. Andy Hume, Planner with the Las Cruces MPO, summarized that "the RSA clearly identified some safety issues and led to enacting well-designed countermeasures. It definitely generated a lot of momentum along the corridor."



IMAGE COURTESY of VHB, Inc.



IMAGE COURTESY of VHB, Inc.

For more information about El Paseo RSA activities contact:

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RSAs Lead to Safe Routes to School

In a continuing effort to encourage walking to school and to identify pedestrian barriers, Albany Safe Communities and the Georgia Safe Routes to School Resource Center have partnered to conduct Pedestrian RSAs at neighborhood elementary schools.

Audit team members from the City of Albany’s Engineering Department, Georgia Department of Transportation, Dougherty County Board of Education, and the Parent/Teacher Association attended the National Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Training to learn about strategies to overcome obstacles to walking to school.

“Safe Communities has had an active Road Safety Audit program in place for a number of years,” said Michele Strickland, Safe Communities Coordinator. “The Pedestrian RSAs are another tool in our kit and provide us a slightly different perspective when we look at pedestrian and bicycle travel through the eyes of a child maneuvering through traffic.”

The Georgia Safe Routes to School Resource Center provided a consultant to work with the audit team at Sylvester Road Elementary School. Recommendations for the area include the installation of sidewalks along the perimeter of the school grounds and the addition of a H.A.W.K. signal to supplement a school crossing guard at an uncontrolled intersection. Low-cost safety improvements include the upgrade of traffic signs and pavement markings on the streets surrounding the schools.

“Once the recommendations have been accepted and approved by the Board of Education, our plan is to apply for SRTS grant funding for infrastructure improvements through the Georgia Department of Transportation,” continued Strickland. “We lost several of our neighborhood schools when Albany flooded in 1994. Those that remain are determined to thrive in their neighborhoods. Part of that is the ability of students to walk to school.”



IMAGE COURTESY of Toole Design Group



IMAGE COURTESY of Toole Design Group

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Kentucky Uses RSAs to Increase Healthy Communities

At the 2010 Healthy Communities Conference, Regina R. Washington, Director of the Division of Prevention and Quality Improvement for the Kentucky Department for Public Health announced that the Commonwealth of Kentucky is fourth (highest) in smoking, seventh (highest) in obesity and sixth (lowest) in physical activity. To improve Kentucky’s “health”, the Commonwealth created the “Healthy Communities” Initiative, which seeks to encourage people to be more physically active, eat a healthy diet, and limit tobacco use through policy, systems, and environmental changes that improve the community’s health.

In response, the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) asked the 50+ health departments across the Bluegrass State to conduct walkability audits as a part of the “Healthy Communities” initiative. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) and FHWA-Kentucky Division partnered with CHFS in this initiative.

To support the health department personnel’s efforts, the FHWA Kentucky Division suggested they be trained on Road Safety Audits (RSA). The FHWA Office of Safety, through the Resource Center, provided a 1-day RSA training workshop in the towns of London, Frankfort, and Bowling Green. Nearly 80 people attended the training courses and participants included at least one representative from each health department in the area, the city or municipality where the health departments were planning their audits, and representatives from the local highway district offices and/or the area development districts. The training provided an overview of the 8-step RSA process with a focus on pedestrians and also included a field exercise.

Ruth Hawkins, Health Education Director with the Madison County Health Department reports, “we

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IMAGE COURTESY of Madison County Health Department

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have conducted walkability audits on some streets in the cities of Berea and Richmond, as well as on some of the county roadways. We plan to use the results from the walkability audits to select streets or roadways on which to use the more comprehensive pedestrian road safety audits. Once the RSAs are completed and the results analyzed, a report will be submitted to the appropriate governing bodies.”

For more information on how Kentucky is using walkability audits with their Healthy Communities initiative, please contact:

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Peer Assists Local Agency in Alaska with Rural Road RSA

In October 2010, staff in the Organized Village of Kasaan, located on the Prince of Wales Island in Alaska, wanted to perform a Road Safety Audit (RSA) on the Island's rural roads. The Village wanted to use the RSA to be proactive in their attempts to improve the safety of their rural roads due to lack of proper signing, potential roadside hazards, and poor delineation on horizontal curves. After reading about the Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Program in the Road Safety Audit (RSA) Newsletter, staff contacted the RSA P2P Coordinator by email (safetyp2p@dot.gov) to find out more about the program.

After assessing the types of roadways that the Village wanted to review, as well as the reasons for conducting the RSAs, the P2P Coordinator identified a Peer who not only had extensive experience with leading RSAs, but who also was extremely familiar with rural road safety issues. Following a teleconference and some email exchanges between the Village staff and the Peer, RSAs were scheduled for Kasaan Road and Hydaburg Highway.

Working with the P2P Coordinator, travel arrangements were solidified so the Peer could attend the RSAs in person and provide on-site assistance to the Village staff. In addition to the Peer, RSA team members included the Bureau of Indian Affairs,

the Alaska Tribal Technical Assistance Program (TTAP), and the Organized Village of Kasaan. Crash and traffic data were provided by the Alaska Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Alaska State Patrol provided valuable information and insight into crash experience on the two reviewed road sections. On Kasaan Road, RSA recommendations included updated signing, improved guardrail, removal or shielding of roadside obstacles and enhanced delineation along horizontal curves. Hydaburg Highway recommendations included upgrading signs according to 2009 MUTCD guidance, shielding roadside hazards, enhancing delineation at bridges, and providing a uniform treatment of horizontal curve delineation.

Having a Peer join the RSA effort introduced more than simple guidance on the RSA process. In the case of the Village of Kasaan, the Peer's experience on rural roads assisted in a number of ways. Since specific crash data was not available for the roadways under review, the RSA team relied on general crash data from the Alaska DOT, as well as their own knowledge and experience identifying safety issues on rural roads. This is why it was especially important that the selected Peer was so knowledgeable in rural road safety.

The Peer also assisted the Village by providing guidance on the organization and coordination of the RSA. When arriving to the Prince of Wales Island, the Peer emphasized a strong need for preplanning prior to the start of the RSA. Sam Thomas, Transportation & Infrastructure Specialist with the Village of Kasaan, reported that “while preplanning added additional effort to the RSA process, Village staff found that the additional effort paid



Hydaburg Highway
IMAGE COURTESY of Tom McDonald

off allowing the team to spend their time more efficiently throughout the RSA.”

Another benefit the Peer brought to the Village of Kasaan was his experience with organizing an RSA team. Prior to conducting the RSA, the Peer worked with Village staff to search for individuals with different expertise and backgrounds to join the RSA team in order to provide an interdisciplinary review of the rural roads. This interdisciplinary team was beneficial to the RSA as each person provided a different point of view.

While the Peer himself ultimately departed after the RSA was completed, the skills and techniques he shared with the RSA team in Alaska will be used many times over in the future.

For more information about the Village of Kasaan RSA, please contact:

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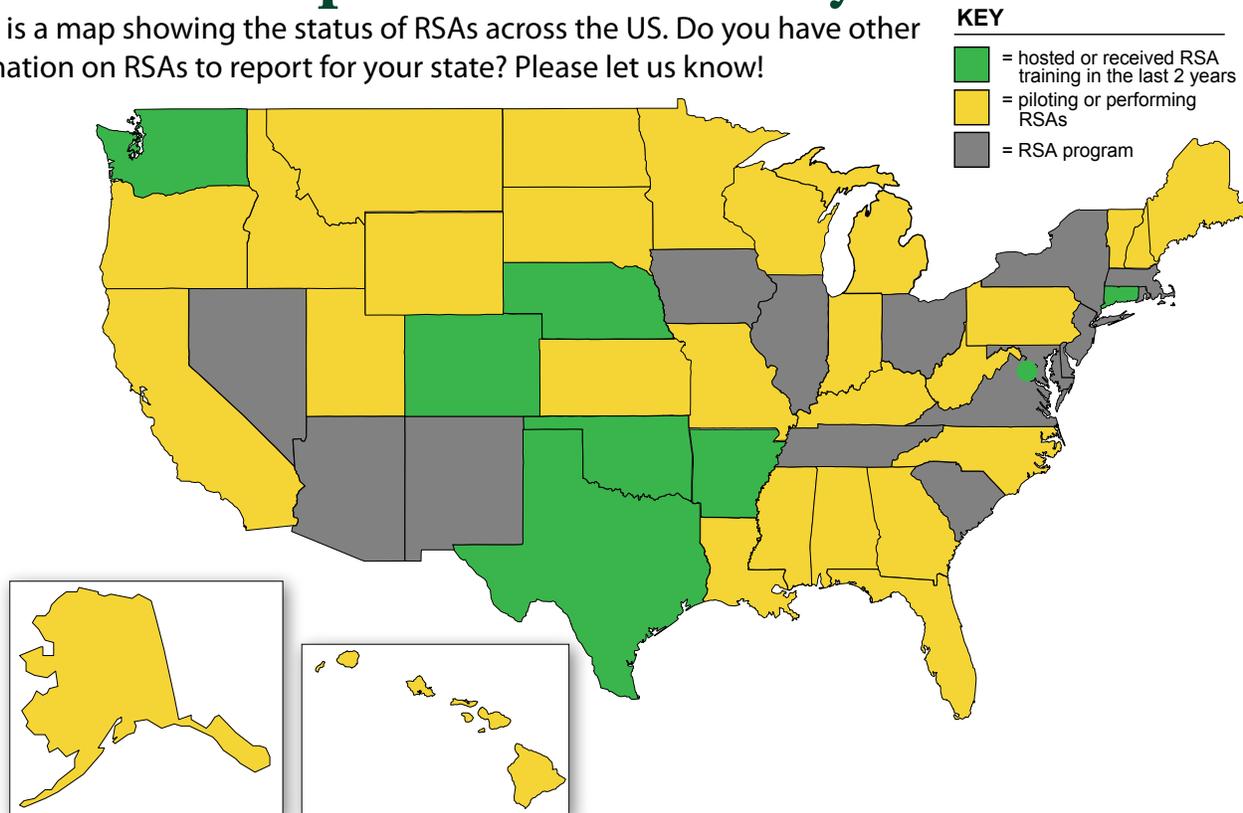
For more information on the **Road Safety Audit Peer-to-Peer Program** please email: safetyp2p@dot.gov or call (866) P2P-FHWA



Kasaan Road
IMAGE COURTESY of Tom McDonald

National Map of RSA Activity

Below is a map showing the status of RSAs across the US. Do you have other information on RSAs to report for your state? Please let us know!



Quarterly Highlights

➤ New TRB Policy Study

In November TRB released a policy study regarding highway safety. The study recommends a U.S. Road Assessment Program among other recommendations. Special Report 300: *Achieving Traffic Safety Goals in the United States: Lessons Learned from Other Nations* can be located at http://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/Achieving_Traffic_Safety_Goals_in_the_United_State_164388.aspx.

➤ New RSA Toolkit

The new RSA Toolkit for Federal Land Management Agencies and Tribal Governments was released in January and is available for download on the FHWA RSA website at <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/rsa/resources/toolkitflh/>.

Other RSA News

- Bicycle RSA Guidelines and Prompt Lists are under development and will be available by the end of the year.
- The FHWA Work Zone Team is collaborating with the FHWA Office of Safety on the development of Work Zone RSA Guidelines and Prompt Lists.
- A review of all Strategic Highway Safety Plans revealed that 32 States have included RSAs in some capacity.
- During the Florida DOT District 7 Management Council meeting on February 3, the FDOT Executive Board recognized the D7 RSA Program and Procedures and the RSA program will be rolled out statewide soon.
- The Pima Association of Governments in Tucson, AZ, the Mo-Kan Regional Council in St. Joseph, MO and the East-West Gateway Council of Governments in St. Louis, MO are initiating RSA programs.

To highlight your agency's RSA in the newsletter or to learn about upcoming RSA training activities contact:

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The FHWA Office of Safety's mission is to reduce highway fatalities by making our roads safer through a data-driven, systematic approach and addressing all "4Es" of safety: engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency medical services. Increasing awareness of the need for roadway safety infrastructure improvements is very important. We are striving to provide decision-makers with important information, tools and resources that will improve the safety performance of roadways. Safety should be considered first, every time and at every stage of a project. Make safety your first consideration in every investment decision.